Reading Material: Personal Libraries And The Cultivation Of Identity In Revolutionary South Carolina

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DEDICATION

To my parents, who unwittingly instilled such a fondness for books and reading in me that I had no choice, really, but to study the musty old volumes that appear on these pages; to those friends who made certain that I kept writing—what follows is entirely your fault; to my beloved dog, Banny Tarleton, who patiently listened to the same sentences over and over again in hopes of a treat; and finally, to you, dear reader, who I encourage to read carefully, thoughtfully, and well.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I vividly remember one dreary January morning, standing at the foot of a massive, Charleston-made bookcase at the Heyward-Washington House. Its glazed doors were thrown open and, squinting at the top shelf, my eyes were drawn to a dark mottled calf volume, about two inches thick, with gilt-ruled raised bands and a small gilt morocco label that read, simply, “FEDERALIST.” Upon opening it, we were astonished to discover it was a first edition of The Federalist, printed in New York by John and Archibald McLean in 1788, and inscribed by members of the Gadsden family. For breathtaking moments like this, I extend my sincere gratitude to the librarians, curators, conservators, archivists, and staff I had the privilege of working with over the course of my research, particularly Jennifer McCormick, Mary Edna Sullivan, Kerri Harding, and Michael Weisenberg. I would also like to thank those families who welcomed me into their houses and gave me the space and time to explore their private collections.

I could not have amassed such a wealth of research—certainly more than I can cover in one dissertation—without generous funding granted to me by the Columbia Chapter of the Colonial Dames, the Graduate School of the University of South Carolina-Columbia, and the Decorative Arts Trust.

Many thanks to the members of my committee, Dan Littlefield, Nicole Maskiell, Jeannie Britton, Constance Schulz, for their comments and suggestions, as well as my mentors Grahame Long and Stuart Bennett who have invariably encouraged, shaped, and
challenged my interest in South Carolina libraries these last few years. I owe special
thanks to Gretchen Woertendyke, who prompted me to explore the Campbell 1778 library
inventory in her American Colonial and Federal Literature Seminar, and Leon Jackson,
who, in his History of the Book in America seminar, allowed me to further probe that
inventory to uncover the spaces in which reading took place within one family’s home.

An emphatic thank you to those friends, colleagues, and (sometimes) complete
strangers who listened to spontaneous gushing over tree calf bindings, at least feigned
interest in photos of bookplates and marbled endpapers, and patiently waited as I stared
wistfully at roped-off bookcases and portraits. Finally, my deepest and most sincere
thanks to my parents, who not only encouraged and fed my love of books for much of my
life but also offered endless unwavering and unconditional support for an excessively
bookish daughter, even though she didn’t become a “real” doctor in the end.
ABSTRACT

In South Carolina, a colony known for its wealth and transatlantic connections, private libraries offer a unique lens through which to explore the culture of reading and book ownership that was an essential part of daily provincial and early national life. Largely overlooked by historians, personal libraries functioned as statements of well-rounded, often cosmopolitan identities before, during, and after the Revolutionary War. A careful reading of newspaper advertisements, probate inventories, loyalist claims, and correspondence, in conjunction with extant books, bookcases, portraiture, and spaces allows us to reconstruct the culture of reading and book-ownership that dominated Lowcountry society before 1800. Doing so reveals the importance placed on reading and a recognition of the book's formulative influence upon cultivating the individual self among middling and elite families. Often displayed in the most public spaces of private homes, book collections functioned as carefully curated statements of one’s professional and academic life, hobbies, interests, and leisure, as well as material expressions of taste and wealth, framed—like portraits—by elegant mahogany cases. By situating books acquired in various ways for various reasons within private homes and individual lives, we find that male and female readers shaped their books as much as the books they owned and read shaped them.
PREFACE

There once was a time when impressive private libraries could be found throughout the South Carolina Lowcountry. Legendary collections were associated with prominent leading figures, such as the flanker at Middleton Place that served as both library and exhibit space for Arthur Middleton’s books (“ten thousand,” according to one docent), classical statuary, and art.¹ Yet for how many books South Carolinians supposedly owned in the eighteenth century, very little has actually been written on those book collections. If one were to draw conclusions based on current book history scholarship alone, the culture of reading in which many South Carolinians of the era surely took part on a daily basis—on an individual and personal level through book-buying, -reading, and -displaying—would appear largely nonexistent, at worst, or, at best, obscured. Women, as well as Loyalists book owners and collectors, are also notably absent from these histories.

Perhaps the tendency is to assume that, because of their individual wealth and even the storied sizes of their collections, South Carolina’s book owners were little more than book ‘voyeurs’—individuals who amassed libraries merely because they had the financial means, transatlantic connections, and one might even say narcissistic drive to do so. It follows, then, that large libraries were surely meant to impress the viewer with just

¹ This is certainly hyperbole. While South Carolinian book collections were large, current data demonstrates that, at least in Middleton’s lifetime, no personal library consisted of more than a couple thousand volumes at most.
how lavishly the books’ owner lived—suggesting not only how much wealth but also leisure time their owner had. Yes, leather-bound books, and the fashionable glazed mahogany cases in which to store and display them, were expensive, but books need not have been purchased bound through a London agent (many, in fact, were not), nor did a book collector necessarily need a bookcase (let alone one made of mahogany) to have a “proper” library of their own.

Instead, it may be more useful to remember that: first, although no longer prohibitively so by the mid-century, books were still expensive. Second, books were generally seen—not only by planter and merchant elites, but by the middling and poorer classes, too—as a means of improvement, refinement, education, and entertainment. Because books were read and bought for those reasons, collections of volumes were, in a way, curated. Third, it would have been an absurdly costly expense to emulate the great private libraries of Europe in the far-flung British provinces and, later, during the economically depressed period after the War for Independence merely for appearances alone. Fourth, and finally, whether or not individual volumes were read cover-to-cover, or even opened at all, the material form of the book itself—for example, a spine’s gilt tooling, raised bands, and eye-catching morocco label announcing that particular book’s title—allowed the observer to “read” the shelf and conclude something about an individual owner’s (or owners’) tastes, pursuits, and interests. Moreover, many bindings were executed to an owner’s individual taste by an individual binder with a particular set of decorative tools at his disposal. In this way, books were commodities imbued with very particular meanings, just like so many other things that filled colonial houses during
the period. By the same token, and as modern studies suggest, reading shapes people—it influences one’s worldview, one’s imaginative capacity, and one’s opinions. It is worth bearing in mind, then, that as much as books shape individual readers, which the historian may or may not be able to uncover, readers and owners, in turn, shape books.

Several problems face anyone endeavoring to uncover a history of South Carolina’s personal libraries. First, no complete private collection survives in situ, let alone altogether in a singular repository. Some libraries were divided among siblings, others auctioned to pay off debts along with other household goods and slaves, and more still partially or entirely destroyed by storms, flooding, fire, or war. For instance, Arthur Middleton’s extraordinary library fell victim to Union troops who burned the plantation in 1865. The collection of books at Middleton Place today contains one singular volume inscribed by Middleton. A few others, presumably removed from the library before the Civil War, survive at Harvard College Library.

Second, attempts to identify books that belonged to a particular individual in institutional catalogs is often frustrating. Few catalog systems include ownership notes (inscriptions, bookplates, or otherwise), and those that do rarely include such information in a consistent way. As the National Trust’s Mark Purcell laments, “it can sometimes feel almost as if the curatorial practices of research libraries must have been devised to make

it as difficult as possible to investigate which books came from where.”

Once books have been identified, or, out of desperation, one decides to pull books blind, going through page-by-page in search of past readers’ interventions in the fly leaves, margins, and within the text itself is exceedingly tedious and not always fruitful.

Moreover, where books do survive, they are not always accessible to the public, meaning the researcher has to rely on the kindness of strangers to let them into their homes to see books they themselves may or may not know much about. Alternatively, one has to identify books for sale on the market and contact the bookseller in the hope that he or she will provide further information and images without demanding purchase.

And even those collections that are publicly available—seen frequently lining mahogany bookshelves in a number of house museums—are often displayed more for the overall “look” of an antiquated library than placed in any meaningful way.

No matter how tedious, however, the research turned up in pursuit of such a study not only emphasizes how valuable books and reading were in the revolutionary Atlantic

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4 For example, one bookseller offering a “Volume from the Library of Thomas Lynch, Jr. - Second Rarest Declaration Signer” merely pointed to images already available in the listing and, when asked, claimed that he could not tell if there had ever been a Lynch family bookplate in a volume of poetry and refused to leaf through said volume for additional inscriptions, paste-ins, or marginalia without purchase. (The original Thomas Lynch, Jr. signature on the right top corner of the front fly leaf was evidently clipped out by female Lynch descendants who sold this particular volume’s signature, and others, to autograph collectors in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.) The book was originally listed for $5,000; he later offered it to me for $2,500—a steep price for someone living on a graduate student stipend—when I suggested I would be happy to drive to his store and look at it in person. It is currently still available online for purchase for $3,750.
world but, even more relevant today, underscores the importance of collecting and preserving individual copies in this current era of digitization and deaccession in institutional repositories. Holding Edward Rutledge’s copy of *Wealth of Nations* (London, 1784)—tree calf covers rubbed, with its the front cover holding on by a thread, from frequent reading and spine chipped from repetitive pulling off a shelf—and seeing the dog-eared pages of a section on agriculture and manufacture, provide a rather different experience than scrolling through a digitized copy from the Bavarian State Library in Munich on Google Books. Reading in the latter half of the eighteenth century, as today, was a deeply personal, individual experience. While book collections can be categorized to a certain degree, it is absolutely necessary to identify and make sense of the traces that survive in individual volumes in order to truly understand what books meant to past readers—how they interacted with their books, where books were read, and when readers felt compelled to intervene with an author’s, printer’s, or binder’s work. It may not always be possible to identify under what circumstances and why individual books were acquired, or to locate exactly when and where reading took place, or even to know how any particular text influenced a given reader. But, in my experience, I have found that books have a wonderfully uncanny way of revealing their own lives. One simply has to look.

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LIST OF TERMS

Folio: Book size resulting from folding a sheet of paper once; height typically 12” x 19”.

Quarto: Book size resulting from folding twice; height typically 9 1/2” x 12”.

Octavo: Book size resulting from three folds; height ranges from 6” x 9” to 8 1/4” x 11 1/2”.

Duodecimo: Book size resulting from four folds; height ranges from 5” x 7 3/8” to 5 1/2” x 7 1/2”.

Textblock: The bound-together pages comprising the book’s content, including all text and illustrations.

Pastedowns: Endpapers that are pasted to the interior front and rear covers.

Endpapers: Often blank or marbled leaves added by the bookbinder to the front and rear of the text block, forming the pastedowns and free endpapers.

Fly-leaves: Additional papers at the front and rear of a book that added by the binder.

Tooling: Decoration on leather bindings, often gilt or blind.

Bumped: The corners, head or foot of the spine have been damaged by careless handling.

Chipped: Small pieces have broken off of the binding.

Rubbed: Portions of the binding have been worn away, such as on the foot of the spine.

Disbound: A book that lacks its original binding.

Rebound: A type of repair in which the entire binding has been replaced.

Rebacked: A type of repair in which only the spine of the book has been replaced.
INTRODUCTION

On July 30, 1769, John Rutledge sat down to write a long letter of brotherly advice. Edward, who left South Carolina to study law at the Inns of Court, was John’s youngest brother, and it was the nineteen-year-old’s first time traveling abroad. Having made the same journey for the same reason himself a little over a decade prior, John felt well-positioned as oldest brother and father-figure to offer Edward guidance in his studies. In what became an exhaustive missive that covered everything from learning shorthand to attending David Garrick’s (and only Garrick’s) performances, John recommended authors, titles, and subjects for Edward to buy or borrow, explaining his reasoning for each. He urged young Ned to read “frequently,” “with great care,” and “over and over, with the greatest attention.” Above all, John stressed, “When I say you should read, I do not mean just to run cursorily through it, as you would a newspaper but to read it carefully and deliberately, and transcribe what you find useful in it. If this method was taken, one would seldom read any book without reaping some advantage from it.” Although perhaps himself not as well-educated as other contemporaries, John

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clearly saw diverse, extensive, and intensive reading as an essential skill for his youngest brother to hone.\textsuperscript{8}

Acquiring books, and carefully reading their pages, offered a distinct advantage to South Carolinians both at home and abroad in Georgian London. Books were not only viewed as necessary for professional or academic advancement, but, as John Rutledge’s letter indicates, increasingly came to be seen as a key part in becoming a well-rounded citizen of the British empire and, later, the United States. Rutledge’s letter is one of many that betrays the importance of books in the lives of colonial South Carolinians in the latter half of the eighteenth century. In many ways—and as Rutledge’s letter ultimately suggests—careful reading was seen as a conscious act requisite to establishing one’s own identity and reputation, rather than simply a means of self-improvement or a leisurely pass-time. While careful reading was important, for many of Rutledge’s contemporaries, it was equally important to build a personal book collection.

Indeed, for those South Carolinians who could afford them, personal libraries were statements of cosmopolitan identities before, during, and after the American Revolution. In the latter half of the eighteenth century, individual book collections housed in monumental pieces of glazed mahogany furniture were more than merely indicative of professional pursuits or fashionable hobbies, or material bolsters of Anglo-American status. Gilt-stamped calf spines were meant to catch the light and a viewer’s eye. Morocco labels identified what text was inked on the pages within. Books were meant

\textsuperscript{8} Haw quotes one of Rutledge’s students who, in 1774, wrote that John Rutledge “may not perhaps have had that extensive Education and Reading requisite to compleat the Orator.” See Haw, \textit{John and Edward Rutledge of South Carolina}, 8.
not only to be read, but their fly-leaves served as scratch paper and invited readers’ interventions in margins—generous or small—and un-inked spaces. Moreover, despite the tumult and transformations of war, books and personal libraries remained a key feature and concern of daily life in South Carolina. It is only through situating books acquired in various ways for various reasons within and on furnishings inside private homes that we can better understand the culture of reading and book-ownership that permeated Lowcountry society.

Despite unprecedented access to all manner of print culture from 1750 to 1800, ‘refined’ provincial men and women were not cavalier about their reading. Neither were they simply buying books just for the sake of appearances. In the latter half of the eighteenth century, and particularly among American colonists, books were regarded as valuable and important not just because of their high prices or the scarcity of a particular volume in the margins of empire. Instead, books contained important and valuable information and had to be thoughtfully read and thoroughly digested in order to become a well-rounded, contributing member of transatlantic society. Such self-fashioning was seen as an essential pursuit in the years before the Revolutionary War—and, indeed, continued in the years after. Moreover, the ownership of books was equally important and many middling and elite South Carolinians amassed large personal libraries over the
years. Personal libraries, while ‘private’ in that they belonged to one individual or family, were actually more accessible to a broader cross-section of colonial society through loaning, borrowing, gifting, or stealing.

In fact, there is ample evidence of a shared sociocultural understanding that books shaped the individual in private correspondence, diaries, commonplace books, auction catalogues, booksellers’ newspaper advertisements, probate inventories, and even among the books themselves. Moreover, the value of bookcases and other accoutrements that necessitated reading at home, evidenced in part by the account books of local cabinetmakers, demonstrate the culture of reading that dominated eighteenth-century life. In many ways, careful reading and the mindful acquisition of texts were regarded as conscious acts essential to creating and establishing one’s identity, rather than simply as a means of self-improvement. Colonial South Carolinians’ conscious consumption of particular books and the performative role of books on a mahogany bookshelf are inextricably linked to public and private individual identities, especially in the watershed era of the American Revolution.

Although this self-reflexive and self-conscious aspect has become overshadowed, reading and curating book collections were then, as today, social and transformative

Emma Hart’s definition here is most helpful. She defines middling households as those “who enjoyed ownership of their own businesses” and some “comforts of life” that the urban laboring poor simply did not have, including slaves, polite furnishings, and property. Some were so successful that they extended credit to the wealthiest merchants and planters of the provincial elite. Unlike urban middling households, the elites used the port city as their seasonal home to escape malarial country seats. Emma Hart, Building Charleston: Town and Society in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2015), 4, 123-24, 149. For Hart’s full definition of British Atlantic provincial middling class, see Building Charleston, 121-28.
practices. South Carolinians knew this and frequently fretted over it. Books were collected not only because of an individual’s bibliophilic tendencies, but also to be displayed as evidence, bolstering claims to status and identity within the British Atlantic world and, later, the United States. Amassing a remarkable library transformed one’s public identity (be it professional, political, economic, or intellectual), as well as reflected and shaped one’s private pursuits and interests. While this project broadens our understanding of the lived experience of reading and book ownership in the eighteenth century, it also uncovers the transatlantic colonial roots of personal libraries today. In the same way that one might curiously glance as bookcases, coffee tables, and nightstands today, eighteenth-century South Carolinians also took stock and judged the books adorning the rooms (and presumably ready by) family, friends, business associates, and acquaintances.

Further, my study rejects the outdated patriarchal notion—and the general historiographical consensus—that Southern women did not have their own books prior to the early nineteenth century. Finally, looking at the shared sociocultural expectations and experiences of reading, book ownership, and book display reorients our conceptualization of Whigs and Tories in the Revolutionary era. We might thus better understand our own deepening political divisions and how what we choose to read—and, importantly, what others glean from our reading—ultimately informs how we define ourselves and our place in the world today.

Books were ubiquitous in the homes and lives of mid-eighteenth-century South Carolinians. One has only to visit the Gibbes Museum to see Sarah Middleton Pinckney
with an octavo laying open on her lap, or David Ramsay seated in front of his library, a red curtain revealing the haphazardly-shelved octavo- and quarto-sized volumes in identical bindings behind him. My methodology combs wills and probate inventories, loyalist claims, account books, and newspaper advertisements; explores domestic spaces, bookcases, and portraiture; and considers all parts of extant books. In so doing, this project aims to excavate the intensely personal lived experience of book ownership and reading in order to highlight the political, social, and cultural significance of books in the Revolutionary Era.

Despite evidence in private letters, diaries, and commonplace books, very few scholars have studied the role of personal libraries and reading in the Lowcountry, and fewer still have considered the broader connection to the Atlantic world in the Revolutionary era. Among the principal works on the subject, Walter Edgar’s dissertation, “The Libraries of Colonial South Carolina,” is largely an enumerative study that focuses on probate inventories and neglects where books were displayed, and how, within the household. More recently, James Raven’s *London Booksellers and American Customers* considers the role of the Charleston Library Society—a subscription library for men—in

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10 Walter B. Edgar, “The Libraries of Colonial South Carolina” (PhD diss., University of South Carolina, 1969). While Edgar’s study focuses on the colonial era, he includes an appendix of “Notable Libraries,” or those “valued at £50 or more.” His research most thoroughly covers the colonial era, having consulted surviving South Carolina inventories, and includes an appendix of “Notable Libraries,” or those “valued at £50 or more.” See Edgar, “Libraries of Colonial South Carolina,” 218-26. For my study, I took random samples of one hundred individuals per volume of Charleston County Inventories from 1753 to 1785 at the Charleston County Public Library. While cumulative data is not available at this time, my survey suggests that book-collecting and reading culture was more than merely a cultural phenomenon of the Lowcountry elite.
the colonial and Early National period. These studies not only ignore the female hands through which books may have passed, but also wrongly assume women of the colonial South did not have their own libraries. Indeed, the image one gets of Southern women before 1800 is that of a plantation mistress in her pannier-supported silk skirts, elegantly draped in an upholstered mahogany easy chair, reading whatever she happened to lay her hands upon in her father’s, her husband’s, or her son’s library that day.

Moreover, both historians imply that there were few truly impressive private book collections in the colonial period. While this perhaps was the case by contemporary standards in country houses across the Atlantic Ocean, book ownership must be studied within the provincial context by bearing in mind that books—especially elegantly bound

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12 Raven, for instance, contends that the Charleston Library Society’s “collection overwhelmingly reflected masculine interests,” however “it seems likely that many women did read the books and magazines borrowed from the library by male members of their household.” He does not consider the notion that women were just as exacting as men in their reading choices, and, moreover, he needlessly genders the society’s library catalogue. Similarly, and in one of the few instances where he discusses female readers at all, Edgar notes that “For the ladies whose duties included either all the housework or at least the partial supervision of it, there were a few helpful household hints” to be found in books like *The Art of Cookery* and *The Complete Housewife, or Accomplished Gentlewoman’s Companion*. See Raven, *London Booksellers and American Customers*, 69; Edgar, “Libraries of Colonial South Carolina,” 46.

13 The idea that women in the colonial South did not have libraries of their own has long been accepted and perpetuated by historians and will be discussed at greater length, and refuted, in chapter 5. While Walter Edgar maintains that women inherited their husband’s libraries, a number of historians suggest that women relied on the libraries of men in their lives, rather than building their own book collections, prior to 1800.
volumes—were more expensive in the margins of empire than they were in the metropole. It thus seems exceedingly arbitrary to focus, as Walter Edgar does, on libraries of twenty-five or more titles valued at a minimum of £50. Such parameters encourage others, like Raven, to get the “impression … of small but carefully chosen [book] collections” among the wealthiest planters and merchants and “many very small collections” in the homes and workspaces of shopkeepers and artisans. It is misleading to emphasize price and quantity over quality and substance. This is especially true given the fact that the appraisals and valuations appearing in probate inventories conceal a great deal of information about the individual volumes themselves (including binding format, condition, and age). Although Raven and Edgar both draw attention to Southern book ownership, it is only by looking closely at inscriptions and marginalia, wooden bookshelves, and owners’ lives that we can truly understand what books meant to people in late eighteenth-century South Carolina.


15 Raven, London Booksellers and American Customer, 222-23.

16 One book historian of the period correctly notes that “the valuations in probate inventories and library catalogues are generally of second-hand books in uncertain condition, and the estimates of the valuators are chiefly useful for indicating their sense of the relative worth of the books they were appraising.” See Russell L. Martin, “A Note on Book Prices” in A History of the Book in America, Volume 1: The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World, Hugh Amory and David D. Hall, eds. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the American Antiquarian Society, 2007), 522.

17 As Raven points out, work on colonial domestic libraries focuses primarily on those in the north; see Raven, “Social Libraries and Library Societies in Eighteenth-Century North America,” 30-33.
With the rise of the reading public in the eighteenth century, or Jürgen Habermas’ “literary public sphere” in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, literate and propertied individuals participated in rational-critical debate over print culture.\(^{18}\) Men and women enjoyed unprecedented access to books and other print material in coffeehouses, taverns, and through subscription libraries. Such public spaces allowed patrons to peruse an extensive selection of books and read. Additionally, scholars such as John Brewer, in *Pleasures of the Imagination*, have argued that institutions like the circulating library were complemented by the book collections of private individuals.\(^{19}\) Brewer explains that most country estates of Georgian Britain boasted a room dedicated exclusively to the private collection of books. These libraries were largely open to guests and visitors. To that end, Benedict Anderson argues in *Imagined Communities* that print culture—including books—enabled readers to envision themselves within a specific sociocultural context.\(^{20}\) I argue, however, that given the accessibility of vernacular texts across linguistic boundaries, readers both imagined and experienced places abroad, regardless of their ability to travel. It follows that colonial South Carolinians cultivated cosmopolitan identities through the acquisition and reading of books as both part of the specific English linguistic tradition and as participants in broader, transatlantic


connections beyond the province. Moreover, I demonstrate that even in the years following the Revolution, Carolinians still depended upon the British and continental book trade to supplement local and national printed material.21

Rather than looking at New England political pamphlets that may or may not have passed through South Carolinian hands as the origins of revolutionary action in the colony, I instead aim to explore the varied interests of readers and attend to the evolving role of reading and library-building in the Revolutionary era.22 Such an analysis undermines notions of monolithic, mutually-exclusive “Whig” and “Tory” Anglo-colonial identities by demonstrating that South Carolinians—regardless of their political leanings—often read and owned the same works. (Whether or not they interpreted or valued them in the same way is another matter.) In fact, there is little to suggest in the postwar years that “revolutionary” or “patriotic” libraries—distinct from book collections of a bygone provincial era—even existed among the middling and upper classes. Library curation remained a decidedly Atlantic undertaking. Such a reorientation complicates the stereotyped image of the colony’s famously conservative delegates at the Second

21 James Raven also notes that “before local American supply finally came of age, the demands and expectations of colonial customers remained fixed to the east.” I, however, demonstrate that this trend continued well into the early national period. See Raven, London Booksellers and American Customers, 255.

22 This approach is hailed by Eric Slauter as a more useful way to look at the influential or popular texts of the American Revolution, while moving away from more causal analyses such as Bernard Bailyn’s Ideological Origins of the American Revolution (1967). Slauter further argues that historians must create a “better overall picture” of the “market for” reading, especially since “readers in disparate places encountered a political literature varied in format, genre, style, and origin.” See Slauter, “Reading and Radicalization: Print, Politics, and the American Revolution” Early American Studies 8 (Winter 2010): 39-40.
Continental Congress, who “dance[d] to the sound of the profitable pound in molasses and rum and slaves,” by revealing just how deep the cultural, intellectual, and social connections with the empire ran.²³

South Carolinians understood the value of books and the immense power they held in shaping one’s worldview, behaviors, personal identity, and reputation. But books also connected people, places, and histories. Many, if not all, middling and elite South Carolinians in this period consciously participated in the culture of reading for those very reasons—though some, of course, found it easier to access than others. Because they recognized this influence, South Carolinians purposefully sought out titles and subject matter to craft their best selves. As readers and book-buyers, they were thus conscious consumers of printed materials.²⁴ As book-owners, they imbued deeper meanings into those printed materials by making them their own—through bindings, bookplates, and marginalia—placed on display for ready use in their private homes.

Modern literacy-and-identity studies confirm what eighteenth-century readers knew and practiced. For example, one psychologist argues that reading both makes and moderates cultural identity.²⁵ Studies also demonstrate that reading can “deeply and

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²³ A lyric from Edward Rutledge’s song in 1776, “Molasses to Rum.”

²⁴ This approach is used to great effect by Jan Fergus in Provincial Readers in Eighteenth-Century England (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

²⁵ Ferdman defines cultural identity as the “image of the behaviors, beliefs, values, and norms … appropriate to members of the ethnic group(s) to which we belong.” Bernardo M. Ferdman, “Literacy and Cultural Identity” Harvard Educational Review 60 (May 1990): 181-82.
intensely embed” individuals in “cultural and kinship ties across countries.” 26 And, as a number of articles show, reading literature not only encourages empathy and makes readers smarter. It also shapes how we see ourselves. 27 In short, reading is transformative. 28 Of course, reactions to books “are so individual, so random, so susceptible to influences that are only tangential to books and what lies inside them,” as one author points out. 29 But, surely, historians ought to recover those past experiences of reading if for no other reason than to better understand the role of books in—and their deep impact upon—readers today. 30


This study combines traditional sources with extant pieces of furniture, architectural spaces, and surviving eighteenth-century books with local provenance to recapture reading and book ownership—acts which, as Roger Chartier reminds us, were not merely “abstract operation[s] of the intellect,” but were also “inscribed in a space.” Where older studies by book historians Febvre and Martin, Robert Darnton, Adrian Johns, and Richard Sher ignore furnishings, architecture, and other accoutrements of reading, more recent scholarship, such as that of James Raven and Karen Baston, turns to physical spaces, recreating the conditions in which people read in the eighteenth century. In both, the domestic library projects of noble families, like at Harewood House or Argyll House in Britain, were renowned for their interior design and furnishings, in addition to the books themselves, and inspired middling “gentlefolk and well-to-do tradesmen” to fashion their own. For Raven especially, the influence of

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Thomas Chippendale’s *Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker’s Director* provided a useful guide for anyone to create a library to suit their own home and on their own budget.\(^{34}\)

That is, however, the full extent of their attention to the material culture of reading.

Considering the spaces in which books were read and displayed goes some way to demystifying the often-elusive world of the historical reader. It allows us to reconstruct the conditions and contexts of books within the lives of their readers and owners. As Laurel Thatcher Ulrich argues, things or objects, such as books or bookcases, often “can be pressed into service as primary historical evidence” in ways that “severely limited text-based sources” can not.\(^{35}\) By looking at the material substance of books and their performative roles in the lives of their owners, as fashionable props in portraiture or displayed within finely crafted bookcases, surviving objects provide tangible evidence of past ways of reading in the colonial South.

This study follows a small but growing number of historians and curators who emphasize the importance of material culture in this period. Although it does not focus on book ownership, Jennifer Anderson’s *Mahogany* richly illustrates the usefulness of blending probate records, merchant and cabinetmaker account books, advertisements, paintings, and decorative arts to reveal how deeply engrained mahogany was in both

\(^{34}\) Raven, *Business of Books*, 197.

social rituals as well as imperial British identity in the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{36} Like Anderson, Zara Anishanslin also incorporates decorative arts in her study of silk, another luxury commodity that was deeply woven into the lives of upper middling and elite colonists.\textsuperscript{37} Jennifer Van Horn, too, demonstrates the power of material objects in shaping social identities and binding communities through “shared tastes and distinctive modes of object use.”\textsuperscript{38} All three historians demonstrate how portraiture, as a primary source, enriches our understanding of the identities provincials sought to convey and bolster. Throughout this project, I highlight extant portraits where books are featured as handy props or subdued backgrounds. While these may have been “stock” for the painter and not necessarily the books owned by the sitter, the fact remains that the individual chose to be portrayed—for whatever reason—with reading material.

Although situated in the nineteenth century, Leah Price’s focus on “non-reading” is also useful here. She emphasizes the many ways in which books could be used as things, rather than merely for intellectual content, and their capacity to link people across


time and space.\textsuperscript{39} The most recent scholarship by Abigail Williams and Mark Purcell, respectively, follows this trend, combining Price’s innovative study of books in space with a focus on material culture and book materiality.\textsuperscript{40} Both Williams and Purcell place books at center stage in eighteenth-century British homes, being particularly mindful of the physical spaces in which books were displayed and interacted with.\textsuperscript{41} Just as importantly, Williams and Purcell both demonstrate that books meant a great deal to their owners and readers. Such studies are particularly informative because South Carolinians unabashedly emulated British society and, both before and after the Revolutionary War, were dependent upon the British book trade.

\textsuperscript{39} According to Leah Price, the “non-reading” of books, historically, comes in many forms: “refusing to read or own or touch or even refrain from destroying [books],” owning books for “aesthetic reasons,” or “the point in [a book’s] life span when its readability has passed and its pages are ripe for cutting, wrapping, and even wiping.” Indeed, “books don’t simply mediate a meeting of minds between reader and author. They also broker (or buffer) relationships among the bodies of successive and simultaneous readers—or even between one person who holds the book and others before whose gaze, or over whose dead body, she turns its pages.” See Leah Price, \textit{How to Do Things with Books in Victorian Britain} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 8-9, 12.


\textsuperscript{41} For example, Williams does so by “[highlighting] how certain practical and cultural contexts—limited lighting, rudimentary ophthalmology, increased leisure time, desire for the display of polite knowledge—affected the ways in which books were consumed.” Purcell, on the other hand, aims to correct the “tendency to assume that libraries in British and Irish country houses were less numerous, less used and less important to their owners than was actually the case” by studying purposefully designed domestic libraries, bookbindings, and reader interventions. Williams, \textit{Social Life of Books}, 3; Purcell, \textit{Country House Library}, 17 & 21.
As of yet, no historian has focused on the materiality of book culture or spaces of reading and book display in the far-flung provinces of the British Empire. Price, Williams, and Purcell all focus explicitly on British reading culture. But studying the personal libraries of South Carolinians highlights the deeply Atlantic nature of colonial aspirations, as well as a strong continued interest in that culture even after winning independence. My study thus starts where these leave off by reorienting the focus to the Lowcountry. In a region known for its wealth and conspicuous consumption of British culture, personal libraries were commonplace. As such, they offer a useful lens through which to study colonial and early republic book culture from all angles. When situated squarely in the individual lives of their owners and readers and, more broadly, within their local and transatlantic contexts, we can better understand readers’ aspirations, anxieties, and actions.

I assume that readers now, as then, rarely read works such as this intensively and in order, preferring to skip straight to whatever chapter catches their fancy after consulting the table of contents and introduction. To that end, a guide: Chapter 1 explores the culture of reading and book-ownership in the Carolina Lowcountry from 1750, tracing its purpose and expansion through the 1760s, the impact of war in the 1770s and 1780s, and continuities and changes into the 1790s. Chapter 2 explores the variety of venues through which South Carolinians acquired books and made them their own through bindings, bookplates, and inscription. Chapter 3 moves to the bookshelf, placing books behind the glazed window panes of imposing library cases that were shipped from London or made in local cabinetmakers’ workshops. Chapter 4 considers physical spaces
of reading and book display, and what these can tell us when the historical record is otherwise silent, by focusing on the last provincial residence to which Sarah Izard Campbell, wife of the last royal governor, was confined. In this same spirit, Chapter 5 challenges us to reconsider Southern women as readers and book-owners by revealing that women were far more deeply invested in the culture of reading than previous historians have granted. The epilogue, predictably, takes us into the early nineteenth century, touching on the revolutionary generations’ libraries and the ways in which South Carolina’s book culture changed. Appended are library inventories that, in the course of my research, struck me as particularly unique or illuminating. While some are transcribed directly from probate inventories, I composed a number of these catalogues myself as I encountered individual volumes in museums, libraries, archives, and private homes.

Remnants of eighteenth-century South Carolina libraries are scattered around the country. A number of books, from a number of individual and family libraries, are in private collections, having been handed down for generations. Others still are currently being peddled online by antiques dealers and antiquarian booksellers, demonstrating, as anyone who owns books knows, that irritating truth: books, by design, have a tendency to travel, whether we want them to or not. Unfortunately, no library is preserved in full, as far as I can tell, in either private collections or institutional ones. For those books I have been able to get my hands on, however, I have endeavored throughout to describe the bindings in detail. This is because, as we will see, bindings in this era were often “to taste” and always crafted by hand. Binding was thus part of one’s experience of a book. Unlike in the nineteenth century, there were not so-called “house style” publisher’s
Moreover, the mid-eighteenth-century viewer would have recognized the different binding types and materials of the books they saw in someone else’s home. Lastly, with the exception of direct quotations and titles, I have chosen to use “Charlestown” to refer to the port city prior to incorporation in 1783 and, thereafter, the modern “Charleston.”

Historians have only just begun to thoroughly explore the role of book collections and reading in the revolutionary period, and there are still a number of holes to be filled. While the cultural and social history of libraries continues to be developed, personal libraries ought to be considered as useful sites for understanding social, cultural, and political events. Books in the home not only served as expressions of individual identity but also drew people together across linguistic, geographical, and temporal boundaries. As we shall see, books were everywhere. And it was in reading those books—together or independently, for business or for pleasure—that South Carolinians punctuated the day-to-day and made sense of their rapidly changing world in the revolutionary age. With a more thorough understanding of the role of books in the personal and public lives of their owners, we can better understand the ways in which book ownership and reading historically informed, and continues to inform, the construction of identity.

Ultimately, the book historian’s challenge is to recover “what books meant to

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people.”\textsuperscript{43} Personal libraries, whether large enough for designated rooms of their own or small enough to be kept on a cupboard shelf, reveal just that. Lowcountry collections reflected personal and professional interests, as well as the transatlantic networks of their owners. When displayed in monumental bookcases behind glass, they conveyed a sense of cultivated identity to family, business associates, and visitors. By drawing on a variety of sources, we can better understand not only the books themselves, but also the shelves on which they were displayed, the rooms they found themselves in, and the hands between which they were exchanged. Through this kind of excavation, we can better reconstruct the lived experience of reading and more fully appreciate the origins of reading culture today.

CHAPTER I. LOWCOUNTRY BIBLIOPHILIA

In 1796, forty-seven-year-old David Ramsay relaxed into the upholstered seat of an armchair to have his portrait painted, likely by Rembrandt Peale (Figure 1.1). He wears an understated powdered wig, a white waistcoat and silk stockings, black breeches, and a navy coat. Behind him, a scarlet curtain is swept to the left, revealing four mahogany bookshelves lined with thirty-three haphazardly shelved volumes. The largest books are upright and snug on the lowest shelf, while the books on the shelves above—many bound in plain calf with morocco labels, and at least one in its original blue boards—lean this way and that next to, or on top of, short piles. These are in all within an arm’s reach, suggesting that we, as the viewer, have interrupted one of South Carolina’s most prolific readers and writers. His even glance and easy pose are suggestive of a man very much at home with his books.44

Ramsay’s portrait was very similar to that of fellow South Carolinian bibliophile and Broad Street inhabitant Edward Rutledge (Figure 1.2). Painted by James Earl two years earlier, Rutledge stands wearing a black suit, a bit of wig powder on his coat’s

Figure 1.1. Doctor David Ramsay, ca. 1796; oil on canvas attributed to Rembrandt Peale. Collection of the Gibbes Museum of Art, Charleston, South Carolina.
Figure 1.2. Detail of *Edward Rutledge*, ca. 1794; oil on canvas by James Earl. Gift of Sarah Pinckney Ambler; collection of Gibbes Museum of Art, Charleston, South Carolina.
shoulder, grasping a scroll of paper. He, too, stands in front of a crimson curtain pulled aside to reveal shelves also lined with morocco-labeled books. His gentle smile is warm, and, unlike Ramsay’s collection, the books behind him appear neatly organized. Although the titles are illegible, it is easy to imagine that one of those volumes might be Adam Smith’s *Wealth of Nations* (London, 1784), the third volume of which survives today, albeit heavily taped, in the library at Middleton Place. If this painting is any indication, Edward Rutledge certainly took his brother’s advice, given in late July 1769, to heart.

At the time their portraits were painted, both men lived within a few short blocks of Charleston’s bookstores and print shops. Moreover, they, like many of their male and female contemporaries, were avid readers and book owners. They not only participated in the book trade as consumers, but, in Ramsay’s case, published a number of books of his own. For his part, Rutledge encouraged the culture of reading more privately by focusing his attention on his children. This was not a phenomenon found only in South Carolina. Indeed, as one historian recently argued, “books and reading material were a significant presence in eighteenth-century domestic life and were deeply embedded” in

45 James Earl, *Edward Rutledge*, ca. 1794, oil on canvas; gift of Sarah Pinckney Ambler; GMA.


47 David Ramsay is best known for his works *History of the Revolution in South Carolina, History of the American Revolution, Life of George Washington*, and *History of South Carolina from its First Settlement in 1670 to 1808*.  


transatlantic culture. Moreover, and as these portraits suggest, for many book-owners the library “could be at the very heart of a gentleman’s”—or, as we shall see in chapter five, gentlewoman’s—“social life.”

Neither Ramsay nor Rutledge were unusual, though. Reading and book ownership were very much a part of Lowcountry and, more broadly, British Atlantic culture in the latter half of the eighteenth century. This is demonstrated in correspondence, probate inventories, subscription lists, and surviving books. Although (and, perhaps, because) there were few “public” or institutional libraries in South Carolina, many individuals amassed large personal libraries that filled the gap for themselves, their family, and their

48 Williams, Social Life of Books, 95.

49 Baston, Charles Areskine’s Library, 165.

50 According to John Brewer, “in genteel portraits books—a book was almost as common a prop as a spouse, a house or an animal—no longer merely associated the sitter with a profession or vocation” in mid-eighteenth century England. “The book, almost any book, had become a sign of culture and gentility.” See Brewer, Pleasures of the Imagination, 158.

friends. South Carolinians most closely aligned with British book culture, but foreign language and translated works were also popular and frequently found in Lowcountry libraries. Surprisingly, during and even after the Revolutionary War, South Carolinians wholeheartedly participated in the Anglo-Atlantic book culture of the pre-war years. So much so that, by the turn of the century, a suitable room for a home library was an attractive selling point for potential homebuyers.

Indeed, books were far more than mere commodities, and few South Carolinians of the period could be accused of being “shelf-fillers.” Books were not only useful professionally. As James Raven contends, books—whether imported or printed locally, purchased in the colonies or abroad—“carried information and ideas.” These ideas were seen as paramount to identity formation and cultivation, particularly among the Lowcountry elite. For those in families who could afford the expense, the importance of

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52 According to Beales and Greene, “people who needed books but could not afford them frequently borrowed from other individuals (a minister or community leader), or from stocks of books kept in places such as taverns and general stores.” See Ross W. Beales and James N. Green, “Libraries and Their Users,” History of the Book in America, Vol. 1, 399.

53 One 1803 advertisement for a “House and Lot, situated in an eligible part of Tradd-street” with “a Piazza, shaded by Venetian blinds, containing four rooms, in complete repair in a genteel style” with a room “fitted up as a Study or Library.” See “For Private Sale,” City Gazette and Daily Advertiser, 6 July 1803, 4.

54 According to one historian, this was often a historiographical critique of George Washington, especially in contrast to his contemporaries. See Kevin J. Hays, George Washington: A Life in Books (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), xi.

reading and book ownership were stressed from an early age. In fact, by the time many reached the completion of their studies—sometimes abroad—they had already begun amassing books for their personal collections at home.

Of course, reading particular works had practical educational benefits. On the one hand, colonial South Carolinians recognized that reading literature was “a reliable foundation for beneficial social interaction.” Thomas Heyward, Jr., for example, complained to his father that when he looked “back into the early part of Life and see how my time was wholly employed about figures without any Regard to Words I cannot be surprised now that I am ignorant of an Art to which I never applied myself.” In order to correct this deficiency, he promised to dedicate his time to his “Closet,” or study, so that he, too, might be one of the few who not only, and uselessly, “employ all their time about Words and Language,” but instead serve “both themselves and their Country.” Books offered their readers characters and conduct to emulate, and South Carolinians knew this full well in the late eighteenth century. One Lowcountry reader noticed that “tho’ I can never hope to arrive at the perfection recommended in those Books I shall


57 Thomas Heyward, Jr., to Daniel Heyward, London, 11 February 1767 in the Thomas Addis Emmet Collection, New York Public Library (hereafter NYPL). https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/ba0a2b02-ee71-b0df-e040-e00a18062abc#/?uuid=ba0a2b02-ee78-b0df-e040-e00a18062abc (accessed February 20, 2017). This deficiency was felt by other South Carolinian elite, as indicated throughout John Rutledge’s 1769 letter to Edward Rutledge.

58 Thomas Heyward, Jr., to Daniel Heyward, London, 11 February 1767, NYPL. Thomas Heyward, Jr. went on to be a delegate to the Second Continental Congress and was also taken as a prisoner of war when the British captured Charlestown in 1780.
read them frequently with pleasure, happy if I can catch in any great degree some of [the] many Virtues [the author] recommends.”

On the other hand, books were also viewed as a means of continued professional development and useful reference. For instance, Doctor Thomas Dale kept 325 “Medicinal Anatomical & Botanical Books” in his personal library—the most books of any genre in his collection. David Ramsay, also a doctor, purchased “Morgagne on Diseases” at the estate auction of Lionel Chalmers’ library on July 29, 1777. John Rutledge recommended that Edward read “Coke’s Institutes…over and over, with the greatest attention, and not quit him till you understand him thoroughly, and have made you own everything in him, which is worth taking out.” He also thought Blackstone was “useful” and that a “little book called Termes de le Ley or terms of the law” would be


60 Dale’s medical books were also valued at £200—the most expensive genre in his collection; followed by “Classical & Grammatical” works (308 volumes appraised at £140), “Divinity” (150 volumes at £92), and “Natural Phylosophy & Gardening” (101 volumes appraised at £100). Dale’s books totaled £810 of his £3,317 3s 9p estate. See Inventory of Dr. Thomas Dale, [n.d.] vol. 84, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

61 Inventory of Lionel Chalmers, 7 July 1777, vol. 100, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

handy.\textsuperscript{63} If all else failed, South Carolinians often had connections for their students to rely upon for instruction.\textsuperscript{64}

As Rutledge’s letter also demonstrates, reading lists also marked significant milestones in one’s life. Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, for example, chose to congratulate his younger brother Thomas on his appointment to United States Minister to Britain in 1791 with a list of useful reference books “in the Diplomatic Line” that he kept in his personal library (“study,” as he called it) that he hoped Thomas would read before his travels. Pinckney recommended:

\begin{quote}
Vattell on the Law of Nations; the Treatise of Wiquefort on Ambassadors (which is the book of the greatest authority relative to the rights of public Ministers) … Quaestiones publici Juris of Bynkershoeck—Burlamaqui,
\end{quote}


Grotius, Puffendorff,—And all Lord Chesterfield’s Works—The Second Volume of his Letters to his Son contain very good advice for a Minister—
You have Sr. William Temple’s works; his Letters are excellent—The papers published by Lord Hardwicke are in E: Rutledge’s Study; he begs you will take them—Dalrymple’s Memoirs you should also get;—I believe my Sister has Sully’s memoirs; his negotiation with Elizabeth is a Masterpiece—Chesterfield recommends several French Works in this line, which are excellent—Jenkinson, & not Eden, is the Author fo the Treaties I carried to Georgia—I forget of whom I borrowed them—I have desired Mrs: Pinckney to lend you the Droit d’Europe, a very excellent [little] work…

Charles Cotesworth sincerely hoped that Thomas would start working his way through this reading list right away, or that it would, at the very least, keep him occupied until the brothers next met in person.

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65 Charles Cotesworth Pinckney to Thomas Pinckney, 12 December 1791 in Papers of the Revolutionary Era Pinckney Statesment Digital Edition, ed. Constance B. Schulz. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2016 (accessed January 18, 2018). Vattell, Law of Nations or the Principles of Natural Law Applied to the Conduct and to the Affairs of Nations and their Sovereigns (trans. English 1760); two Dutch works (Abraham de Wicquefort and Cornelius van Bynkershoek; Jean-Jacques Burlamaqui Principles of Natural Right (1747) and Principles of Political Law (1751); Hugo Grotius On the Law of War and Peace (1625); Samuel von Pufendorf (German) Of the Law of Nature and Nations (1672); Sir William Temple’s published works (five volumes, 1700, 1703, 1709); Dalrymple’s Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland from the Dissolution of the Last Parliament of Charles II until the Sea Battle of La Hogue (1771;1790); Duke of Sully’s Mémoires (1638); Charles Jenkinson, Collection of all the Treaties of Peace, Alliance and Commerce between Great Britain and Other Powers (1785).
As Pinckney’s reading list for his soon-to-be-minister brother shows, certain books were particularly useful for professional refinement. Robert Smith, Jr., who became rector of St. Philip’s Episcopal Church at the age of twenty-five, owned a second edition of rhetorician Thomas Sheridan’s *Lectures on the Art of Reading* (London, 1781) bound in plain contemporary calf with gilt-ruled raised bands.⁶⁶ Marginal corrections to pronunciations and folded over pages, acting as bookmarks so that he could quickly refer to the most useful passages, are found throughout the volume—no doubt useful for a man who regularly delivered sermons.⁶⁷ Moreover, as an author, Sheridan “fought the ‘dead letter’ by articulating projects not only for improving public speaking but for preserving the special character of the spoken voice.”⁶⁸ Smith’s interactions with his book are thus suggestive of his personal interest in developing and fine-tuning his own voice.

But even the study of law, or any other professional pursuit, was not viewed as an acceptable reason to limit oneself to strictly academic reference works. John Rutledge encouraged Edward to “not neglect the classics; but rather go through them from

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⁶⁷ Sheridan, *Lectures on the Art of Reading*, 35, 387-88, 393-94. For instance, the bookmark formed by the folded-over fore edge of page 387 suggests that Smith wanted to be able to easily thumb to a section on the importance of “semi pauses” in public delivery of text, “in order to render the ideas more distinct, and to improve the harmony;” see Sheridan, *Lectures on the Art of Reading*, 389. Sheridan’s *Lectures* were very influential among the revolutionary generation, including Thomas Jefferson; see Jay Fleigelman, *Declaring Independence: Jefferson, Natural Language, and the Culture of Performance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 10, 13-14, 26.

beginning to end” and suggested he “get a private tutor, who will point out their beauties to you.” Although Edward was destined to be a lawyer in South Carolina, John also recommended to his youngest brother that start a commonplace book to accompany his readings, as Francis Bacon did. Such a volume should contain all of “the beautiful passages [he] met with, such as were striking, nervous, or pathetic, in the different authors [he] read in the different languages.” Commonplacing like this created, as David Allan argues, a “bespoke compendium of knowledge” that was also “a physical artefact with a prodigious capacity for shaping literary preferences and intellectual habits, as well as fulfilling the cultural and philosophical needs of an era of politeness and incipient Enlightenment.” Indeed, books were just as relevant outside of one’s profession and within the realm of personal interests. For example, John Drayton, the


70   John suggests Edward follow the suit of his own favorite author, “Lord Bacon [who] did not think this beneath him” and instructed the younger to “read his collection of apothegms.” Rutledge refers here to Francis Bacon, A Collection of Apopthegms, New and Old (London: Printed for Andrew Crooke, 1674). In the preface, Bacon wrote “Cicero prettily calleth them Salinas, Salt-pits, that you may extract Sal out of, and springle it where you will. They serve to be interlaced in Continued speech, They serve to be recited upon Occasion of themselves. They serve if you take out the Kernel of them, and make them your own. I have for my Recreation amongst more serious studies Collected some few of them.” See Bacon, Collection of Apopthegms, [iv].


72   Allan, Commonplace Books, 57. One surviving example of a South Carolinian commonplace book, dated 1787 and rebacked and bound in a contemporary plain pebbled calf, is now in the collection of the South Caroliniana library, belonged Alexander Moultrie.
builder of Drayton Hall, owned a number of architectural design books which he
certainly referenced in the construction of his Palladian plantation seat, including Colin
Campbell’s *Vitruvius Britannicus; or the British Architect* (London, 1717). Reading—
and being careful of what one read, whether professionally or recreationally—helped to
fashion one’s reputation throughout this period. “You must either establish [your
reputation] when young,” John Rutledge warned in closing his reading list for his
youngest brother, “or it will be very difficult to acquire it.”

Reading was seen as a respite during academic study as well as a recreational
pastime. This was likely a result of an “anxiety over how to employ leisure hours” that
permeated Anglo-American society and culture. While a student at Middle Temple,
Thomas Pinckney, for example, wrote to his brother in 1774 that during a “long Recess
from public Law Business” he had “employ’d Part of this Time in reading with Attention
Locke’s *Essay on Human Understanding* [and] at the same Time comparing him with

73 Inventory of John Drayton’s library in the diary of Charles Drayton, collection of
Drayton Hall. Mark Purcell notes that, among British country libraries, “Campbell’s
*Vitruvius Britannicus* … was the most popular book of all” among those for whom
“architecture was [an] appealing pastime.” See Purcell, *County House Library*, 127.

74 John Rutledge to Edward Rutledge, Charlestown, 30 July 1769 in O’Neall,

Duncan & Watts, which together with a little Law, a little of the Classics, a little Algebra & Mathematics & a little Politics, forms the Circle of my Studies.”

While London awed those young Carolinians sent there to complete their education, it was also where many were introduced to the brisk book trade and reading culture they would emulate back home. Many observed how much cheaper things were in London than they were in Charlestown. And unlike in Carolina, one student observed, “there are every Week Sales of [books] about Temple Bar” where, he promised, “to pick up Bargains of that Sort.” Those books, whether purchased at the bookstands set up along Fleet Street or in the shops of the great London booksellers of the day, frequently appeared in correspondence sent to family in South Carolina. Peter Manigault, for example, constantly reassured both of his parents that he closely attended his studies. He used his position in the metropole as a springboard for grander designs for “improvement”—a trip to France, Holland, and Flanders after a summer in London spent dedicating himself to stick “close to my Books.” In fact, he praised the Inner Temple for


78 Peter Manigault to Gabriel Manigault, London, 18 October 1752 in Manigault, Peter, 1731-1773, Peter Manigault Papers, SCHS Folder 11/275/8.

being such a “sad solitary place” so that he would focus on his readings.\textsuperscript{80} Several months later, however, he wrote to his father that a “Number of Books” were “yet far from being compleated.”\textsuperscript{81}

Even far from home, and particularly when embarking upon Grand Tours, books remained important to South Carolinians abroad—so much so that books traveled farther afield with their owners. In 1753, Peter Manigault wrote to his mother that the books he brought with him from England provided “sufficient amusement” during dreary Belgian mornings.\textsuperscript{82} It was important to keep books at hand, even when traveling. Edward Rutledge urged his son to “continue to carry your Law books with you” as he packed for his grand Grand Tour, or, at the very least, to “arrange the Matter with your Book seller, in such a Manner as to have them sent after you.”\textsuperscript{83}

Back in South Carolina, separate libraries were often kept both in town and country both before and after the war. This practice began sometime before the mid-century, as Eliza Lucas suggested as a suitable reason for her choosing to live on a

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\textsuperscript{80} Peter Manigault to Gabriel Manigault, London, 24 June 1753 in Manigault, Peter, 1731-1773, Peter Manigault Papers, SCHS Folder 11/275/11.
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\textsuperscript{81} As a result, he wrote that he would not be called to the bar until the following term, at least; see Peter Manigault to Gabriel Manigault, London, 17 August 1753 in Manigault, Peter, 1731-1773, Peter Manigault Papers, SCHS Folder 11/275/11.
\end{flushright}

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\textsuperscript{82} Peter Manigault to Ann Ashby Manigault, Brussels, 8 April 1753 in Manigault, Peter, 1731-1773, Peter Manigault Papers, SCHS Folder 11/275/9.
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plantation, rather than Charlestown proper, in a letter to her friend around 1740. References to plantation libraries are increasingly common after the 1750s, however. For example, Daniel Heyward kept a “Lott of Books” in “the Parlour below/At Stairs” of his White Hall Plantation. Charles Pinckney referenced his “country” library when he requested a copy of the Museum from Philadelphia bookseller Mathew Carey in 1788. Isaac Motte bequeathed “all [his] Books both in Town & Country” to his son, Alexander Broughton Motte, in his will of 1795. Thomas Lynch, Sr., kept his library containing “Lots of Books” in a bookcase at his Peach Tree Plantation outside of Georgetown. Thomas Pinckney asked his sister if she (or their brother, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney)


85 Inventory of Daniel Heyward, Jr., 7 November 1782, vol. 100, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.


87 Will of Isaac Motte, 15 May 1795, vol. 25, Charleston County Wills, CCPL.

88 Inventory of Thomas Lynch Esq., 11 December 1777, vol. 99B, Charleston County Wills, CCPL. It is certainly worth noting that Lynch did not seem to have a town library, however.
had “a Spanish Grammar” in town that he might borrow. Finally, extant bookplates suggest that planters kept separate and distinct libraries at their plantations, such as the Clifton plantation bookplate of William Alston (Figure 1.3).

With so many private libraries in the Lowcountry, a number of South Carolinians chose to clearly mark their books as property. Increasingly popular in Britain and on the continent throughout the eighteenth century, bookplates were just one way of doing so and allowed book owners to make a “public mark of ownership.” Because books were expensive, book-owners commissioned engravers or printers to design highly individualized plates that could be affixed to the books in their personal collections. These often identified the book’s owner, either with a family crest, motto, name, or some combination thereof, but could also include the name of the property library to which the

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90 Alston’s “Clifton” bookplate is found on the respective front pastedowns of all three gilt-ruled tree calf volumes of Anthony Ashley-Cooper, Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times, in Three Volumes. The Fifth Edition., Volumes I-III (Birmingham: Printed by John Baskerville, 1773); collection of the author. Other examples of plantation libraries abound, though less obviously, in surviving sources, such as Joseph Wragg’s “Mahogany Book Case” valued at £20; see Inventory of Joseph Wragg at Quarter House Plantation, 31 May 1753, vol. 82A, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

91 Fliegelman, Declaring Independence, 167.

Figure 1.3. Bookplate of Colonel William Alston (1756-1839) for his library at Clifton Plantation. Collection of the author.
plated book belonged or other identifying information about a given book’s owner. In addition, bookplates were also a way for book-owners to express their personal taste—ranging from high-style rococo with scrolls and floral sprays, like Peter Manigault’s London-printed bookplate, to simpler, often locally-printed typographical designs (Figures 1.4, 1.5, and 1.6). Whereas Manigault’s bookplate features a stylized coat-of-arms and identifies his occupation (“Barister at Law”), where he completed his studies (“Inner Temple”), and his home province of South Carolina, others, like Robert Smith, Jr.’s simply feature his name and an italicized motto (“Carpe diem”) or, in the later neoclassical fashion, cleaner shields.93

Bookplates were certainly not the only fashionable way to declare oneself an owner or avid reader of books. Some South Carolinians sprinkled their correspondence with clever literary references, as Thomas Pinckney did in expressing his disdain of a companion’s beaver cap, which gave him “the appearance of Dryden in Virgil’s Helmet;

93 Bookplate of Peter Manigault, London, ca. 1754 in Jonas Hanway, *An Historical Account of the British Trade over the Caspian Sea, Volumes I and II* (London, 1753); private collection. Manigault most likely had these bookplates designed and printed by a London engraver sometime after his completion of his legal studies in 1752 and before his return to South Carolina following his Grand Tour in 1754. Manigault’s descendant, Charles Izard Manigault, used his grandfather’s armorial bookplate as a blueprint for his own set of plates that he had printed in a cleaner neoclassical style in New South Wales, circa 1818. Charles added a crest to the family coat-of-arms, featuring an aboriginal figure wearing a Prince-of-Wales crown of ostrich feathers. See Matthew Fishburn, “The earliest known Australian bookplate” *New Australian Bookplate Society Newsletter* 31 (December 2013): 1. It is also worth noting that bookplates could just as easily be cancelled out by later owners as they were pasted in by their original colonial purchasers or binders. This is seen in the examples of the X-ed out rococo bookplate of William S. Hasell and the crossed out name of William Drayton on his rococo bookplate, both in the collection of the Charleston Museum.
Figure 1.4. Bookplate of Peter Manigault, London, ca. 1754. Courtesy of a private collection.
Figure 1.5. Typographical bookplate of Robert Smith, Jr. Collection of Middleton Place Foundation, Charleston, South Carolina.
Figure 1.6. Possibly Charleston-made bookplate of Robert Bentham, late eighteenth to early nineteenth century. Collection of the Charleston Museum, Charleston, South Carolina.
described in the memorable Conflict of the Books.” Not only that, but Pinckney later gloated in 1778 that he “parade[d] myself regularly every Day with my Gown and Band and an armful of Books, with as much Consequence as if I was concerned in every case” of the court. Moreover, they were also found among other personal items, especially when traveling. In December 1762, for example, a number of valuable personal effects were stolen out of Robert Dillon’s wagon, including “a suit of pompadour coloured clothes lined with satin,” “a suit of blue cloth trimmed with gold,” and “a small box of books.”

Portraits were yet another means of doing so, as Charles Pinckney (d. 1758) chose

94 Thomas Pinckney to Harriott Pinckney Horry, 21 March 1776, in The Papers of Eliza Lucas Pinckney and Harriott Pinckney Horry Digital Edition, ed. Constance Schulz. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2012. http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/PinckneyHorry/ELP0491 (accessed February 8, 2017). The “Battle of the Books,” which appears in The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift, D.D., Volume I: A Tale of a Tub, The Battle of the Books, and Other Early Works, ed. Temple Scott (London: George Bell and Sons, 1905), 179, as follows: “The two cavaliers had now approached within the throw of a lance, when the stranger desired a parley, and, lifting up the vizard of his helmet, a face hardly appeared from within, which, after a pause, was known for that of the renown Dryden. The brave Ancient suddenly started, as one possessed with surprise and disappointment together; for the helmet was nine times too large for the head, which appeared situated far in the hinder part even like the lady in the lobster, or like a mouse under a canopy of state, or like a shriveled beau, from within the penthouse of a modern periwig; and the voice was suited to the visage, sounding weak and remote.”


96 “Stolen or lost out of a waggon,” 25 December 1762, South-Carolina Gazette, 2.
to be portrayed. There, he wears a red banyan and matching turban in front of his library bookshelves, much like the later portraits of Rutledge and Ramsay, with an open book in hand as if the painter (and viewer) have interrupted a man reading in his leisure time. Indeed, it is worth noting that, of all the backgrounds these individual sitters could have chosen—Romanesque landscapes or palatial interiors—they opted instead to be portrayed in front of a case of shelved books or with books close at hand on tabletops. It seems that nowhere is the importance of the book and book-ownership more evident than in late eighteenth-century portraiture.

As elsewhere in the Atlantic world, books frequently changed hands. On the one hand, books were often exchanged as gifts between friends and colleagues, especially over long distances. For example, John Jay presented John Drayton with a copy of *Memoirs of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* (Boston, 1785) while the South Carolinian was visiting New York in 1793. On the other hand, books were also frequently loaned between friends, as demonstrated by Charles Cotesworth Pinckney’s

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97 Henry Benbridge, *Charles Pinckney*, ca. 1774-1775, oil on canvas; Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, Winston-Salem, North Carolina. This is a posthumous portrait copied from an earlier work by an unknown artist, possibly painted with Charles Cotesworth Pinckney’s, and his wife’s, wedding portraits in the mid-1770s.

98 As Mark Purcell succinctly remarks, “then, as now, books made good presents.” See Purcell, *Country House Libraries*, 121.

99 *Memoirs of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences; To the End of the Year 1783, Volume I* (Boston: Printed by Adams and Nourse, in Court-Street, 1785); Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, University of South Carolina-Columbia (hereafter RBSC). The front pastedown is inscribed: “Dear Sir, The American Academy at Boston has published one volume of memoirs. I herewith send a copy—so pleased to accept it from, Dear Sir, your most odedt. & hble. servt., John Jay.” Drayton signed the title page “John Drayton, New York 1793.”
profuse apology to a friend for returning a book he had long ago borrowed—and
subsequently forgot borrowing—from him.100

But books also commonly appeared in wills as valuable tokens to be divided
among family and friends. Hector Beringer de Beaufain, for instance, gave “all my Books
and my share in the Charles Town Library Society” to a friend upon his death.101 Charles
Pinckney left his brother, William a “silver hilted sword, Rapin’s history of England and
Tindal’s Continuation thereof in five Vols in folio, and [Aurtherly’s?] Britaina
Constitution.” Meanwhile, his friend William Bull was bequeathed “St. Amand’s
Historical Essay, and Squire’s inquiry into the English Constitution as a token of the
regard I have for his Merit and his Sincere Attachment to the true Interest of our
Country.” His nephew Charles was giving “twenty five pounds [Sterling] worth … of my
Law Books, but upon the condition that he assist my dear wife in posting and settling my
books and making out my Bills na accounts.” As to the remaining books of Pinckney’s
library, he gave his “large family Bible and any other fifty Volumes she shall chose out of
my Library” to his wife, Eliza Lucas Pinckney, and “all the rest of my Library” to his son

100 Charles Cotesworth Pinckney to Richard Furman, 6 March 1792 in Papers of the

101 Will of Hector Beringer de Beaufain of Charlestown, South Carolina, PROB
11/925/351 at the National Archives, Public Records Office, Kew (hereafter referred to as
PRO).
Charles Cotesworth Pinckney.\textsuperscript{102} Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, in turn, gave “to [his] beloved Brother Thomas Pinckney all [his] Law and Military Books” in his will dated December 14, 1778—a day within the birth of his first son and in the midst of preparations for the second expedition to defend Savannah.\textsuperscript{103}

Such gifts also appear among loyalist memorials and between revolutionary colleagues from the War for Independence. Loyalist William Bull gave “all my Law Books” to his “good friend Robert Williams Esq…as an acknowledgement of the many good services I have received of him.”\textsuperscript{104} Patrick Simpson, on the other hand, gave his nephew “all my printed Books except a folio Bible and Blairs Sermons which Books I give to my Wife Margaret.”\textsuperscript{105} Finally, Christopher Gadsden thanked John Adams for “the

\begin{thebibliography}{99}


\bibitem{104} Will of William Bull, late Lieutenant Governor of South Carolina of His Britannik Majesty, 14 October 1791, PROB 11/1209/259, PRO.

\bibitem{105} Will of Patrick Simpson of Johns Island, State of South Carolina, North America, 3 March 1792, PROB 11/1216/36, PRO.

\end{thebibliography}
very acceptable present You sent me, by Mr. Gibbes, Your Defense of our Constitutions, wch. I read, with the greatest Attention & as much pleasure.”

The war itself stressed many South Carolinian book-owners, whether loyalist or revolutionary, with good reason. While imprisoned in the Tower of London from 1780 through 1781, Henry Laurens was forbidden access to “Books & News Papers for [his] amusement” “lest improper Papers should accompany them.” Personal libraries were also enemy targets, as Thomas Pinckney experienced at his “House at Ashepoo” where British soldiers “burnt the dwelling House & books.”

The importance of Pinckney’s report of this wartime arson to his mother is twofold: it not only values his book collection above “all the Furniture, China, … Sheep & Poultry … and Liquors,” but also demonstrates the specific targeting of valuable domestic (and uniquely flammable) objects belonging to a conspicuous revolutionary.

Of course, the personal libraries of loyalists were also targeted, as evidenced by the reference to collections and specific titles that appear in a number of South Carolina

106 Gadsden also wrote that he was “glad to hear by a Friend of mine at the Convention that it’s much read there, he sent me a Copy printed at Philada. but Yours came to hand a few days before.” See Christopher Gadsden to John Adams, 24 July 1787, Adams Family Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, reel 370.


Loyalist Claims. Thomas Phepoe included "a good Law Library" among his lost personal effects, listed alongside “a Chariot, a Negro fellow, [and] a Pew in Saint Michael’s Church.” On the other hand, when Robert Williams fled, he chose to leave his collection of professional and "miscellaneous books" with family members “to be sold if necessary for their support" in his absence.

The claims of elite loyalists, however, demonstrate in sharp relief how keenly the loss of one’s personal library stung. When Robert Ballingall's plantation was plundered by patriot forces in 1781, all of his books there—valued at £200—were “carried away or destroyed.” Jeremiah Cronin, a royal customs appointee, was even more unlucky. Thinking he might protect his belongings, including his “Book Case and sundry Books,” Cronin sold his personal library to someone he thought was a fellow loyalist. As it turned out, the man he “sold” the lot to, Charlestown magistrate Thomas Turner, was really a “hypocrite,” or pretend, loyalist who never paid the £40 he had agreed to and kept Cronin's library for himself. Cronin never saw his books again. Of course, book collections could have been exaggerated by individual memorialists in order to claim

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109 He valued this lot at £350. See Memorial of Thomas Phepoe, late an Inhabitant of Charles Town in South Carolina in North American Loyalist Claims, AO 12/47 p. 2, PRO.


111 According to his testimony, he recovered only a mattress. See Memorial of Robert Ballingall in North American Loyalist Claims, AO 12/48 p. 128 & 131, PRO.

112 Memorial of Jeremiah Cronin, late Weigher and Gauger of Charlestown, in North American Loyalist Claims, AO 12/47 pp. 18-19, PRO.
more significant losses, but stories like Ballingall’s and Cronin’s are suggestive of more personal and real losses.

Books were so valued during the war that printers and newspapers editors occasionally celebrated, in print, when stolen volumes were recovered from British forces. For example, in July 1779 one list of “Goods taken from the Enemy” included a specific list of titles and, in one instance, ownership notes: “a small neat bible, Mary Middleton wrote in it; Lives of the Twelve Caesars in Latin; Mair’s Bookkeeping; an old bible; a very old Testament; [and a] 3[rd volume] of the Lady’s Library.”

The war itself ultimately did not distract South Carolinians from the culture of reading to which they were so attached. Thomas Pinckney wrote to his sister while stationed at Fort Moultrie in March 1780 recommending “the two last Volumes of Rousseau’s Eloisa” to her, which he was sure she already owned. “There are some thoughts in him which appear strange, but many which I think very judicious and may be of Service, if not for Daniel, for whom it will be rather later, yet for little Harriott who will soon being to require particular Attention.” It seems, then, the pre-war concern that younger generations read the proper things continued even under the threat of British attack and invasion during the war. Moreover, and just as he had been warned by his brother in the decade prior, Edward Rutledge recommended Charles Cotesworth

113 “A List of Goods taken from the Enemy On the other side [of] Parker’s Ferry or Jacksonburgh,” 15 July 1779, Gazette of the State of South-Carolina, 2.

Pinckney to General Washington because Pinckney had, in part “studied most military Books with as much Care & Attention as ever he did any other Branch of Learning.”

That books remained this important, even during tumultuous times of war, demonstrates that personal libraries were important to all facets of Lowcountry life prior to 1800. Books not only were essential for one’s professional education, but also helped to refine a reader socially and culturally. Moreover, the books one chose to read were reflective of the identity projected to peers and the world more generally. It was not enough to merely read books, however. The fact remains that, at least for those who could afford to do so, it was essentially expected that they curate a personal book collection.

CHAPTER II. BUYING BOOKS, JUDGING COVERS

Unlike many of his contemporaries who finished their studies at colleges in the northern colonies or in London, Charles Pinckney (1757-1824) was a product of a decidedly provincial education. Nonetheless, he was a book enthusiast who not only amassed a large personal library—the remains of which can be found in the archives of the Charleston Museum and the Irvin Department of Rare Books—but also an active participant in Lowcountry book culture. Like David Ramsay and Edward Rutledge, he too chose to be depicted in front of shelves filled with books in his portrait painted when he was twenty-nine. As one biographer notes, Pinckney “added more volumes to the [family book] collection”—perhaps on display behind him—“than any of his forebears or progeny.” Remarkably, Pinckney also had a habit of signing and inscribing his books with the date and location where he purchased or began reading the volume (Figure 2.1).

Pinckney encapsulates the experience of many elite Lowcountry book-buyers in the second half of the eighteenth century. While a number of his extant books indicate that he purchased them in Charlestown (and later, Charleston), others reflect his travels to northern cities like New York and Philadelphia. In fact, the majority of the books that

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survive today are octavo and duodecimo in size—perfectly portable sizes well-suited to travel, either carried in hand or tucked into a trunk. Moreover, he kept books at his plantation, Snee Farm, as well as in town, the latter of which he advertised for sale with his house and lot in 1799 (Figure 2.2).

South Carolinians interested in acquiring books for their personal collections were not in want of options in the second half of the eighteenth century. As shown in the previous chapter, young men often purchased books while abroad for their studies, which followed them home to the colony after their Grand Tours. But printers, booksellers, and merchants printed or offered for sale books from around the Atlantic world—from Boston, Philadelphia, or, most popularly, London. The latest imports were regularly advertised in the 1750s onward, and, from the 1760s, leading booksellers published multi-column (and yet seemingly incomplete) lists of the inventories on their shop shelves. Book auctions were also common and frequently advertised. These advertisements, in addition to personal library inventories, reveal both continued interest in British and continental literature, as well as an emergence of “homeprint”—American editions and original provincial or national works—available on an expanding marketplace.

118 According to Abigail Williams, “portability combined with type size were a prized combination for the everyday reader.” See Williams, *Social Life of Books*, 69.

119 “House and Lot for sale,” *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, 4 April 1799, 4. Pinckney was selling his town book collection to settle debts.

120 As James Raven notes, “more books were exported annually from England to the American colonies than Europe” by the 1770s. Raven, “Importation of Books in the Eighteenth Century,” 183.
Figure 2.2. Sale of Charles Pinckney’s town library as advertised in “House and Lot for sale,” in the City Gazette and Daily Advertiser of April 4, 1799. Courtesy of Readex Historical Newspapers, Early American Newspapers Series I 1690-1819.
Indeed, the books that were available to Lowcountry consumers, imported by town booksellers, printed or bound by local printers or binders, and subsequently ended up in personal book collections ultimately reflect both individual taste and, more broadly, South Carolinian society.\textsuperscript{121} It is useful to presume, as identity economics does, that, although “people have individualistic tastes,” such as the books they purchase and read, they also “follow norms much of the time because they want to do so.”\textsuperscript{122} In the years before the war in particular, the desire to keep abreast of metropolitan popular culture and various enlightenment movements sprung from a desire to, as one historian observed, “construct communities of civil people” across the Atlantic.\textsuperscript{123} The desire to participate in transatlantic book culture did not end with independence, however. In fact, as advertisements demonstrate, reliance on the British book trade remained steady throughout the 1780s and 1790s, despite an increase in local booksellers, printers, and binders. Instead, a trepidatious local book market emerged during this period, and it was

\textsuperscript{121} On the rare occasion, book-buyers noted where books were acquired. For example, Colonel Charles Pinckney (1732-1782) inscribed the front pastedown of \textit{A Select Collection of Poems, from the Most Approved Authors} (Edinburgh, 1772), bound in plain contemporary calf, with a note that he purchased the work “at Ingles’ Sale 2 Vol. Price £2.0.” See \textit{Collection of Poems, from the Most Approved Authors. In Two Volumes. The Second Edition. Vol. I} (Edinburgh: Printed by A. Donaldson, and sold at his Shop Corner of Arundel-Street, Strand, London; and at Edinburgh, 1772); RBSC. Colonel Charles Pinckney was the father of Charles Pinckney, the South Carolinian in the introduction of this chapter.


\textsuperscript{123} Van Horn, \textit{Power of Objects}, 412.
only in the final years of the century that a national literary culture began, in earnest, to complement transatlantic trade.

Just as in Britain, books were most readily purchased from local booksellers.124 Prior to 1750, religious works were most widely available in the province and, as many probate inventories show, most often found in individual book collections. For example, one bookseller located “near the upper Market” advertised a number of spelling books, conduct manuals, and seventeen devotional works by title and “many other sorts of divinity.”125 Another bookseller reviewed the devotionals in his inventory as “highly delightful, and eminently beneficial.”126 In fact, across class and gender, the Bible, sermons, and other “pious tracts” were purchased and read “with a care that they did not often give to novels.”127 Colonists in particular read and purchased religious works out of “concern” for their “spiritual welfare … in the wilderness.”128 While religious works were, of course, most common throughout book collections across the Atlantic world, however, this could just as well have been a product of the literature available in the local provincial market as much as one’s concern for their mortal soul in a treacherous new world, especially by the mid-eighteenth century.

124 Brewer, Pleasures of the Imagination, 145.
125 “Just imported,” 25 May 1747, South-Carolina Gazette, 4.
126 “Advertisements,” 23 June 1757, South-Carolina Gazette, 4.
127 Brewer, Pleasures of the Imagination, 143-44.
Indeed, by the 1770s and into the 1780s, inventory had greatly diversified. While
Robert Wells, preeminent bookseller of the colonial period, offered a variety of genres
catalogued by size (folio, quarto, and octavo), ranging from Locke and Bacon to
Shakespeare and *The Spectator*, in 1756, his most ready stock were “Bibles and Prayer-
Books of all kinds” and “all sorts of Primmers” for children.\(^\text{129}\) By 1770, advertisements
of his shop inventory spanned nearly three full columns in the *Gazette* (Figure 2.3).\(^\text{130}\) He
offered everything from “Humes History of England, 8 Vols. 8vo.,” “Hutchinson’s
History of Massachusetts Bay,” and “Diseases of the East-Indies” to “Blackstone’s
Commentaries, 4 vols.,” “Sheridan’s Plan of Education,” and “Tom Jones.” The books
available at bookstores reflected not only the professions and occupations of local
consumers, but also the popular Anglo-American literature of the day. Moreover,
advertisements for specific titles, such as James Cook’s *New Voyage Round the World, in
the Years 1768, 1769, 1770 and 1771* or Thomas Hutchins’ *Historical Narrative, and
Accurate Description, of Louisiana and West Florida*, demonstrate a growing interest in
the world more broadly—particularly the Pacific and western territories.\(^\text{131}\)

Local booksellers often promised to go out of their way to import specific titles
for specific buyers. “Gentlemen desirous of having books imported, may depend on their


\(^{130}\) “Imported for Sale,” 3 September 1770, *South Carolina American and General
Gazette*, 161.

\(^{131}\) “Just published, and to be sold,” 18 August 1775, *South Carolina and American
General Gazette*, 1; “[Advertisement],” 24 June 1785, *South Carolina State Gazette and
Daily Advertiser*, 4.
Figure 2.3. Robert Wells advertisement of books for sale at his shop in the *South-Carolina Advertiser and General Gazette* of September 3, 1770. Courtesy of Readex Historical Newspapers, Early American Newspapers Series I 1690-1819.
being of the newest and best editions, and on the lowest terms,” Charles Morgan claimed. Although local consumers had plenty of choice and variety in reading material through book shops, printers, and merchants, however, they were not always satisfied with their options. “My inquiries for Lady Julia Mandiville has extended to every Store and Book seller’s shop in Town but hitherto without Effect,” one shopper complained in April 1766. It was not until October the following year that she would have been able to find Frances Brooks’ *History of Lady Julia Mandeville*, originally published in 1763, on the shelves of Robert Wells’ “Great Stationary and Book Shop.”

Many bookshops were located within a few blocks of major public buildings, at major intersections, and among the most affluent residences. Nicholas Langford’s store, for instance, was located “next [to] the Coffee-House, on the Bay.” James Taylor used

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“Colonel Heyward’s new Building” as a point of reference for his shop where he offered bookbinding and books for sale. After the 1778 fire that razed a number of the city’s buildings, booksellers increasingly opted to set up shop in brick masonry buildings. Even the Library Society was “in want of a proper Room for depositing the few Books saved from the late Fire.” Of course, stocking store shelves with quires and quires of highly flammable paper made such decisions common sense for booksellers. By tracking the addresses of bookstores that opened and closed in contemporary newspapers and cross-referencing local landmarks of the time, we can map out approximate locations of Charleston’s book industry in the immediate post-war years (Figure 2.4). In so doing, we see that the city’s largest bookstores and printer’s shops—including Charles Morgan, James Muirhead, William P. Young, John Miller, among others—were located in brick dwellings.

The 1790s saw even steadier growth of the Charleston book trade. With the opening of both a branch of the Bank of the United States and a Bank of South Carolina, South Carolina customers had a new “baseline of available credit.” With more money

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136 His shop was located “in Church-street, opposite to Colonel Heyward’s new Building;” see “James Taylor, Book-Binder & Stationer,” 15 October 1772, South-Carolina Gazette, 1. The following year, he advertised his location as “In CHURCH-STREET, opposite to THOMAS HEYWARD’s, Esquire;” see “James Taylor, Book-Binder & Stationer,” 1 November 1773, South-Carolina Gazette, 1. The Heyward property he references is today known as the Heyward-Washington House.


138 Jennifer L. Goloboy, Charleston and the Emergence of Middle-Class Culture in the Revolutionary Era (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2016), 57.
Figure 2.4. Locations of Charleston bookstores of the late 1780s.
Superimposed on *Ichnography of Charleston, S-C; At the Request of Adam Tunno, Esq. For the use of the Phoenix Fire-Company of London, Taken from Actual Survey; 2d August 1788 by Edmund Petrie* (London, 1790); from the Library of Congress Geography and Map Division, Washington, D.C.
to spend, Charlestonians also had a great number of bookshops to peruse. By 1801, the city directory listed eleven booksellers and printers.\footnote{The bookshops of Bailey & Waller, William P. Young, Crow & Query, and the printshop of John Dixon Nelson were located on Broad Street; bookseller E. S. Thomas and printer Seth Paine had shops on Tradd Street; printers John McIver and B. F. Timothy had shops on East Bay; and printers T. B. Bowen on King Street, John J. Evans on Maiden Lane, and Alexander Johnston on Hazle (now Hassell). See Nelson’s Charleston Directory and Strangers Guide for the Year of our Lord, 1801 (Charleston: Printed by John Dixon Nelson, No. 3, Broad-Street, 1801), 58, 62, 74, 87, 94, 101, 103, 117, 124, 125; collection of the Charleston Library Society. Because pages 95-96 are missing, it is possible there were additional printers and booksellers who do not appear in this list.}

As in London and elsewhere in the British empire, book auctions were another way of offering secondhand books to consumers. Those wishing to unload books from their own private collections could forward them to a local bookseller or other auctioneer, who would in turn collate and combine a number of collections and then sell them at a designated time and place. Books could be sold individually or as lots. This method of bookselling became increasingly commonplace around the mid-century. In 1748, Hugh Anderson, master of the Free School of Charlestown, complained of the many inefficiencies to consumers that came from “the present Method of disposing of Libraries … by exposing them to Sale at public Vendue, in Lots or Parcels not sorted or entered in Catalogue.”\footnote{“Advertisements,” 30 August 1748, South Carolina Gazette, 3. Hugh Anderson also advertised “Several hundred Volumes of Books in different Languages and Faculties, many of them lately imported from Great Britain, of the latest and best Editions, to be sold very reasonable” in “Advertisements,” 21 September 1748, South Carolina Gazette, 3.} Anderson, as master of the Free School, was deeply involved in the local...
book trade before the mid-century. Listed as one of the chief “inconveniences” to the consumer, Anderson bemoaned the situation of book-buyer “who may incline to purchase a single or few Books, must take the whole Parcel of different Languages, Subjects, and perhaps odd Volumes for which he has no occasion.” In purchasing by lot, the consumer was forced to buy books they did not necessarily need or want, therefore muddying his own book collection and burdening himself with books that may not have a place on a new owner’s shelf. To combat cluttering personal book collections, Anderson devised a solution. He proposed “to take in Books” and catalogue them from his office, promising that they would be “regularly classed and disposed according to their different Subjects and Languages” at the “lowest Price[s]” through public sales held “three Times a Year.” Unfortunately, Anderson died before he could put his plan into action.

Indeed, from 1750, auctions continued to be a popular way to get rid of or

141 For instance, Anderson was one of two proposal-holders for “a true and historical Narrative of the Colony of Georgia in America” written “by several Gentlemen Landholders in Georgia, at present in Charlestown in South-Carolina.” See [Advertisement], 22 January 1741, South Carolina Gazette, 3.

142 “Advertisements,” 30 August 1748, South Carolina Gazette, 3. Hugh Anderson also advertised “Several hundred Volumes of Books in different Languages and Faculties, many of them lately imported from Great Britain, of the latest and best Editions, to be sold very reasonable” in “Advertisements,” 21 September 1748, South Carolina Gazette, 3.

143 “Advertisements,” 30 August 1748, South Carolina Gazette, 3.

144 His death was reported as follows: “This Day died, Mr. Hugh Anderson, Master of the Free-School near this Town.” See “Charles-Town, November 21,” 21 November 1748, South Carolina Gazette, 2.
redistribute, or acquire, books in South Carolina.\textsuperscript{145} Newspaper advertisements suggest that consumers were especially drawn to the renowned book collections of their peers, such as Robert Wells’ auction of Alexander Garden’s library or that of Captain Thomas Law Elliott.\textsuperscript{146} During the War for Independence, the book collections of loyalists were often seized and put up for auction. The “sundry books” of John Stuart, who, as superintendent of Indian Affairs, fled the province in the summer of 1775, were put up for sale “by order of the House of Assembly” in October 1778.\textsuperscript{147} Advertisements sometimes included information about the contents of the library for sale, such as the “valuable Library of books belonging to the estate of the Rev. Mr. Henry Heywood deceased, of several hundred volumes of curious books in Hebrew, Greek, Lain French Italian, Dutch and English.”\textsuperscript{148} Auctions of shop inventory, individuals simply looking to get rid of books that were no longer of use to them or out-of-date, or, as in the case of Charles Pinckney’s 1799 advertisement, to raise funds to pay off personal debts were also

\textsuperscript{145} As one book historian notes, had “attempts at book auctions been failures,” booksellers “would not have repeated the effort” and the practice would have declined through the late eighteenth century. See Calhoun Winton, “The Southern Book Trade in the Eighteenth Century” in \textit{History of the Book in America, Vol. 1}, Hugh Amory and David D. Hall, eds. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 236.

\textsuperscript{146} Robert Wells’ auction of Garden’s books appeared twice, in both the \textit{Gazette} and its supplement, see “To Be Sold at Auction,” 4 November 1756, \textit{South-Carolina Gazette}, 4 and “To Be Sold at Auction,” 4 November 1756, \textit{Supplement to the South-Carolina Gazette}, 1; “To be sold at Public Vendue,” 28 April 1757, \textit{Supplement to the South-Carolina Gazette}, 2. Elliott’s “Book Case & Library” was appraised at £180 in Inventory of Thomas Law Elliott, 6 April 1757, vol. 84, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

\textsuperscript{147} “To be Sold,” 14 October 1778, \textit{Gazette of the State of South-Carolina}, 4.

\textsuperscript{148} “To be Sold,” 22 April 1756, \textit{South-Carolina Gazette}, 4.
common. William P. Young, who, like Wells, also fashioned himself a book auctioneer and asked that “gentlemen who have books to dispose of by auction … please to send a list of them the day preceding each sale, that they may be in time for insertion in the catalogue,” available the day of his auction.\footnote{149}

Of course, for estate sales, auctioneers had to track down any books that might have wandered off prior to or since a person’s death. James Parson’s “valuable Collection of Books” was evidently found to be missing a number of volumes, prompting his executors to request that “all persons who have borrowed or are possessed of [his] Books … send them to his late dwelling-house, in Church Street.”\footnote{150} Darby Pendergrass, executor of Samuel Campbell’s estate, beseeched “those Gentlemen who have any of Mr. Campbell’s Books, to send them to him before the Day of Sale, in order to complete the several sets” after taking a full inventory of Campbell’s book collection.\footnote{151}

As advertisements for the return of books indicate, book-borrowing was just as common in the Lowcountry as it was elsewhere. Sometimes, book borrowers never returned the books they were loaned. William Henderson, librarian of Charlestown Library Society, begged for the return of missing volumes to the library’s collection in 1756. His list included forty-five titles and “a great number of pamphlets.”\footnote{152}


\footnote{151} “To be Sold, by public Outcry,” 19 July 1773, \textit{South-Carolina Gazette}, 1.

\footnote{152} “All Persons possessed…,” \textit{South Carolina Gazette}, 29 January 1756, 2.
literature listed was largely of legal ("Atkins’s power of parliaments), philosophical (Locke’s *Essays on Human Understanding*), medical ("Olivet on bathing," “Whytt on lime-water,” and “Young on opium”), travel (“Narrative of an Englishman who winter’d in Greenland”), and popular interest (such as “Miss Blandy’s trial” on murderess Mary Blandy who poisoned her own father in 1751). As common then as it is today, library patrons could forget about the books borrowed, misplace them, loan them to others, or purposefully hold onto them. Indeed, as one library advertisement indicates, valuable books with fine bindings, like “the 2d. [volume] of Dr. Jackson’s Works; a thick folio, and mark’d with golden letters on the lid,” were especially likely to go missing.

Of course, one did not need to identify solely as a bookseller, book auctioneer, or librarian to participate in the local book trade. Stationers, binders, printers, and merchants also offered books for sale throughout the mid-eighteenth century. When Elizabeth Timothy took over her husband, Lewis Timothy’s print shop, she was quick to advertise a number of books she had for sale. In addition to bibles, horn books, and spelling books, one could purchase “Reflections on Courtship and Marriage, Armstrong’s Poem on Health, the *Westminster* Confession of Faith, *Pamela*, Watts’s Psalms and Hymns” as well as “*Cato* on old Age.”

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153 “All Persons possessed…,” *South Carolina Gazette*, 29 January 1756, 2.

154 “Lost,” 22 May 1756, *South-Carolina Gazette*, 10. “Golden letters on the lid” likely refers to gilt stamping on the front cover.

155 “Advertisements,” 19 January 1747, *South Carolina Gazette*, 3. At her time of death in the spring of 1757, Timothy had only “a parcel of old Books” and “2 French Bibles” in her personal collection; see Inventory of Elizabeth Timothy, 2 July 1757, vol. 84, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.
Bookbinders were found throughout town and were, in many ways, integral to making a book one’s own during this period. Books were often imported as signatures of paper stitched together between boards or in paper wrappers, ready to be bound to the book-buyer’s individual taste. Decoration, or lack there of, was entirely at the individual discretion (and pocketbook) of the book owner. Binders added spine labels, gilt tooling on the spine or ruling on the covers, and marbled endpapers and fly leaves to complete a volume. As more skilled binders set up shop in town, consumers had more choices in binding materials and styles.

As early as 1757, bookseller Robert Wells employed his own bookbinder freshly arrived from London. In a notice for magazine subscription orders, he also included an announcement to readers “that he had engaged a book binder” at “considerable expence and trouble” to himself, and that “binding, in all its branches, will be performed in as elegant a manner, plain work or gilded, as in London, and on the most reasonable terms.” Training in London was a particularly attractive qualification for many binders, if advertisements—including newspapers and binder’s tickets—are any indiction. One

156 Sher, Enlightenment and the Book, 83-84.
158 Raven, “Importation of Books,” in History of the Book in America, Volume 1, 167. Raven argues that the expansion of the binding trade in America lead to reduced demand for luxury-bound European books. If extant books owned by South Carolinians are any example, however, elite demand of luxury bindings remained brisk even with local options after the Revolutionary War.
159 “[Advertisement],” 21 July 1757, Postscript to the South-Carolina Gazette, 2.
rare surviving typographical binder’s ticket, glued to the vibrant marbled front pastedown, boasts that the London-trained binder who performed “Binding in all its various branches executed in the most masterly manner at the shortest notice” (Figure 2.5).160 For those booksellers and binders who could, they were sure to offer a variety of bindings to their customers.161 Independent binderies also existed in the Lowcountry before and after the war. In early before and after the war. In early 1762, George Wood bound “books in the neatest and strongest manner, either plain, gilt, or gilt and lettered, to gentlemen’s taste or fancy.”162 Three years later, after expanding into the bookselling and book-loaning business, he still continued “book binding in all its branches, whether plain work or in calf, Morocco leather &c.”163 Bookbindings were often the most noteworthy physical aspect of a book, as demonstrated in one 1756 advertisement for a missing

160 Bookbinder’s ticket of David Bailey in Thomas Mills, A Compendium of Latin Grammar, on a New Plan, for the Use of Youth (Charleston: Timothy & Mason, 1795); collection of the Charleston Library Society. This ticket is also featured in Rare, Prized, and Valuable: The Charleston Library Society’s Fifty Favorites From the Collections, Laura K. Mina, ed. (Charleston: Charleston Library Society, 2017), 91.


162 “George Wood Book Binder and Stationer,” 6 March 1762, South Carolina Gazette, [n.p.].

163 “George Wood,” 27 April 1765, South Carolina Gazette, 3.
Figure 2.5. Binder’s ticket of David Bailey on the front pastedown of Thomas Mills, *A Compendium of Latin Grammar* (Charleston, 1795). Collection of the Charleston Library Society, Charleston, South Carolina.
second volume of “Dr. Jackson’s Works,” described as “a thick folio, and mark’d with
golden letters on the lid.” Some surviving collections bear this out, such as Charles
Pinckney’s, which is suggestive of his individual style preference for plain calf with
similarly gilt morocco labels (Figure 2.6). In contrast, John Bee Holmes was evidently
not as nearly militant in his collection’s uniformity as was Pinckney (Figure 2.7). These
differences are also evident in probate inventories, although sometimes masked by
appraisers as “lots” or “parcels” of books.

While it is true, as Walter Edgar observed, that such phrases “conceal a great deal
of information,” this is hardly the fault of the eighteenth-century book-owner. These
phrases, littered across probate inventories, function more as a form of shorthand that
reflected the interest, expertise, and time available on the part of the appraisers. That does
not mean these inventories are useless, however. Where John Cords’ inventory listed a “a
Parcell of Books” appraised at £70, the “Parcell of Books” belonging to Elizabeth
Broughton was valued at only £10—suggesting that Cords’ books might have been larger
in size (quartos rather than duodecimos) and more finely bound (full morocco instead of
plain calf, for instance). Moreover, in the same inventory, one might find a bible valued

164 “Lost,” 22 May 1756, South-Carolina Gazette, 10.

165 Mark Purcell notes the same among British “gentry and aristocratic families.” See


167 Inventory of John Cords, 22 January 1757, vol. 84, Charleston County
Inventories, CCPL; Inventory of Elizabeth Broughton, 2 May 1757, vol. 84, Charleston
County Inventories, CCPL.
Figure 2.6. Gilt spines with original morocco labels of books belonging to Charles Pinckney. Collection of the Irvin Department of Rare Books, University of South Carolina-Columbia. The tooling on the bindings of the two volumes (left) of Moore’s *View of the Society & Manners in France, Switzerland, and Germany* (Dublin, 1783) were clearly done by a different binder, with slightly different tools, than that of Chatham’s *History of the Life of William Pitt* (Dublin, 1783).
Figure 2.7. Elaborately gilt spines of books belonging to John Bee Holmes. Collection of the Charleston Museum, Charleston, South Carolina.
at £6 and a “parcel of old Books”—suggesting a number of books, in contrast to one
bible—valued at £1 5s, which suggests something of value in the the size and binding
style of the bible itself, rather than sheer number of volumes, as a modern reader might
assume. Or, one “Book of Architector,” presumably with a number of engraved plates,
might be equal in appraised value to “five Old Books” at £5.

To a certain degree, particularly in the years leading up to the Revolutionary War,
local binding took on particular political appeal for consumers. Robert Wells, for
example, advertised throughout July 1769 on the front page of the South-Carolina and
American General Gazette, soliciting “dressed Calve-Skins proper for Book-binders, and
to be used in this Province.” Possibly anticipating the Charlestown Non-Importation
Agreement of July 22, 1769, Wells began to stockpile “large” and “small Parcels” of
calfskin. Wells evidently saw the financial benefit to offering local leather for local
bindings in such a political climate. Although books, pamphlets, and other printed
materials were excluded from the non-importation agreement and thus continued to be

168 Inventory of John Sandiford, 27 June 1753, vol. 82A, Charleston County
Inventories, CCPL.

169 Inventory of John Miller, 16 December 1776, vol. 100, Charleston County
Inventories, CCPL.

170 “Leather for Book-Binding,” July 10, 1769, South Carolina and American
General Gazette, 1.

171 “Leather for Book-Binding,” July 10, 1769, South Carolina and American
General Gazette, 1.
available to Lowcountry book consumers, Wells offered his customers a patriotic option to outfit otherwise imported blocks of text with local goods.

The non-importation agreement purposefully excluded “printed books and pamphlets” because of Charlestown’s deep interest in and dependence upon the British and continental book trade.\textsuperscript{172} As such, imports briskly continued throughout the rest of 1769 and into the 1770s. In contrast to Wells’ local calf-binding scheme, Nicholas Langford offered a “collection of choice and useful books, in polite Literature, esteemed History, &c. &c.” which were “All best Editions, and many very elegantly bound” in November of that same year.\textsuperscript{173} Despite economic depression after the war, as well as the unpopularity of consuming British goods in some circles, Charleston’s book trade continued to thrive on foreign imports in the postwar years.\textsuperscript{174} Although, as Jennifer Goloboy points out, overall import levels fell from over £1 million to under £400,000 between 1784 and 1786, nearly all of the city’s booksellers advertised their latest London inventories in the same period.\textsuperscript{175} As early as January 1784, bookseller Charles Morgan offered “A Large Assortment of Printed Books” “Just imported in the last Ships from


\textsuperscript{173} “Just Imported, by Nicholas Langford,” 2 November 1769, \textit{South-Carolina Gazette}, 1. The same advertisement also appears in the \textit{Gazette} of October 31, 1769.

\textsuperscript{174} Goloboy, \textit{Charleston and the Emergence of Middle-Class Culture}, 51 & 55.

\textsuperscript{175} Goloboy, \textit{Charleston and the Emergence of Middle-Class Culture}, 55.
London.” By May, he had ships from London and Edinburgh bringing in even more books and began offering them to the city’s merchants as well as private buyers. James Muirhead also offered books “imported from London and Glasgow” at his book store on Broad Street.

It really was not until the 1790s that local literature started to emerge, and it was, most often, at new bookshops that home-printed works were readily available to Lowcountry book-buyers. William Young, for example, offered at his Broad Street bookshop located at the sign of Franklin’s Head copies of “Travels through America, A Poem by M. Forrest.” Young praised the work as a “specimen of unlimited sublime poetry,” containing “a description of Charleston and the Carolina ladies, [and the] siege of Charleston.” Later that same year, he also offered an “American edition of the

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176 “[Advertisement].” 3 February 1784, South Carolina Gazette and General Advertiser, 1.

177 “[Advertisement],” 27 May 1784, South Carolina Gazette and General Advertiser, 1. Morgan lists “A Large Collection of Books, consisting of History, Divinity, Philosophy, Mathematics, Poetry, Physic, and a variety of School Books.—A Catalogue to be seen at the Store,” “a large collection of Bibles and Psalm-Books, bound in various manners; pockets and covers for ditto,” and “a large assortment of Italian and English Music, vocal and instrumental.” He ends the advertisement: “N.B. Merchants may be supplied with compleat sets of Books, bound in the newest and most elegant manner” for re-sale in their own shops.


179 “Just published and for sale, by W. P. Young,” 8 July 1793, City Gazette and Daily Advertiser, 4.
Encyclopaedia.” Such publications ought to be interpreted as part of a “different set of objects” that emerged in the last years of the eighteenth century to knit together a national community of readers.

Despite the proliferation of booksellers in the postwar period, some individuals opted to use their own personal connections to acquire books, cutting out local middlemen and going directly to the source themselves. Writing to Philadelphia printer Mathew Carey, Charles Pinckney requested “a compleat set of your Museum from the beginning to the present month of June inclusive bound in three Volumes.—Six numbers in each Volume.” Carey’s *American Museum* was a monthly literary magazine that he first published in January 1787. It is likely Pinckney had first been exposed to it while at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia that fall. His brief note reveals not only a savvy and knowledgable consumer of the particular periodical, outlining how he wishes the set to be bound, but also an active interest in keeping up with the latest material. In closing his June 1788 letter, for example, he impatiently requested, “In future be so good as to send me two numbers instead of one of the museum.”

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180 “W. P. Young,” 19 September 1793, *State Gazette of South-Carolina*, 3. Patriotic editions, such as Blackstone’s *Commentaries on the Laws of England* or Montesquieu’s works, were also common in the prewar and early years of the Revolution.


Those personal connections may have stretched farther abroad as well. A number of volumes bearing the ownership marks of Charles Cotesworth Pinckney suggest that he either purchased himself or acquired through family or friends several elaborately gilt folio and octavo volumes purchased from a Bordeaux bookseller.¹⁸⁴ Joseph Manigault frequently placed book orders with his London agents, as well. In addition to boiled linseed oil, “best white Lead,” “Yellow Ochre,” paintbrushes to paint the rooms of his house, painted chairs and satinwood card tables to furnish it, he also requested the following be purchased from James Lackington’s London bookstore:


¹⁸⁴ Pinckney either had these books purchased on his behalf from the same bookseller, Bergeret in Bordeaux, or he may have purchased them himself over several years as he was in Europe from 1796 to 1799. Bergeret’s bookseller tickets are found on the front pastedowns of at least two volumes: Biographie Étangère ou Galeries Universelle, Historique, Civile, Militaire, Politique et Littéraire [2 volumes] (Paris: Alexis Eymery, 1819); Nouvelle Architecture Hydraulique [2 volumes] (Paris: Chez Firmin Didot, 1796). Both sets are in a private collection.
Lackington’s last Catalogue. … [and] The Elegant Extracts. All the
Volumes, & in the best binding.ª

Such a specific list of items demonstrates that Manigault likely had a copy of
Lackington’s latest catalogue, and was also purchasing multiple volumes either for
various properties or friends and family. Interestingly, he ended his book order with a
request that an “enclosed Memorandum be sent to some Optician.”ª It seems that the
thirty-three year old Manigault was in need of reading glasses.ª

Finally, though legally banned from learning to read, enslaved African Americans
were inextricably linked to the South Carolina book market.ª Slaves frequently show up
in the probate inventories of printers and booksellers. Elizabeth Timothy, printer and
publisher of the South-Carolina Gazette from 1738 to 1746, owned six slaves at the time

ª Joseph Manigault to Messrs. Bird, Savage & Bird, Charleston, 8 April 1796 in
Manigault Family Letter Book, 1793-1801, South Caroliniana Library.

ª Joseph Manigault to Messrs. Bird, Savage & Bird, Charleston, 8 April 1796 in
Manigault Family Letter Book, 1793-1801, South Caroliniana Library.

ª According to Abigail Williams, “it was not until the late eighteenth century that
[spectacles] began to be used widely.” She goes on to say that “the great eighteenth-
century development in spectacles was the addition of sides. Up until then, they rested
precariously on the nose.” See Williams, Social Life of Books, 67-68.

ª For more on slave literacy, see E. Jennifer Monaghan, “Reading for the Enslaved,
Writing for the Free: Reflections on Liberty and Literacy” Proceedings of the American
of her death in 1757: Flora, Molly, Judith, Dina, and two children. James Taylor kept a “Boy Named Bob” at his Church Street bindery. Bookseller Charles Morgan also “wanted to hire for two or three months, from 10 to 20 Negroe Men” for his store, presumably to assist in the moving and shelving of inventory and in the bindery. And, of course, any books within a home would likely have been visible to, but just out of reach from, the enslaved persons working the property. The image of the tall, glazed-front bookcase with locked doors thus becomes that much more powerful—an indicator of the lengths to which white South Carolinians went to control access to literature and, subsequently, identity formation among the slave majority.

189 Inventory of Elizabeth Timothy, 2 July 1757, vol. 84, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL. Printer Charles Crouch also owned slaves at his time of death: Hannah and her son, James, as well as another “young fellow”—all of whom, valued at £1,150—were listed in the inventory just before his “Compleat Printing Press & Types,” worth £4,000; see Inventory of Charles Crouch, [1777], vol. 98, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

190 Inventory of James Taylor, 23 August 1776, vol. 100, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

191 “[Advertisement],” 6 March 1784, South Carolina Gazette and General Advertiser, 1.
CHAPTER III. CASE STUDIES

The Holmes-Edwards bookcase, currently on display at the Heyward-Washington House, dominates the small, dark withdrawing room in which it is situated. Standing over ten feet tall, it dwarves the other furnishings in the room and looms over visitors (Figure 3.1). Admittedly, it is difficult to focus on anything else in the room—not even Francis Marion’s Windsor chair or the Benjamin Franklin Staffordshire figurine (mislabeled “Washington”) on the mantle are as visually or historically captivating as the library bookcase. Its delicately patterned inlays and elegantly matched veneers are captivating, just as they were to the eighteenth-century viewer. The glazed doors, with their Chippendale Chinese muntins, both protected and displayed the case’s valuable contents. Evidence of nailheads suggests its fashionable repurposing in the decades after its completion on a South Carolina cabinetmaker’s workshop floor. Just as museum visitors are denied access to the bookcase, its finest details and inner workings, and its contents by a thin black rope today, the locks on the doors—when engaged—denied access to philosophy, law, medicine, and popular literature. The shelves inside are adjustable thanks to grooves every two inches, allowing its owner to adjust each and accommodate various book heights. Shelves such as these allowed South Carolinians library-owners to adapt their case furniture to their book collections as they saw fit. This sort of flexibility ensured the longevity of such pieces across generations and book
Figure 3.1. Library Bookcase, attr. to Martin Pfeninger, Charleston, 1770-1775. Mahogany, crotch mahogany and burl walnut veneer, ivory and satinwood inlays with cypress. Currently on display in the Heyward-Washington House. Collection of the Charleston Museum, Charleston, South Carolina.
collections. On view on the shelves inside, for example, some—but not all—of South Carolinian lawyer and politician John Bee Holmes’s library is displayed, situated on the very same bookshelves that he likely used from his marriage in 1783 until his death in 1827. In fact, it was not until recently that the portion of Holmes’ book collection displayed on the shelves were returned to their former home, instead of scattered around the house where visitors saw them stacked on tilt-top tea tables, diagonally leaning on the shelves of younger bookcases, and covering air conditioning vents.

Today, the Holmes-Edwards bookcase is widely regarded as an icon of eighteenth-century Lowcountry cabinetmaking. It was constructed sometime between 1770 and 1775 for merchant and naval commissioner John Edwards. A native of Bristol, England, Edwards purchased the bookcase from Martin Pfeninger, a German cabinetmaker who most likely emigrated to Charlestown in the late 1760s. The piece masterfully blends English neoclassical taste, continental rococo style within the context

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192 John Bee Holmes married Elizabeth Edwards in mid-November 1783; see “Married,” *South-Carolina Weekly Gazette*, 21 November 1783, 2. The rarest books, and those in the worst condition, are currently located in the Charleston Museum’s archive.

193 Interestingly, John Bee Holmes’s library was donated at the same time as the bookcase to the Charleston Museum. Its context and provenance, with the bookcase, was common knowledge to employees and docents at the time; in the years since, however, that institutional memory seemed to have faded entirely. See Samuel Chamberlain and Narcissa Chamberlain, *Charleston Interiors* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 1956), 46.
of a distinctly provincial Lowcountry patronage. In this way, it serves as a prime example of the “emerging provincial culture,” dictated not only by local conditions but also equally savvy South Carolina consumers in the years before the war. As it passed from father to daughter to husband, and remained in the family household through numerous generations, it is also indicative of the long lives a handful of fine pieces have enjoyed. Indeed, Holmes-Edwards bookcase’s continued use in the post-war period belies Carolinians’ dependence upon Anglo-American furniture styles and tastes even after independence. Despite all of this, however, bookcases (as, for the most part, furniture generally) have been overlooked by historians of the period. While there is certainly value in taking a magnifier to an individual piece to investigate the dovetail joinery used by one cabinetmaker or focusing on the commodification of one specific material that is part of a series of objects, it is just as important to consider the form and function of the piece itself within the homes and daily lives of past owners, viewers, and potential

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195 As Dena Goodman and Kathryn Norberg contend, “eighteenth-century furniture often gets overlooked by scholars because it falls between and across areas of historical study and critical analysis.” They criticize the tendency of those historians specializing in material culture who “eschew the luxury goods associated with powerful elites that are preserved in art museums,” those in decorative arts focus on individual craftsmanship and “narratives of stylistic development,” and the historians “of space [who] present us with façade-lined streets and town squares; if they open the doors of buildings, it is only to reveal room upon empty room.” See Goodman and Norberg, *Furnishing the Eighteenth Century*, 3.
consumers. Regarding furniture like bookcases and other accoutrements of reading, such as library tables, as objects worthy of study in their own right—just as valuable as the handwritten manuscript, printed broadside, or textile, and just as impressionable a material as paper, silk, or canvas—speaks volumes of past ways of book ownership and display in the Carolina Lowcountry. A close study of library furniture reveals that bookcases were not merely owned by a few elites, as historians and museum curators have long assumed. Bookcases, and other complementary furnishings, were useful for collecting, organizing, displaying, and even reading the books of one's personal library. Moreover, it was actually commonplace for many of these furnishings—though usually large, unwieldy, and sometimes requiring several specialized hands to move—to move from property to property and owner to owner. Just like the books they purchased while studying in London or while out shopping on Broad Street, owners often could and did leave their mark on their furnishings.

As a furniture form, the bookcase, or book-press, first appeared in England in the

196 A number of recent historical studies focus on British Atlantic material culture, such as Jennifer Anderson’s *Mahogany* (2012) or Zara Anishanslin’s *Portrait of a Woman in Silk* (2016). While my approach in this chapter is similar to Anderson’s and uses much of the same type of source material, this study is ultimately more interested in what library furnishings reveal about their owners—as frames for personal identity—rather than the shifting tastes in wood veneers and inlays that were driven by consumer demand and ecological changes.

197 This might also be why few pieces of such large furnishings survive. Frequent moving, in addition to war, fire, and weather hazards, likely severely damaged or rendered incomplete a number of the many pieces that could once be found in the city’s private residences. Of course some certainly remain in private hands, but surviving Charleston-made bookcases are relatively few given their frequency in wills and probate inventories of the period, especially when compared to those of contemporary Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and Newport.
1660s. The earliest bookcases for home use were relatively humble—more like cupboards or cabinets than refined cases intended for refined book display. By the end of the seventeenth century, however, it became particularly fashionable in England for the middling and upper classes to collect books. As book collecting became more widespread throughout the empire, so, too, did its accoutrements—even in the provincial margins of empire. Purchasing a bookcase was, as one historian observes, an indication of one’s “serious devotion to books.” Glass- or glazed-front bookcases became the most ideal way to show off and protect one’s cherished book collection. Lockable doors not only kept bugs and dust at bay, but also discouraged grubby, unwanted hands from removing leather-bound books from the shelves within. Later, beautiful textiles tacked into place behind glass further protected valuable books from damaging sunlight, and could offer privacy—should a library’s owner wish to control who could see their reading interests and wealth—while providing a striking contrast to delicate and intricate wood details. By the mid-eighteenth century, other furnishings that complemented library-keeping and reading practices emerged. Large library tabletops and bookstands, like richly veneered bookcases, allowed South Carolinians and others across the British Atlantic to cultivate beautiful environments that transformed ordinary reading and book-ownership into expressions of domestic refinement and gentility.

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198 Purcell, Country House Library, 100.

199 Brewer, Pleasures of the Imagination, 283.

Bookcases came in a number of different forms to suit a variety of different price points, tastes, and architectural spaces. The most common, the desk and case, was composed of a slant-front desk and drawers and an upper case with shelves for books.\footnote{E. Milby Burton, \textit{Charleston Furniture 1700-1825} (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1997), 59.} The bookcase section usually had paneled, glazed, or mirrored doors.\footnote{Burton notes that the popularity of glazed bookcases began to emerge in the 1750s. Before the mid-century, case doors were almost exclusively “solid-paneled.” See Burton, \textit{Charleston Furniture}, 59.} Standalone bookcases and libraries were also to be found on workshop floors and in elegant rooms. These were often larger, more expensive pieces, and sometimes featured additional drawers (like the map drawers on the Holmes-Edwards bookcase) or fashionably stylized Chinese fretwork.

Bookcases were rarely produced in British North American port cities before the midcentury. In Charlestown, however, they were extremely popular.\footnote{Indeed, Burton further contends that the “bookcase,” in its several forms, “was a favorite article of furniture with the Charlestonians.” Burton, \textit{Charleston Furniture}, 59. This assessment is further bolstered when surveying probate inventories from the 1750s to early 1780s.} As early as the 1730s, London-trained cabinetmakers advertised their skills in crafting such pieces.\footnote{For example, cabinetmaker James McClellan of Church Street, claimed he “makes and sells all sorts of Cabinet Ware, viz. … Desk & Book-Cases, Bureaus,” et cetera. See “[Advertisement],” 10 February 1733, \textit{South Carolina Gazette}, 3.} Following the end of the Seven Years’ War, however, the local cabinet trade came into its own. In contrast to imports, locally-made bookcases almost always included cypress and...
also featured a number of unique adaptations to Lowcountry home life. For instance, from the late 1760s onward, cabinetmakers began to panel bookcase backs (Figure 3.2). This not only gave the wooden joints room to shrink or expand with the local temperature and humidity fluctuations, but it also prevented “unsightly gaps” from being visible when the doors were opened. Moreover, locally produced bookcases were typically “longer waisted,” or taller than bookcases produced elsewhere. This was largely an aesthetic choice, meant to complement the high ceilings found in many Lowcountry dwellings, rather than a climate-prompted innovation.

A number of sources allow us to reconstruct the bookcase market in Charlestown. Doing so reveals a provincial community deeply interested in proper library-keeping. Not only do a number of extant bookcases survive in museums around the country today, like the Holmes-Edwards bookcase in Charleston, but newspaper advertisements and probate records also bear this out. One particularly illuminating source infrequently used by book historians is cabinetmaker Thomas Elfe’s account book, a large stamped folio bound in contemporary calf. Although its cover is rubbed, one can trace in its pages the demand for bookcases, book stands, and other furnishings that complemented book ownership in the years before the American Revolution. The account book covers a seven year period

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206 Burton, *Charleston Furniture*, 60.

207 Thomas Elfe Account Book, 1768-1775, Charleston Library Society, Charleston, South Carolina (hereafter CLS).
Figure 3.2. Rear paneling on a Charleston-made bookcase. Library Bookcase; Charleston, 1765-1775; mahogany, cypress. Collection of the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, Old Salem Museums & Gardens, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.
from 1768 to 1775 and reveals just how individualistic local preference for bookcases were during the revolutionary period.

Mahogany was far and away the preferred material for those who could afford to buy large, heavy pieces of it. Of course, the wood was deeply ingrained in a number of other important social rituals in the colonial era, from tea consumption to funerary practices.208 But mahogany was also deeply rooted in the collection and display of books. Highly polished wood veneers were complemented by shining brass escutcheons and handles mounted on their fronts, or gold leaf painted on their doors (Figure 3.3). Elegant bookcases added to the “aura of refinement” that colonial South Carolinians sought to replicate in their provincial homes, especially when situated in rooms with other reflective objects, such silver candlesticks, brass andirons, and gilt mirrors.209

Mahogany was not, however, the only wood deemed appropriate for bookcases. For middling South Carolinians, local cypress or walnut did the job just fine.210 These woods also hinted at more utilitarian, and practical uses—perhaps intended for businesses, shops, or schools, rather than private withdrawing rooms or parlors.

208 Anderson, Mahogany, 54.

209 Elfe, for example, also stocked and sold brass hinges, handles, escutcheons to customers; Elfe Account Book, November 1768, pp. 11 & 14, CLS.

210 For example, a plain “Case for Books with draws and pidgeon holes” was ordered by James Wakefield in 1773 for the price of £12. Because Elfe did not note the wood, and given the piece’s low price, it was most likely made of local wood he had lying around his workshop. See Elfe Account Book, October 1773, p. 90, CLS. Burton notes that cypress was the most common secondary wood used in pre-revolutionary bookcases. After the war, secondary woods were often white pine, ash, or cedar. Burton, Charleston Furniture, 66.
**Figure 3.3.** Desk and bookcase by Henry Burnett, Charleston, ca. 1750-1760; mahogany, cypress, mirrored glass, gilt. Collection of the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, Old Salem Museums & Gardens, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.
example, Thomas Elfe received an order in September 1772 “for 6 Cypress cases for Books,” and, four days later, the same customer also bought a mahogany case with pigeon holes for a slant-top desk.\footnote{Elfe Account Book, September 14 and 18, 1772, p. 61, CLS.} Although not as prized as mahogany, especially large cypress cases made of several different parts were also expensive, as seen in the three bookcases “each in 2 parts” ordered by Salvador Fraser in 1774.\footnote{Elfe Account Book, March 1774, p. 104, CLS.} Whereas the six cypress cases ordered in 1772 cost £20 and fifteen shillings, Fraser’s bookcases totaled £120.\footnote{Elfe Account Book, pp. 61 & 104, CLS.}

Like book bindings, case furniture could be made “to taste” for individual customers. In fact, if Elfe’s account book serves as an example, Lowcountry libraries were as individual as their buyers. In 1772, lawyer John Dart ordered a “Library Book Case [with] Chineas doors & [drawers] under them,” likely to furnish his home for his new wife.\footnote{Elfe Account Book, p. 64, CLS. Jeremiah Theus painted two companion portraits, now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, of Dart and his wife Henrietta Sommers in 1772. It seems the couple were interested in filling their home with all the accoutrements of fashionable life.} A number of Elfe’s other customers purchased cases with “Chinese doors” in this period, too.\footnote{Elfe Account Book, pp. 40 & 55, CLS.} The following year, lawyer Thomas Phepoe purchased “a Mahogany
book Case” with a “Pediment head with a frett.” “Chinese doors” were an indicator of fashionable refinement which Charlestonians eagerly demanded. Popularized by Thomas Chippendale’s *Gentleman and Cabinet-maker’s Director* (London, 1754), oriental patterns were often used on fine bookcase doors (Figures 3.4 and 3.5). These required great skill and time to execute on the part of the cabinetmaker, who had to face-veneer the stiles and rails of the glazed doors. As such, Chinese-style bookcases were among the most expensive produced locally. Elfe recorded only two orders for such work: “a Mahogany Desk & Book Case with Chins. Dores” for John Barnwell, Jr. (costing £150) and “Library Book Case wth. Chineas doors & draw[er]s under them” for John Dart (£100). These designs, however, not only demonstrated a particular cabinetmaker’s skill, but also reflected the stylish taste of the consumer.

For socially ambitious and wealthy South Carolinians, glazed bookcases were the most prized. Glazed bookcase doors not only allowed owners and visitors to gaze upon impressive personal book collections, but they also allowed candlelight to reflect off of gilt-stamped spines in the evenings. Glass panes were expensive in the provinces,

216 Elfe Account Book, January 1773, p. 71, CLS.

217 Newspaper advertisements suggest that copies of Chippendale’s *Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker’s Director* were available for purchase at Charlestown bookstores by 1766, at least. Robert Wells first advertised the work on June 20, 1766 as: “Chippendale’s and Ince and Mayhew’s designs of Household furniture;” see “Robert Wells,” *South Carolina and American General Gazette*, 20 June 1766, 43. Over a year later, he either still had copies available or, as he claimed at the top of the advertisement, imported more copies of the folio volume; see “Just arrived from London,” *South Carolina and American General Gazette*, 26 June 1767, 127.

218 Elfe Account Book, pp. 55 & 64, CLS.
Figure 3.4. “Library Bookcase,” plate LXVII from Thomas Chippendale’s *Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker’s Director* (London, 1754). Collection of the Charleston Library Society, Charleston, South Carolina.
Figure 3.5. Detail of Chinese-style fretwork, plate CL from Chippendale’s Director (1754). Collection of the Charleston Library Society, Charleston, South Carolina.
however. Between April 1768 to May 1769 alone, cabinetmaker Thomas Elfe sold three panes of “Book Case Glasses” for £57. Not only was the material itself expensive, but even plain glazing required great skill, like the “Chinese doors.” Glass panes were often imported and, as with anything fragile, easily broken. It, therefore, was an expensive upgrade for consumers, costing men like Daniel Howard and Offspring Pearce £135 to £140 pounds.

A number of newspaper advertisements demonstrate that glazed bookcases were often imported ready-made from London cabinetmakers, too, and sold by local merchants. For example, merchant Samuel Prioleau advertised “Book Case with Glass-Doors” for public auction “precisely at Three o’Clock” on Thursday, February 6, 1766, in addition to other fashionable furniture, such as a “Dozen of London made claw-feeted hair bottomed Mahogany Chairs, completely finished.” In another example, one firm offered “a Consignment of neat and genteel Mahogany Furniture,” with particular emphasis on the “genteel” nature of all furnishings, including “one genteel desk and book

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219 Elfe Account Book, pp. 7 & 14, CLS.

220 Elfe Account Book, pp. 71 & 110, CLS.

221 As another example, in September 1766, the firm Reeves & Cochran advertised “just imported in the ship Queen-Charlotte, from London… [desks] with neat bookcases and glass doors.” See “Reeves & Cochran,” 5 September 1766, *South Carolina and American General Gazette*, 3. In this way, the import market continued much in the same vein it did before the midcentury, as another advertisement by merchants Mackenzie & Roche in 1742 demonstrates; “Advertisements,” 24 April 1742, *South Carolina Gazette*, 2.

case with glass doors” and another, presumably cheaper, “with plain doors” of solid wood paneling.223

Although his account book is the only one of its kind known to survive, Thomas Elfe was not the only cabinetmaker in the South Carolina Lowcountry. Both before and after the war, cabinetmaking flourished. Martin Pfeningier, maker of the Holmes-Edward bookcase, was just one of many of Elfe’s contemporaries.224 At his shop on New Church Street, a fashionable location nestled among some of the city’s grandest homes, he offered “Cabinet-Making in all its Branches” and “inlaid-work in any taste,” promising “the lowest rates, and [production] in the most expeditious Manner.”225 Cabinetmakers not only made pieces, however. They also offered ready-made work, including bookcases. For instance, Thomas Woodin, “Carver and Cabinetmaker,” offered “some curious mahogany work” in 1767, including London-made “Book Cases, with glass doors.”226

The cabinetmaking business, however, was not necessarily the easiest to enter. As Richard Magrath’s 1773 advertisement suggests, Charlestown consumers were selective.

223 “To be sold by publick Outcry,” 27 February 1769, South Carolina and American General Gazette, 41.

224 Within a few short years of Pfeningier’s arrival in Charlestown, he actually worked in Elfe’s workshop. Elfe paid him £40 for work on May 8, 1772. See Elfe Account Book, p. 53, CLS.

225 “Cabinet-Making,” 12 April 1773, South-Carolina Gazette, 3. His workshop on ‘New Church Street’ is now the corner of Tradd and Meeting.

226 “Thomas Woodin,” 29 June 1767, South Carolina Gazette, 4. According to this advertisement, Woodin also taught drawing “in all its branches.”
Moreover, not all cabinetmakers were as savvy about their customer-base as Pfeningr and Elfe. Magrath, whose shop was located on King Street, had gone to “great Expence and trouble” to complete a large assortment of cabinet-work, including desks and bookcases, double chests, French armchairs, and bedsteads all in the “Hopes of gaining some Credit with the Gentry of this Place.” When the work was finished, however, he was disappointed to find few customers. While some “Ladies and Gentlemen” had expressed interest in purchasing pieces privately, none followed through on the initial day of public sale. Magrath’s plan to save his entire inventory, so as not to “disappoint” the general public because a few individuals had scooped up the best pieces, had backfired. Desperate to unload his inventory, he announced another public sale by explaining his reasoning for the first: “He being determined, as he advertised, that every Person should have an equal Chance of purchasing such articles as they might be in want of [and] at the same Time hoping, that his Impartiality would in some Measure intitle him to the future Favors of the public.” Perhaps Magrath fancied himself a finer cabinetmaker than did potential customers. Or, perhaps, this sort of egalitarian approach to the market was unappealing to Charlestonians who were accustomed to custom

228 “Richard Magrath, Cabinet-Maker,” 28 June 1773, South-Carolina Gazette, 1.
cabinetwork or, in the era of non-consumption, disagreed with Magrath’s personal political views and actions.

As with all trades, the War for Independence also impacted the cabinetmaking business in Charlestown. Martin Pfeninger, for example, apologized to his customers for “the want of materials [that] oblige him to leave off his business of Cabinet-making.”

Running short on mahogany and other woods for inlay, and unable to receive more due to the ongoing conflict, he was forced to stop taking orders. Pfeninger promised that the “bespoke” pieces he had already begun would “be finished as far as the materials he has will go.” He also promised that “as soon as materials can be had,” presumably when the war ended or wood was smuggled into the province, he would be able to continue his work. Despite the disruptions of war, however, the bustling furniture market had returned by the late 1780s. In the 1790 Charleston Directory alone, there were seven cabinetmakers located within town boundaries, all in easy walking distance of the

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231 “Martin Pfeninger,” 28 October 1777, South-Carolina Gazette, 3.

232 “Martin Pfeninger,” 28 October 1777, South-Carolina Gazette, 3.

233 “Martin Pfeninger,” 28 October 1777, South-Carolina Gazette, 3. It is worth noting that Pfeninger’s name appeared on a list of loyalists under the British occupation of the city in 1780; he died in 1782, evidently having not kept up his cabinetmaking business.
grandest homes, bookbinders, and booksellers.\textsuperscript{234} Indeed, for those Charlestonians determined to maintain personal library collections, they could easily do so.

Cabinetmakers not only built bookcases, but they were also hired to tend to regular bookcase maintenance. A number of Charlestonians turned to Elfe and his workshop simply to “mend” their bookcases and libraries.\textsuperscript{235} Jammed locks, for instance, denied owners access to their shelved book collections, papers, and things. Elfe opened “a Book Case Lock” at the home of Mrs. William Elliott in November 1771.\textsuperscript{236} At other times, a new, or cautious, owner requested new locks and keys for their bookcases, as John Scott did.\textsuperscript{237} Merchant Moses Lindo also hired Elfe’s workshop to “clean” his desk and case before a move across town.\textsuperscript{238} Bookcases were, after all, functional pieces of furniture that were used to some extent on a regular basis and, in order to continue using them, they needed to be in working order.

Cabinetmakers functioned as movers by building transport cases and directing the movement of desk-and-cases and libraries both in and out of town. For example, Offspring Pearce, an episcopal minister, paid £3 to have a “packing Case” made for his

\textsuperscript{234} The cabinetmakers listed in the Directory are as follows: Charles Burn on King Street; William Hampton on Beresford’s Alley, Thomas Hope on Friend Street, John Ralph on Church Street, Jacob Sass on Queen, Charles Watts and John Wilson on Meeting Street; see Charleston Directory (1790), CLS.

\textsuperscript{235} Elfe Account Book, pp. 92 & 122, CLS.

\textsuperscript{236} Elfe Account Book, p. 44, CLS.

\textsuperscript{237} Elfe Account Book, p. 146, CLS.

\textsuperscript{238} Elfe Account Book, July 1773, p. 83, CLS.
£138 glazed mahogany desk and bookcase.239 John Barnwell, Jr., also ordered a “packing case for the Book Case” he ordered from Elfe in June 1772.240 Elfe not only cleaned Moses Lindo’s desk and case on July 29, 1773, but he also oversaw its move “from Stolls alley.”241 Because bookcases could often be prohibitively expensive pieces of furniture, their owners went to great lengths to ensure their safe travel.

Not everyone opted to take their bookcases with them when they moved. Benjamin Guerard’s advertisement in December 1779 suggests that the new town house he purchased simply did not have the room to accommodate the bookcases (and book collection) he already owned. He advertised that he was not only selling “the well finished, roomy, airy, commodious house I live in Orange street, built of choice materials” but also “some scarce and valuable BOOKS [and] two elegant library Book Cases.”242 Other examples hint at the inconvenience of moving bookcases out of the province. For instance, Thomas Wallace offered his furnishings, including “some exceeding neat carved mahogany Houshold Furniture such as Chairs, Book Case, &c” for sale as well as his house for lease.243 Moreover, some chose to sell their furnishings, including bookcases, because they intended to move back to England. When Sampson

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239 Elfe Account Book, May 1774, p. 110, CLS.
240 Elfe Account Book, June 1772, p. 55, CLS.
241 Elfe Account Book, p. 83, CLS.
242 “[Advertisement],” 1 December 1779, Gazette of the State of South-Carolina, 1.
243 “Thomas Wallace,” 8 August 1761, South Carolina Gazette, 2.
Neyle decided to return to the metropole and sold all of his furnishings, including a glazed bookcase, he very well may have intended to start anew there. The bookcase he sold in Charlestown might have been a locally-made piece or, just as likely, a slightly-dated import. Since he did not offer his books for sale, however, it seems probable that he intended to purchase a bookcase in the latest style upon arrival in England.

One need not leave the province entirely to feel the need to sell their bookcases, either. Town bookcases were sometimes sold by those moving to the countryside, as one advertiser stated in 1779. This may be because the cases themselves were either too large (or too small) for the plantation house’s architectural space or book collection, or simply too cumbersome to move. (Although, as Elfe’s account book demonstrates, the expense for specially-made packing cases was often trivial compared to the piece itself.) It seems most likely in such instances that those leaving town for their plantations already had bookcases there.

Local cabinetmaking was supplemented by the brisk furniture import trade, as


245 J. Troup offered “his house in Broad-street” as well as his “library book-cases, [and] desks with book cases” for sale. See his advertisement, 24 November 1779, Gazette of the State of South-Carolina, 1.

246 Elfe charged £3 for bookcase packing cases in both instances that appear in his account book. See Elfe Account Book, pp. 55 & 110, CLS.

247 This is further suggested by surviving eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century bookplates, which sometimes specified the plantation library to which a book belonged. Volumes belonging to William Alston of Georgetown, now in two separate private collections, indicate separate libraries at both Fairfield and Clifton plantations.
elsewhere in British North America, which greatly expanded throughout the 1760s. In 1762, merchant Francis Stuart, for example, advertised “a compleat … assortment of European and East-India Goods” including “compleat sets of desk and book-case furniture,” just imported from London. These could be bought at his store on Bay Street. Another firm, Reeves, Cochran, & Poole on Church Street, offered consumers “Mahogany furniture of the best workmanship,” including bookcases, as well as a variety of other goods such as “Staffordshire stone ware” tureens, “ginghams of beautiful patters and colours,” “stone and paste shoe, knee, stock and breast buckles of the neatest workmanship.” They also advertised that “all orders from the country will be punctually complied with,” thus courting potential clients out of town at their plantations and further in the backcountry. Moreover, many furniture sellers offered a variety of fine imported furnishings that complemented the bookcases they sold on the Charlestown market in the years before the revolutionary crisis. Robert Smyth’s store on Bay Street, for example, not only offered a glazed bookcase, but also forty-eight London-made, “claw-feeted” chairs, tea tables, and a bureau. Due to this variety in inventory, South

248 “Francis Stuart, & Co.,” 20 February 1762, South Carolina Gazette, 2.

249 “Reeves, Cochran & Poole,” 7 November 1766, South Carolina and American General Gazette, 124.

250 “Reeves, Cochran & Poole,” 7 November 1766, South Carolina and American General Gazette, 124.

Carolinians could thus outfit sociable spaces of reading while, at the same time, stocking
their plate chests and closets.

Those looking to furnish their personal libraries had ample opportunity to
purchase bookcases secondhand. Bookcases were sometimes put up for auction on their
own, such as the “very neat mahogany Desk and Book-Case in good condition, and
almost new” that was auctioned on December 2, 1766. More often, however, they were
part of larger auctions for household furnishings. Sampson Neyle announced his intention
to return to England multiple times in the spring of 1771, offering up “all of his
hous[e]hold furniture, consisting of a neat mahogany desk and book-case, cloaths press,
shaving stand, chairs, tables, bedstead, [and] feather bed.” It is worth pointing out that
he lists the desk and bookcase first—ahead of the feather bed and bedstead which were
typically the most expensive furnishings in colonial households. This suggests that it
must have been a very “neat” desk-and-case, indeed—or he, at the very least, regarded it
as such by provincial standards.

Robert Williams, Jr., on the other hand, attributed a bookcase’s value to the
number of books it was able to hold. He advertised “a variety of Genteel Household

252 “[Advertisement],” 28 November 1766, South Carolina and American General
Gazette, 139.

By late May, Neyle seemed desperate to unload his furniture, announcing that he would
hold a “Public Sale, at his House, on White-Point,” still not having sold the bookcase. By
June, he had booked his passage to England. See “To be Sold at public vendue,” 30 May
1771, South-Carolina Gazette, 1; “[Advertisement],” 3 June 1771, South Carolina and
American General Gazette, 3.
Furniture” for sale, including a “neat Mahogany Book-Case, capable of containing about 200 Volumes.” For most South Carolinian book-owners, two hundred books was an impressive collection. Moreover, his advertisement suggests that he assumed such information—the size of a personal library that the bookcase could hold—was valuable for potential buyers.

Bookcases were sometimes sold with their library contents, too, particularly at estate sales. For example, the sale of Thomas Law Elliott’s estate included his plantation “book case and library of books.” Another estate sale offered “a very good mahogany desk [and] book case” with “a good [collection] of books.” Booksellers liquidating their inventory might also include bookcases from their shops and private homes in sales.

In 1774, Nicholas Langford was forced to move out of the Bay Street tenement he rented for his business and residence for major renovations. Having decided to summer in London, he chose not only to sell his entire inventory of books, but also “two of his London make Mahogany Book Cases,” offering potential buyers the chance to curate their own book collection from his stock to suit and fill London-made (and, presumably, fashionable) bookcases.


255 “To be sold at Public Vendue,” 28 April 1757, Supplement to the South-Carolina Gazette, 2.

256 “To be Sold,” 4 August 1759, South-Carolina Gazette, 2.

Although they were certainly the centerpiece, bookcases were not the only furnishing in the stylish late eighteenth-century library. Local cabinetmakers made other pieces of book furniture, too, and these forms were also available as imports. Library tables, for example, were ideal for looking at a number of opened volumes simultaneously (Figure 3.6). One of the earliest such pieces is found in the 1755 inventory of Andrew Rutledge’s house in Charlestown, where “1 Broken Reading Desk” is listed—and thus differentiated from—a writing desk.258 The 1777 estate sale of Lionel Chalmers, whose library bookcase contained “[about] 230 Volumes,” included one such “reading desk,” sold with a Venetian blind.259 William Wragg also owned a library table, alongside three mahogany bookcases filled with books, at his house in Charlestown.260 Bookstands, or reading stands, which could be placed on tabletops, cradled open books so as not to damage their spines.261 Bookstands, or reading stands, which could be placed on

258 These are listed with “1 Mahogany Desk & Alphabet & one Elbow Chair,” “2 Ordinary Bookcases,” and a library of “340 Books;” see Inventory of Andrew Rutledge, Esq., 2 December 1755, vol. 82B, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

259 Inventory of Lionel Chalmers, 7 July 1777, vol. 100, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

260 Three more mahogany bookcases are listed throughout the property, in what appears to be (but is not labeled) a room-by-room inventory; see Inventory of William Wragg, [1777], vol. 100, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

261 At the time of the appraisal of Lionel Chalmers’ estate, there was a “Reading Stand” in the “Small Room in front” of his Charlestown house; see Inventory of Lionel Chalmers, 7 July 1777, vol. 100, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.
Figure 3.6. “Library Table,” plate LIV from Chippendale’s *Director* (1754). Collection of the Charleston Library Society, Charleston, South Carolina.
tabletops, cradled open books so as not to damage their spines. Although both were fashionable in the metropole at the time, only two of each appear in Elfe’s account book. Interestingly, the most expensive library table, carrying a price tag of £85, was purchased by Superintendent of Indian Affairs John Stuart in November 1772. This suggests that, particularly in the years immediately before the American Revolution, some local consumers had already begun to reject certain British modes and styles while others, such as those conspicuous supporters of the crown, continued to embrace expensive reading accoutrements.

Indeed, even the war did not halt the sale of secondhand book- and library cases. In fact, those who left for the countryside, assuming it was safer from the threat of British capture, sometimes chose to leave their library furnishings behind, as one advertisement indicates. “Intending to remove into the country,” the subscriber, who lived on Broad Street, offered “Part of his Household Furniture” for sale, including “library book-cases” and “desks with book cases.” Especially because of their size and the difficulty of moving them over long, it was often easier to sell bookcases at auction than to go through the expense to have them properly packed and hope for the best on the roads out.

At the time of the appraisal of Lionel Chalmers’ estate, there was a “Reading Stand” in the “Small Room in front” of his Charlestown house; see Inventory of Lionel Chalmers, 7 July 1777, vol. 100, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

Elfe Account Book, p. 64, CLS.

“[Advertisement],” 24 November 1779, Gazette of the State of South-Carolina, 1. It is also notable that another advertisement related to a private library (“Auction of Books” held by Benjamin Cudworth on Monday, December 13, 1779) appears directly beside Troup’s on the front page of the Gazette.
of town. Troup’s advertisement also suggests that he may have had case furniture suitable for book ownership at his plantation already and simply did not have the space for more.

War was not the only potential danger for cabinetmakers’ businesses, estate or moving sales, or for bookcase owners generally, however. Especially for cabinetmakers, city-wide fires was just as threatening to their livelihoods as they were to booksellers through the second half of the eighteenth century. Following the city fire of June 1796, one cabinetmaker advertised his new place of business and residence as follows: “Charles Watts … Begs leave to inform his Friends and the Public, that since he was unfortunately burnt out, he resides at Mr. John Milligan’s, No. 6, Bedon’s alley: Where he has for sale, A Variety of Cabinet Furniture … [including] Secretaries and Desks, and Book Cases.”265 Watts further promised to “punctually attend” all orders placed at his new workshop. This advertisement for a new workshop, showroom, and residence all suggest that Watts was able to acquire (or perhaps even saved some of) his tools and wood supply so that he could carry on his trade within a little over a month of the fire.

Once bookcases and other accoutrements of reading were purchased, they were moved into various rooms of private homes. Sometimes they were placed in rooms designated as studies and libraries.266 But they were also found in other, high-traffic


> The library as a unique architectural space gained traction in South Carolina throughout the second half of the eighteenth century. It is, however, important to keep in mind that books were “more likely to be in Studies or Closets than formally designated Libraries,” and, moreover, that books were also often kept “in fitted shelves set into the panelled walls of the Study or Closet,” as Mark Purcell reminds us. Purcell, *Country House Library*, 114 & 116.
rooms, too. Peter DeLancey kept seventy-nine volumes in the “Book Closet” off his front
drawing room, distinct from the bookcase and collection of 221 books kept in his second
floor dressing room. According to Daniel Horry’s probate inventory, for example, a
“Mahogany Book Case” containing “190 Volumes of Books” were found in the central
hall at Hampton Plantation, along with an assortment of chairs, tables, looking glasses,
and a marble slab—presumably upon which books might be rested, like a library table.
In another room, designated in the inventory as the “Study,” another “200 Books” were
stored in a mahogany chest, rather than a bookcase. The inventory further reveals that
Horry kept yet another mahogany bookcase in the parlor of Harriott’s Villa Plantation.

Bookcases were not only owned by the wealthiest planters and merchants. George
Hunter, for example, bequeathed his desk and bookcase to local limner Jeremiah

267 The drawing room also contained ten mahogany chairs with velvet bottoms, an
armchair with velvet seat, six plain mahogany chairs, a mahogany settee, three looking
glasses and sconces, as well as a harpsichord and music books; the books kept in his
dressing room are listed over three pages by title and volume number. See Inventory of
Peter DeLancey, 1771, vol. 94A, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

268 Daniel Huger Horry, Jr., Inventory, 16 January 1786, in Papers of Eliza Lucas
rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/PinckneyHorry/ELP0200 (accessed February 8, 2017).

269 Daniel Huger Horry, Jr., Inventory, 16 January 1786, in Papers of Eliza Lucas

270 Daniel Huger Horry, Jr., Inventory, 16 January 1786, in Papers of Eliza Lucas
Theus. While a highly-patronized artist, Theus was certainly not as wealthy as Henry Laurens or Gabriel Manigault. Moreover, bookcases did not necessarily have to be large. Surveyor Henry Mouzon’s “Book Case & Library” of books was valued, in total, at £20. Tavernkeeper Elisha Pointsett also owned a bookcase, but it must have been very plain, being valued at only twenty shillings. It is important to keep in mind, however, that bookcases were also used to store things other than books. As Abigail Williams warns, “we should, however, be cautious in assuming that because people owned furniture with which to store books, … they necessarily used them for that purpose.” Lockable bookcases and other furnishings could “store anything that was valuable.”

Although bookcases were clearly in demand among Lowcountry book-owners, they were not an essential part of book-ownership. Indeed, for many South Carolinians, bookcases were a lavish and unnecessary expense. Josiah Johnson’s “Lybrary,” a collection of books that were undoubtedly the most valuable material possessions he owned, was not kept in a bookcase or bookpress. It is most likely, according to the 1753

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271 Will of George Hunter, 18 July 1755, vol. 81, Charleston County Wills, CCPL. Hunter also gave Theus cases of bottles, an “Ox Eye Camera,” linen clothing, and a painting.

272 Inventory of Henry Mouzon, Jr., 17 April 1777, vol. 100, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

273 Interestingly the woods of other pieces, such as “2 cedar chests,” “1 Walnut Desk,” and “1 Pine Desk,” are included in the inventory, but the wood of his bookcase was not; Inventory of Elisha Pointsett, Sr., 10 April 1771, vol. 94A, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

274 Williams, Social Life of Books, 52.
inventory of his estate, that he kept it on one “Old Desk.”  

John Lewis Poyas’ books were kept in a trunk, along with other papers. Judging by his estate inventory, David Hext’s books were presumably kept in a “corner cupboard,” rather than a proper bookcase. And while it is clear that Jacob Motte kept his personal book collection in a room designated as his “office,” he had no case furniture of any kind at his home in town. Books could just as well be kept in closets or chests of drawers, on tabletops, and otherwise scattered throughout the home for easy and regular reference. Moreover, it is important to remember that book-borrowing between friends and family was a regular occurrence across all classes, which, for many, did not warrant investment in a such an expensive piece of furniture. This practice was popular even among the Lowcountry elite. Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, for example, borrowed copies of Abbé Raynal’s works

275 Inventory of Josiah Johnson, 30 April 1753, vol. 82A, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL. Isaac Motte’s books, including “2 vols. Nelson’s Justice, 11 old Books, 1 Large Book a paraphrase on ye new Testament,” were also likely kept on his “Black Walnut Desk,” which was the next item listed in the inventory; see Inventory of Isaac Motte, 26 May 1753, vol. 84, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

276 Poyas’ books were merely listed as “Sundry Books Papers &ca.” Inventory of John Lewis Poyas, 8 May 1756, vol. 84, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

277 Hext’s books were listed in slightly more detail and included “Tillotsons Sermons in 3 Volumes Folio one Large Bible one Volume of the Laws of the Province a Prayer Book & a few others.” Inventory of David Hext, 19 December 1754, vol. 82A, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

278 “A few books” are listed among the “Sundries in the Office;” see Inventory of Jacob Motte, 21 July 1770, vol. 94A, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL. Daniel Huger had a book collection of “170 Vol.” valued at £137 10s, but no case furniture was recorded in his estate inventory; see Inventory of Daniel Huger, 30 January 1755, vol. 84, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.
from Alexander Garden in 1780. Pinckney’s younger brother Thomas, in turn, requested of both siblings a Spanish-English grammar dictionary (although a Spanish-French or Spanish-Italian “will answer”), if they had one in town.

Like so many things in the eighteenth century, bookcases became markers of personal and cultural identity, especially when found in drawing rooms, offices, studies, or publicly advertised during the revolutionary period. In 1774, for example, one “Rose Wood Desk and Book Case with Chinese Paintings on Glass very masterly executed” belonging to Sir Egerton Leigh, came up for auction along with his collection of books. Leigh, who had been made Baronet “of South Carolina” the previous year, was the


281 “Will be Sold by public Vendue,” 13 June 1774, South Carolina Gazette. Leigh’s effects also included “elegant white and Gold … Sophas and Chairs, covered with blue and white silk, Windo[w] Curtains to match; one other Set of Sophas and Chairs, covered with black and yellow Figures of Nuns Work in Silk, inlaid Commodes, Card Tables, Several Suits of Handsome Chintz Cotton[,] Windo[w] Curtains lined and ornamented with Silk Fringe and Tassels, a complete Set of Chintz Cotton Bed Curtains, a curious and superb India Cabinet,” and “a fine musical Clock, by Ellicott, mounted in Or Molu,” among other fine things. Leigh previously announced his plans to return to England in the Gazette. See “New Advertisements,” 15 November 1773, South-Carolina Gazette, 2; “South-Carolina. June 6, 1774,” 10 June 1774, South Carolina and American General Gazette, 1.
colony’s attorney general and member of the royal governor’s council.\textsuperscript{282} Anticipating conflict, he decided to flee the province. The painted panes of Leigh's glazed bookcase, in addition to the primary wood of rosewood, were exceedingly unusual in comparison to other bookcases found in South Carolina at the time.\textsuperscript{283} The stylized oriental motifs evoked a romanticized image of Asian culture that was highly fashionable in Britain at the time, but was also perhaps evocative of an earlier japanned furniture styles.\textsuperscript{284} In this way, it served as conspicuous consumption to what one historian calls the “sophisticated, cosmopolitan styles provoked by [European] contact with Asia” that reigned supreme in fashionable English taste throughout the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{285} Such a bookcase was not only emblematic of consumers’ fascination with \textit{chinoiserie} before the Revolutionary War but also served as a marker of Egerton’s deep affinity for English high style. Such a bookcase was not produced, and certainly was not widely available, in colonial


\textsuperscript{283} As far as I can determine, Leigh’s bookcase does not survive. Having consulted with an early American decorative arts curator at the Metropolitan Museum, a similarly styled bookcase is not known to exist in any museum or private collection this side of the Atlantic Ocean. Perhaps it was an early example of \textit{églomisé} in colonial America, but as no other description of the bookcase survives, it is impossible to say with any certainty.


\textsuperscript{285} Frank, \textit{Objectifying China, Imagining America}, 95.
America. The painted panes of his glazed rosewood bookcase therefore might further be interpreted as a claim to the distinctly British, rather than provincial South Carolinian, identity of its owner.

The bookcases that survive today in museums around the country, like the Holmes-Edwards bookcase, are often the finest examples of eighteenth-century American-made or -used case furniture on display in North America. They survive because of their continued use, restyling, and repurposing by subsequent generations of owners. The monumental breakfront library bookcase in the Museum of South Decorative Arts’s collection, for example, features evidence of tacks on the interior of the bookcase doors—most likely a later eighteenth- or early nineteenth-century addition to the bookcase to keep it in line with the latest styles. Although its original owner is unknown, the bookcase eventually came into the possession of Edward Willis (1835-1910), who stored his own collection of rare books on its shelves. An early photograph shows the very same bookcase, and Willis’s collection, in their private home (Figure 3.7). Clearly, bookcases such as this, even when separated from their original owners and contexts, continued to be valued and used by the multiple generations of families and institutions who came to own them in the years following their construction. The continued value placed on the mahogany bookcase today, for not only its form and

286 Frank, Objectifying China, Imagining America, 8.


288 Rauschenberg and Bivins, Furniture of Charleston, Vol. 1, 139.
Figure 3.7. Library bookcase in use at 72 Tradd Street, Charleston, [date unknown]. This bookcase, ca. 1765-1775, and photograph is currently in the collection of the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, Old Salem Museums & Gardens, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.
function but also its ability to say something about its owner, thus ultimately has its root in the eighteenth-century culture of book-ownership.
CHAPTER IV. THE REVOLUTIONARY LIBRARY OF SARAH IZARD CAMPBELL

In the summer of 1775, Lord and Lady William Campbell were a conspicuously Atlantic couple living in a revolutionary age. The pair met when Campbell—the handsome captain of the Nightingale—was stationed outside of Charlestown in the late winter of 1763, just after his time in the West Indies, Belle Île, and India. Sarah Izard was fourteen years his junior, but widely regarded in the Lowcountry as an accomplished and beautiful woman (Figure 4.1). They were married on April 17, 1763 and sailed for England the following week. Their marriage was an advantageous one: Izard was of the South Carolina elite and Campbell of the British peerage. Upon their return to Britain, Campbell was nominated for Argyllshire’s seat in the House of Commons where


Figure 4.1. *Lady William Campbell*, 1823; watercolor on ivory by Charles Fraser. Collection of the Gibbes Museum of Art, Charleston, South Carolina.
he served from January 1764 to July 1766. In 1766, when her husband was appointed the Captain General and Governor in Chief of Nova Scotia, they set sail for Canada. Over the next seven years, the couple spent many months outside of the province, frequently going south to New York and Philadelphia, and returning to visit the southern provinces where they owned Inveraray Plantation. And, during that time, he twice petitioned for the governorship of South Carolina. It seemed that both husband and wife had one place in mind as home.

The Campbells returned to London in 1774 after William’s older brother, the Fifth Duke of Argyll, successfully secured him the position the previous summer. William received his appointment as royal governor of South Carolina but did not immediately go

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to the colony. Instead, the Campbells remained in London until the spring of 1775, waiting until Sarah gave birth to their third child. After twelve years moving around the Atlantic, Sarah Izard Campbell finally returned — permanently, she hoped — home on June 17, 1775. The family soon after settled into their rented house on Meeting Street, a brick Georgian double with twelve rooms that they filled with their mahogany furniture, instruments, and carpets shipped across the ocean. Yet Governor Campbell's

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295 Draft of the Commission of Lord William Campbell, Whitehall, June 10, 1773, in Commissions, Instructions, Etc. 1760-1774, South Carolina, CO 5/404 pp. 464-95 and Instructions to Our Trusty and Well-beloved William Campbell Esq., Whitehall, June 20, 1774, in Commissions, Instructions, Etc. 1774-1775, CO 5/405 pp. 7-142, PRO.

296 Henry Laurens to Alexander Garden, Westminster, April 13, 1774, in George C. Rogers, Jr. et al., eds., The Papers of Henry Laurens, Volume Nine: April 19, 1773-Dec. 12, 1774 (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1981), 402. In 1774, Laurens reported back to South Carolina that Lady William Campbell was pregnant, which would delay the royal governor’s departure. He learned of this from Lord William Campbell himself. In sharing this personal secret with Laurens as the reason for his delay, Campbell was possibly emphasizing what Meghan Roberts identifies as the “fashionable ideal of sentimental family life” and thus portrayed himself as “deserving of … trust and emulation;” see Meghan K. Roberts, Sentimental Savants: Philosophical Families in Enlightenment France (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), 4. It is also worth noting that one of their children was named “Caroline.” The explicit connection between Caroline Campbell and her namesake, South Carolina, is even featured as “Mi Li, A Chinese Fairy Tale” in Horace Walpole’s Hieroglyphic Tales; The Works of Horatio Walpole, Earl of Orford, in Five Volumes, Volume IV (London: G. G. and J. Robinson, 1798), 342, 347. In this fanciful story, the Chinese Prince Mi Li is instructed that his father would approve of his marriage if, and only if, he married “the princess whose name was the same as her father’s kingdom” or “dominions.” Hoping to enlist the help of Joseph Banks to find his mystery beloved, Mi Li arrives in Oxford, where he just so happens to cross paths with a startled Caroline and her chaperone-aunt Lady Ailesbury. Drawn to Caroline like a magnet, he demands to know who she is. It is then revealed: “Why, she is miss Caroline Campbell, daughter of lord William Campbell, his majesty’s late governor of Carolina.”
administration lasted a mere three months before he suddenly decided to flee to H.M.S. Tamar on September 15, leaving his wife Sarah and their three young children behind.\textsuperscript{297}

Indeed, as Sarah Pearsall so succinctly put: “Behind a lot of happy families lay the Atlantic Ocean; that same Atlantic lay behind a lot of unhappy families, too.”\textsuperscript{298}

Without her husband, or even his secretary, Sarah was left with the children and slaves to defend the family home as tensions escalated into winter. Sarah, like so many other loyalists, bore witness to the “tortures” and “miseries of British supporters” at the hands of unfeeling patriots.\textsuperscript{299} After news reached town that her husband had seized supplies from a town merchant’s ship, a mob of men gathered at her doorstep at ten o’clock in the evening. Although Sarah had already “retired to rest,” they insisted on seeing the lady of the house. When she appeared at the door, they demanded she either tell them the governor’s plans or repay the amount seized by handing over some of the family’s most valuable possessions. They turned to the carriage-house and stables “with Axes and other

\textsuperscript{297} Lord William Campbell to Earl of Dartmouth, On Board His Majesty’s Ship Tamer in Rebellion Road, September 19, 1775 in Original Correspondence of Secretary of State, 1773-1775, CO 5/396 p. 242, PRO; September 15, 1775, in Lieutenant’s logbook for HMS Tamer, 1774-1776, ADM/L/T/6 at Caird Library, National Maritime Museum.


\textsuperscript{299} Pearsall, \textit{Atlantic Families}, 202-203.
violent Instruments” when Sarah hesitated and made off with their horses and carriage.\textsuperscript{300} Concerned about her safety, and likely wary of her husband, the Council of Safety placed Sarah under house arrest and offered to return the stolen horses and “chariot” to her. Lady William refused.\textsuperscript{301} In the following days, Sarah learned of a new plan to hold her and her children as hostages. With that, she decided to leave Charlestown. As her husband later portrayed it, it was entirely her own decision—and not at his council—that she planned her escape in order to “avoid further violence and the Confinement with which she was threatened.”\textsuperscript{302} On December 15, she “effected Her Escape with Her Family by Jumping over the … Walls in the Night Time, and a small Boat being provided, She at a very great Risque got safe on Board” the Tamar.\textsuperscript{303} It was only for a short time that she remained on board with her husband, before being transferred to the Sandwich packet and heading for

\textsuperscript{300} The Memorial of Lord William Campbell in North America Loyalists Claims, T 1/541 p. 396, PRO. This incident was first reported in Lord William Campbell to Lord George Germain, Cherokee Armed Ship in Rebellion Road, January 1, 1776 in Letters to the Secretary of State, 1772-1781, CO 5/410 p. 130, PRO. In that letter, he referred to the mob as “Ruffians” and expressed the conviction that they had only set upon his home and wife as a “reprisal” for the ships seized by Captain Tollemache and himself. The Campbell inventory also lists “five coach horses” in the stable; see Memorial of Lord William Campbell in North America Loyalists Claims, T 1/541 p. 401, PRO.

\textsuperscript{301} In the Council of Safety, December 11, 1775 in Collections of the South-Carolina Historical Society (Charleston: The South-Carolina Historical Society, 1859), 76.

\textsuperscript{302} The Memorial of Lord William Campbell in North America Loyalists Claims, T 1/541 p. 396, PRO.

\textsuperscript{303} The Memorial of Lord William Campbell in North America Loyalists Claims, T 1/541 p. 408, PRO. The South-Carolina and American General Gazette reported that she and her children “went privately on board the Cherokee Man of Ware, where her Ladyship still remains.” See “Charlestown, December 22,” South-Carolina and American General Gazette, 22 December 1775, 1.
London, where she and the children safely arrived on March 6, 1776. When Charlestown radicals learned of this, they took immediate possession of the house and all of the Campbells’ belongings within it. In the days and weeks following, the property and all of its contents were auctioned off.\textsuperscript{304} Sarah, a native South Carolinian, never returned to Charlestown again.\textsuperscript{305}

As a result of their losses, the Campbells filed a claim addressed to Lord North and the British Treasury. In all, they claimed a loss of over £5,800 in personal belongings—and another £22,000 in seized slaves. This extraordinary document provides a detailed inventory of their Meeting Street house, including an extensive catalog of the books in

\textsuperscript{304} Memorial of Lord William Campbell, T 1/541 p. 396, PRO. The Campbells later petitioned the Treasury for a sum of £27,094 2s 6p for the loss of their property in December 1775; see Memorial of Lord William Campbell, T 1/541 pp. 397-410, PRO.

their family library. Although submitted on behalf of Lord William Campbell, the likelihood he had the time to conduct a full, room-by-room inventory of the house—let alone a shelf-by-shelf inventory of his books—in the precious few hours between his decision to flee and his taking flight on September 15 is minimal, at best. It seems more likely that, in preparation for her own flight from Charlestown three months later, Sarah went room-by-room through their home on Meeting Street and documented every item she saw. Knowing both that she would not be able to take much—if anything—with her and that the Council of Safety intended to seize the house and its contents should her husband not come forward with money, a woman of “great merit” such as Sarah could have taken her own initiative to note everything she knew would be lost to the rebels.

Although a Lowcountry elite herself, Sarah remains largely obscured in the historical record. Save for announcements of her marriage to “the Right Hon[orable] Lord William Campbell, son of his Grace the Duke of Argyle” in newspapers up and down the coast, and passing mentions of “Lady William” and her whereabouts through

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306 Although certainly more common in the 1770s than in earlier decades, detailed room-by-room inventories that included a catalogue of books were generally uncommon. The level of detail in the Campbells’ inventory is met or exceeded by a small number of probate inventories, including Lionel Chalmers and bookseller George Wood, both of Charlestown, as well as Thomas Lynch, Sr. at Peach Tree Plantation and his house in Charlestown.

the late 1760s in female friends’ correspondence, there is remarkably little trace of her.\(^{308}\)

We know she was regarded as “amiable” and had “one of the most considerable fortunes in the province.”\(^{309}\) Besides the family’s inventory, most likely composed by her, and a surviving portrait, there is very little to learn about Sarah, Lady William Campbell.\(^{310}\)

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\(^{310}\) Charles Fraser, *Lady William Campbell*, 1834, watercolor on ivory, 4 1/2 in. x 3 1/2 in. Gibbes Museum of Art, Charleston. This miniature is a copy of the original portrait that hung in the library at the Campbell’s Meeting Street home and was sold at public auction after the Council of Safety took possession of the property. Fraser lists it in his account book as a “Copy of Sr Joshuas Portrait of Lady Campbell” and cost $50. See “Charles Fraser’s Book of Records,” The Gibbes Museum of Art, http://www.gibbesmuseum.org-miniatures/fraser-book/14.php (accessed 10 November 2016). The original portrait is now in a private collection in England.
Even historians like William Harris and especially William Ryan spare little room for Sarah in their work on Charlestown in 1775, despite being her husband’s *entrée* into Lowcountry society. Rather than searching for her, Sarah is portrayed as the stereotypical Southern woman: a submissive, fashionable fixture within the household. This, however, not only cheapens her historical experience but, like those historians who maintain that women did not have their own book collections, also denies her any sense of individuality or influence. So, how do we get to Sarah, particularly at a time when she was without her husband and with no surviving paper trail? While it may seem to be an unexpected source, I suggest that we turn to the Campbell inventory to get a sense of who Sarah was, the spaces she moved through, and the world she lived in on the eve of the American Revolution in order to explain why she ultimately chose to leave Charles Town and everything she knew.

Sarah was seemingly comfortable in English society, especially in the years after the war, if not long before. Historians have done much work to suggest that South Carolinians emulated British style and manner, particularly by the mid-eighteenth century. As noted by Benjamin Carp, travelers were shocked by the “level of wealth, luxury, Anglicization, and high fashion” of the town which, Carp argues, made Charles

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311 For mentions of Sarah, Lady William Campbell, see Harris, *Hanging of Thomas Jeremiah*, 39-40, 100-101, 107-109, 153-55, 164; Ryan, *World of Thomas Jeremiah*, 43, 75, 113-16. Ryan spills the most ink on Sarah—three continuous sentences—in a description beneath her portrait. Although recognized by both authors as Lord William’s main connection to the South Carolina elite, she is otherwise given little attention.
Town’s “urban environment” even more similar to London.\textsuperscript{312} Even contemporaries recognized this trend.\textsuperscript{313} That Charlestonians so easily accepted and imitated metropolitan lifestyles suggests that someone like Sarah would have been familiar with “gentlewomanhood” in all of its forms.\textsuperscript{314} Indeed, elite South Carolinian women were expected to act as mistress of the house, embracing the “conventional purview of an English” housewife, both in the domestic realm of the household (within the four walls) and to the “public sphere of South Carolina’s agricultural economy.”\textsuperscript{315} Moreover, as Amanda Vickery argues, genteel women in the eighteenth-century British world—of which Lady William Campbell was undeniably a part—managed their “household

\textsuperscript{312} Benjamin L. Carp, \textit{Rebels Rising: Cities and the American Revolution} (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 21 & 145. Interestingly, Carp goes on to contend that “Charleston’s elite patriarchs had reasons to be suspicious of urban crowds.” In this light, Sarah’s confrontation with the mob of white men (including at least two merchants, according to William Ryan) on her downtown doorstep might be seen as claiming the very same “patriarchal” authority the wealthy male elite so often did. See Carp, \textit{Rebels Rising}, 21. For more on Charles Town’s “refinement” and luxury in the eighteenth century, see S. Max Edelson, \textit{Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina} (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 130, 136-38, 163, 174, 220-21.

\textsuperscript{313} In just one example, notable physician and naturalist Lionel Chalmers (another Scotsman who settled in the Lowcountry after training at the University of Edinburgh, and for whom Chalmers Street is named) commented that the town way-of-life was “much after the English manner,” with rituals of tea, coffee, and entertainment, as well as the latest fashions and furniture. See Lionel Chalmers, \textit{An Account of the Weather and Diseases of South-Carolina} (London, 1776), 35 in the Robert Charles Ferguson Collection, Society of the Cincinnati Library, Washington, D.C.

\textsuperscript{314} Additionally, as Max Edelson suggests, Charlestonians were perfectly happy to openly criticize and mock those who did not “live up to basic” and fashionable “standards.” See Edelson, \textit{Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina}, 174.

\textsuperscript{315} Edelson, \textit{Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina}, 226.
property like a museum curator administering her own collection.” Vickery also observes that “in a well-regulated household, the mistress-housekeep could literally itemize the physical contents of a house and knew exactly where to lay her hands on a particular object.” It stands to reason, then, that the household inventory was originally put together by Sarah, even if the document now in the Public Records Office was later transcribed by someone else.

The argument that Sarah (or, at the very least, a woman) compiled the inventory is further strengthened by the detailed list of women’s clothing. Ranging from a pink sack-back gown and satin shoes to flounced dimity petticoats, lace ruffles, and ribbons, the list included over 160 separate articles of Sarah Campbell’s clothing. Her husband’s, in contrast, was recorded simply as “a Large Wardrobe of Lord Willm. Campbell’s Cloathes, Lace Ruffles, Swords, Fine Arms, &ca. &ca. &ca.” Between the initial nighttime incident with the mob and her own flight from Charlestown, Sarah was informed of the planned confinement of herself and her family and hatched a plot, with the help of friends, to escape. This might explain why some parts of the inventory, like her wardrobe and the library for example, are more detailed than those she might have been less


317 Regarding loyalist claims in general, Mary Beth Norton contends that female claimants typically were able to give a more well-rounded and complete depiction of the material contents of their household, especially in contrast to male claimants. See Mary Beth Norton, Liberty’s Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 6-8.

318 Memorial of Lord William Campbell, T 1/541 pp. 402-403, PRO.
familiar with, such as her husband’s apparel. It is important to remember that inventories, like letters, were surely “written in between real life”—and it is against this dramatic backdrop over the course of three days that the Campbell inventory was most likely taken.319

More broadly, historians have at length considered the ways in which colonial Americans emulated English taste and style through their houses and furnishings. Best expressed by Richard Bushman in *The Refinement of America* (1992) is the idea that American colonists injected meaning into style of domestic architecture and furnishings. As “gentility heightened self-consciousness” the home became a “beautiful stage set on which people performed” for family and visitors.320 Furniture was consciously constructed, using “expensive materials” like mahogany, for specific purposes—ultimately, to encourage “cultivated expressions of enlightenment and civilization” in day-to-day life.321 Moreover, as argued by Kevin Sweeney, eighteenth-century houses, and their contents within, acted as “embodiments of power” and “reinforced claims of

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social status and political leadership” of colonial elite.\(^{322}\) While peers furnished their homes with some English imports, the Campbells almost certainly owned English-made or other Continental pieces, rather than local vernacular interpretations based on guidebooks.\(^{323}\) By looking at the spaces within the house, where Sarah spent the majority of her day, we can better understand not only the performances executed within those spaces, but also the role of reading within the Campbell’s home.

Furthermore, historians have long rejected the idea of women curating their own libraries in the eighteenth century. Despite being within the household, their husband’s books, although listed in their wills, were not their own.\(^{324}\) For Walter Edgar, wives merely inherited their husband’s libraries in eighteenth-century South Carolina.\(^{325}\) Most female readers were drawn to instruction manuals and cookbooks. Well-read women like Eliza Lucas Pinckney were the exception, rather than the rule.\(^{326}\) Cynthia Kierner offers a

\(^{322}\) Kevin M. Sweeney, “High-Style Vernacular: Lifestyles of the Colonial Elite” in *Of Consuming Interests: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Cary Carson, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter Albert (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia for the United States Capitol Historical Society, 1994), 2. Additionally, the house the Campbells rented was built ca. 1760, the time when Sweeney locates a dramatic increase in the cost of construction in the Georgian style and also when colonial houses “began to resemble English models more closely … in plan.” See Sweeney, “High-Style Vernacular,” 36-37. This is evident in the architectural drawing of the Campbell’s rented residence; see Jonathan H. Poston, *The Buildings of Charleston: A Guide to the City’s Architecture* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1997), 257-58.

\(^{323}\) Sweeney, “High-Style Vernacular,” 25-26, 35.


more enlightened take, suggesting that elite women relied on their father’s or husband’s library. While this meant that a woman’s reading in the mid-eighteenth century was often “influenced by the tastes and needs of the men around them,” she argues they were certainly reading more than cookbooks and advice literature.\footnote{Cynthia Kierner, Beyond the Household: Women’s Place in the Early South, 1700-1835 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 65.} If female readers followed contemporary genre recommendations, Kierner suggests they read history, geography, travel accounts, and natural philosophy, in addition to novels and sentimental literature, as Cathy Davidson suggests.\footnote{Kierner, Beyond the Household, 60; Davidson, Revolution and the Word, 67.} While women certainly read, consensus says that women definitely were not amassing their own libraries.\footnote{Even Jill Lepore, in her study of Jane Franklin Mecom, is unable to identify books Jane purchased for herself, if any. Instead, she demonstrates that even the daughter of a soap boiler could be a voracious reader and key part in the transatlantic print network before 1800. Appendix F, entitled “Jane’s Library,” is merely an imagined one, a list of books Lepore is confident Mecom read in her lifetime, rather than personally owned. See Lepore, Book of Ages, 33, 84-85, 149, 312-323.} Indeed, James Raven finds that “very few women” show up in probate inventories as owners of personal libraries in the eighteenth century.\footnote{Raven, “Social Libraries and Library Societies in Eighteenth-Century North America,” 46.} He instead suggests that it was only in the nineteenth century—and only among elites—that women began to collect books.\footnote{Raven, “Social Libraries and Library Societies in Eighteenth-Century North America,” 46.}
Rather than accepting the idea that women simply did not collect books of their own, that choices in reading material were largely influenced by a husband’s taste or profession, it is crucial to scrutinize a source like the Campbell inventory to understand both women as readers and women as book owners. In the absence of Sarah’s own written and personal account, it is essential to take into account not only what is detailed within the inventory, but also to consider what choices were made in its compilation. Especially when compared to other South Carolina Loyalist claims on behalf of males and females, the Campbell inventory stands out as uniquely detailed. Unlike the furniture, glassware, or sundry items, the books were listed in great detail: number of volumes, individual titles and authors, and their price. This level of detail was only matched by the itemization of the seventy-eight slaves at Inveraray Plantation. More superficially, in comparison to frequent spelling errors and creative inconsistencies elsewhere in the inventory, the authors and titles suggest a careful attention to spelling. The detailed list of books and other items found in the Campbell bookcase, in the room they called their “Library,” suggests that their value, actual and intrinsic, must have been very high. Moreover, as Roger Chartier argues, “reading is not uniquely an abstract

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332 Rarely did South Carolina claimants list individual titles for property lost during the Revolutionary War. If they did, it was most often a reference to a family Bible. Otherwise, “books of the profession,” “law books,” “medical texts,” et cetera, were most common if books were listed at all. While this might confirm Kierner’s assumption that the “women who followed their husbands into exile…showed little knowledge” of their family’s property and possessions when filing their claims, the Campbell inventory offers a compelling corrective. See Kierner, Beyond the Household, 68. Moreover, it ultimately suggests that Norton and Vickery are more accurate when it comes to middling and elite colonial women.

333 Memorial of Lord William Campbell, T 1/541 pp. 404-405, PRO.
operation of the intellect: it bring the body into play, [and] it is inscribed in a space.”

Considering both the sites of reading based on the inventory and Sarah’s movements through those margins, I therefore argue that women in the colonial South were not only reading, as evidenced by furniture and spaces within the home, but also amassing libraries of their own—however hidden these may be to historians today.

Moving throughout the Campbell’s home, the inventory reveals the spaces with which Sarah was most familiar and permits a glance into her daily life. Looking at the contents of their Meeting Street house also highlights the complicated, sumptuous, temporary world in which Sarah, her husband, and their children found themselves caught—partially provincial, partially metropolitan. She most likely spent her mornings in the master bedchamber, where she kept two “Mahogany Tambour Frames & one Stand” for embroidery, or in her drawing room, where she had a “Large Elegant Lady’s Writing Desk of Mahogany” with an “Ebony Ink Stand” in addition to her dressing table and harpsichord.

The presence of a writing desk, both here in Sarah’s drawing room and elsewhere in the house, was yet another performative aspect of gentility in the eighteenth-century home. It served as a way to “advertise their [owner’s] correspondence, to display their writing instruments, and to let it be known that they

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335 Memorial of Lord William Campbell, T 1/541 p. 396, PRO.

336 Bushman, *Refinement of America*, 95.
wrote and received letters.” While we do not have evidence of its style or decoration, we do know her writing desk was “large,” “elegant” and made of mahogany—crafted, presumably, in the best style as well as of the best wood. Throughout the eighteenth century, the mahogany market—as well as how the material was used and understood—fluctuated in response to deforestation, depletion, and a global search to find, or establish, new sources of it. Deeply ingrained in British Atlantic social rituals and practices, the ownership of mahogany furniture—especially smooth, richly shining pieces—became a way for those living in far-flung colonies to “reinforce their status as full-fledged [British] subjects.”

Not only was Sarah’s desk indicative of the importance of correspondence in eighteenth-century life and mahogany as consumer commodity, but the lady’s writing desk was a relatively new piece of furniture altogether. According to Dena Goodman, women’s writing desks were introduced in Europe in the 1740s. While its most obvious function was to serve as a writing service, it did far more than that. In a locked drawer, it could afford a woman privacy (at least in her correspondence). Moreover, Goodman

337 Bushman, *Refinement of America*, 96.

338 Bushman, *Refinement of America*, 96.


argues that writing desks “helped integrate letter writing into the material world of the woman who owned and used it” and also served as a “prop” for the domestic stage.\footnote{Goodman, \textit{Becoming a Woman in the Age of Letters}, 205; Bushman, \textit{Refinement of America}, xiv.}

Overall, Sarah’s drawing room on the first floor was a comfortable retreat. Furnished with eight hair-bottomed chairs and a “Yellow Worcester Carpet.” Imported carpets such as hers would have been an expensive luxury only recently common in elite colonial homes.\footnote{Sweeney, “High-Style Vernacular,” 35.} The chairs would have been for her use or that of her daughters’ or guests’. In November and December, the room would have been heated by the “Brass Mounted” “Grate,” used to burn imported coal, yet another statement of wealth in the Campbell home.\footnote{Memorial of Lord William Campbell in North America Loyalists Claims, T 1/541 p. 396, PRO.} While she might have read reclined in the large four-post bed in the bedroom, Sarah just as easily—if not more comfortably and privately—could have read

\begin{footnotesize}
\item[341]goodman, \textit{Becoming a Woman in the Age of Letters}, 205; bushman, \textit{Refinement of America}, xiv.
\item[342]sweeney, “High-Style Vernacular,” 35.
\item[343]memorial of lord william campbell in north america loyalists claims, t 1/541 p. 396, PRO.
\end{footnotesize}
in the drawing room, either at her desk or in one of the chairs, as a break from
embroidery, correspondence, and her duties as mistress of the household.\textsuperscript{344}

Later in the morning, Lord and Lady William would have met in the breakfast
parlor, where two “Mahogany Frames for Books” were kept. These frames, or
bookstands, were placed upon the oval mahogany dining table or the smaller breakfast
tables, where the two sat in their “Common” or “Elbow” chairs with hair-bottom seats.\textsuperscript{345}
That two bookstands were listed in the breakfast parlor suggests that the pair passed at
least some mornings, if not some time every morning, reading together. (Moreover, like
most furniture in the eighteenth century, bookstands were portable and often moved from
room to room throughout the day.) Bookstands, ideal for resting an open book upon, were
common in contemporary homes of the English elite. As noted by James Raven,
bookstands or -frames often accompanied tables—as in the Campbell’s breakfast parlor—

\textsuperscript{344} Rhys Isaac, \textit{The Transformation of Virginia 1740-1790} (Chapel Hill: University of
North Carolina Press, 1999), 122. It is interesting to note that she did not have a bookcase
in her drawing room, as these were common in eighteenth-century female domestic
spaces. See, for example, Dena Goodman, “Letter Writing and the Emergence of
Gendered Subjectivity in Eighteenth-Century France” \textit{Journal of Women's History} 17
(2005): 9-37; Baston, \textit{Charles Areskine's Library}, 183. It would be incorrect to assume,
however, that the absence of bookcases necessarily precluded reading in the drawing
room. As John Brewer notes, “books were restless; they escaped from the library, spilling
out into gentlemen’s closets and ladies’ dressing rooms, where piles of novels, travel
literature and histories, often unbound, were kept in corners and in cupboards”; see

\textsuperscript{345} The “2 Mahogany Frames for Books” are listed after the eleven chairs for table
seating and before the small breakfast and large dining tables. See “Parlour The
Breakfast” in Memorial of Lord William Campbell in North America Loyalists Claims, T
1/541 p. 396, PRO.
in or near the domestic library.\textsuperscript{346} They were also, according to Abigail Williams, signs of communal reading.\textsuperscript{347} Although a relatively small and insignificant piece, the two bookstands replicate the reading spaces of the English nobility and, moreover, were uncommon in colonial South Carolinians homes.\textsuperscript{348} Additionally, the horse hair couch with bolsters offered a more comfortable—and cozier—seating arrangement for a pair of readers while replicating metropolitan spaces of reading.\textsuperscript{349}

Because of their wealth, the Campbells were also able to read comfortably at night. Inside their home, they burned wax and spermaceti candles.\textsuperscript{350} Spermaceti candles, in particular, were widely regarded, by those who could afford them, as the best candles because they burned “longer, cleaner, and brighter” than candles of other substances.\textsuperscript{351} Sarah and William also had a large collection of silver candlesticks, candelabras, and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{346} James Raven, \textit{The Business of Books: Booksellers and the English Book Trade 1450-1850} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 197.
\item \textsuperscript{347} Williams, \textit{Social Life of Books}, 53.
\item \textsuperscript{348} Raven, \textit{Business of Books}, 196. For instance, bookstands appear only twice in cabinetmaker Thomas Elfe’s account book of 1768 to 1775: one mended in December 1774 for John Fentrell, and another ordered by Lewis Ogier in April 1775. See Elfe Account Book, p. 128 and 145, CLS.
\item \textsuperscript{349} According to Williams, “the fashion for upholstered seating, particularly long pairs of settees, could have facilitated” reading aloud. Williams, \textit{Social Life of Books}, 53.
\item \textsuperscript{350} “2 Large Boxes of Wax Candles” and “2 [Ditto] of Spermecti [Ditto]” were listed in the front cellar; Memorial of Lord William Campbell, T 1/541 p. 401, PRO.
\item \textsuperscript{351} Emily Irwin, “The Spermaceti Candle and the American Whaling Industry” \textit{Historia} 21 (2012): 45.
\end{itemize}
chambersticks, which were kept locked away in chests when not in use. Silver, when polished, helped reflect and throw candlelight. Larger pieces, like their “Cross Lamp” and four “Branched Candlesticks,” would have held three or more candles. By contrast, the ten “plain Silver,” two “fluted”, and four “Small Fluted” candlesticks all would have held one candle each. Elsewhere on the property, particularly in the kitchens and stables, the Campbells’ slaves relied on the glow of the fireplace or the unreliable and smoky light given off by tallow candles kept in dark iron lanterns or rusty tin chambersticks—conditions which were hardly conducive to reading.

Neither Sarah nor her husband had to venture far for a book to read at any point in the day. Down the central hall, the largest and most public room of the main floor was designated as “The Library” in the inventory, and its contents received the most attention to detail. This was also the room from which William conducted his government. It

352 Memorial of Lord William Campbell, T 1/541 p. 403, PRO.

353 The mounted firearms on the library’s walls as well as the gilding on books’ spines also would have reflected candlelight, making the space more conducive to reading.

354 These were all kept in “Plate Chest the First” and “Chest the Second;” Memorial of Lord William Campbell, T 1/541 p. 403, PRO. They also had two silver chambersticks with snuffers, which would have been used at night when moving about the house and in the bedchamber.

355 Memorial of Lord William Campbell, T 1/541 p. 401, PRO. For more on enslaved readers in colonial South Carolina, see Monaghan, “Reading for the Enslaved, Writing for the Free,” 309-41.

356 There is a pass-through door from the breakfast parlor to the room designated as the library, as well.
was furnished with William’s desk, a settee with a red-and-white check slipcover, six rush-bottom chairs, and two highboys. Three portraits of Lord and Lady William hung on the walls. The mounted firearms served as a reminder of Campbell’s personal naval and family military background, as well as symbols of empire and authority. Yet all of this was dwarfed in comparison to the “Large Mahogany Library Glazed &ca” that was seventeen feet in length. No doubt an impressive piece of furniture, this bookcase, and others like it, had come to be seen as status symbols and expressions of personal identity through the eighteenth century. Indeed, glaze-front, or glass-fronted bookcases were the ideal way to both show off and protect valuable book collections.

Compared to contemporary Charlestown-made bookcases, however, the Campbells’ bookcase was unusually large. Such a piece, as with the Campbell’s other furnishings, was probably made in Britain rather than locally. Moreover, as the biggest piece in the room, shelves teeming with bound books, it functioned as “center stage” for

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357 The Memorial of Lord William Campbell in North America Loyalists Claims, T 1/541 p. 397, PRO. “Et cetera” probably refers to the different inlays on the piece, but might also have included painted accents, such as gold leaf, that would have reflected candlelight. There is no way of knowing for certain, however, what exactly it encapsulated.

358 For more on mahogany furniture as status symbol in the eighteenth century, see Anderson, *Mahogany* (2012).

359 At seventeen feet long, it is even larger than the Holmes-Edwards bookcase at the Heyward-Washington House, which measures only a little longer than eight feet wide. See Burton, *Charleston Furniture*, 61.
performances of gentility, power, and status in the most public room of the townhouse.\textsuperscript{360}

On display were five hundred and fourteen volumes, sixty magazines, and forty-nine music books. This library ranged from political works by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and David Hume’s \textit{History of England} to \textit{Anson’s Voyage} and Italian grammar books.\textsuperscript{361}

Given the accoutrements of reading found within the home, it is not hard for the historian to imagine that Sarah might turn to her books not only for company while essentially under house arrest, but also to find guidance in a revolutionary time.

Although the shelves are not demarcated in the inventory, it seems plausible that the titles were recorded based upon the stamped titles on the books’ spines. Moreover, in reading the titles on the inventory, it appears that there may have been a purposeful arrangement suggestive of a separate “library” belonging to Lady William herself. For example, the three-volume “History of Sid. Biddulph” stood between thirteen volumes of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (listed as “Rousseaus Works”) and \textit{The History of Miss Clarinda Catheart and Miss Fanny Renton} (1765).\textsuperscript{362} Praised by one French reviewer as a straightforward and an “\textit{ingénieux Roman}” (ingenious novel), “History of Catheart &

\textsuperscript{360} Raven, \textit{Business of Books}, 196. Additionally, as seen in Rhys Isaac’s \textit{Transformations of Virginia}, grand rooms with specialized functions were both part of creating—or, in the Campbells’ case, demonstrating—“greater refinement.” See Isaac, \textit{Transformation of Virginia}, 75.

\textsuperscript{361} There were thirteen volumes of “Rousseaus Works,” eight volumes of David Hume’s \textit{History of England}, a one-volume edition of \textit{Lord Anson’s Voyage Round The World}, as well as “Barrets Italian Grammar” and another book listed as “Italian Grammar.” See Memorial of Lord William Campbell in North America Loyalists Claims, T 1/541 p. 397-98, PRO.

\textsuperscript{362} Memorial of Lord William Campbell in North America Loyalists Claims, T 1/541 p. 398, PRO.
Renton” was an English sentimental novel centered on a rich, likable, young lady with whom Sarah may have identified. Beside Catheart and Renton on the book shelf was the one-volume “D[itt]o. of Clementia,”: Clementina, or The History of an Italian Lady, Who Made her Escape from a Monastery, for the Love of a Scots Nobleman (1768), written by Eliza Haywood and published posthumously. This run of sentimental literature was capped off by Charlotte Lennox’s snarky Female Quixote (1752) and Letters from Juliet Lady Catesby (1760). While men certainly read novels in the eighteenth century, the titles and textual content of this particular section of the library could reasonably be assessed as Sarah’s, especially in the context of analyses like Cynthia Kierner and Cathy Davidson. While the Campbell library itself has since been dispersed and probably lost, considering the text within that Sarah likely read—and, moreover, considered herself part-owner of—offers a glance into the internalized norms and wifely-identity that ultimately won out when she fled her native South Carolina in late 1775. It also included a number of popular seventeenth and eighteenth century poems

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363 This work is listed in the inventory as “History of Catheart & Renton,” two volumes. See Memorial of Lord William Campbell in North America Loyalists Claims, T 1/541 p. 398, PRO. For the review of Catheart and Renton, see Journal Encyclopédique, Octobre 1765, Tome VII (Bouillon, France: Printed for the Journal), 95-96.

364 Memorial of Lord William Campbell in North America Loyalists Claims, T 1/541 p. 398, PRO.

365 Lennox’s work is simply listed as “Female Quixote,” 2 volumes, and “Lady Catesby’s Letters.” See Memorial of Lord William Campbell in North America Loyalists Claims, T 1/541 p. 398, PRO.

366 Kierner, Beyond the Household, 60; Davidson, Revolution and the Word, 67.
and epistolary novels, such as John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and Frances Sheridan’s *Memoirs of Sidney Bidulph*. These two works not only demonstrate how popular views of marriage changed over the course of the early modern period, but also come together on the same shelf to inform the reader—in this case, Sarah Campbell in revolutionary Charlestown—on how to behave, or how *not* to behave, as a wife.

Why would Sarah, as a South Carolinian—and no doubt the very reason her husband sought the appointment for so many years—choose to abandon this, her home? Did she question her own loyalty to her husband, her country, and her own self-interest, as did some of the fictional heroines in her library? By looking at the books found within Sarah and William’s library, the ways in which views of marriage and relationships between man and wife changed over the course of the late seventeenth and eighteenth century are revealed. Moreover, when considered within the larger context of the 1775, these books and the lessons therein may very well have informed Sarah in her decision that December to take her children and flee her beloved province in the wake of her husband.367 Although a member of the Lowcountry elite, Sarah returned to South Carolina as the wife of the most powerful Crown official in the colony after many years,

367 Per Akerlof and Kranton, whose theory of identity economics informs my study, “people follow norms much of the time because they want to do so. They internalize the norms and adhere to them,” and behave accordingly. Moreover, they maintain that “identity affects individual behavior directly. This impact is most apparent in things people do that yield no economic benefit—often in activities that are costly, uncomfortable, and even injurious.” See Akerlof and Kranton, *Identity Economics*, 33 & 121. In the instance of Sarah Izard Campbell, her identity as a South Carolinian is subsumed by her identity as the cosmopolitan wife of the royal governor, which helps to explain why she ultimately left the colony in December 1775—a decision that can, in hindsight, be accessed as “costly, uncomfortable, and … injurious.”
and many miles, away. The dissonance between her South Carolinian identity and that of a loyal wife and partner led to her very own trying revolutionary crisis. Alone in a house filled with things like an abandoned “Mahogany Model of a Rice Machine” designed by her husband, she was no doubt troubled by the sudden changes to a world she once knew. While the Campbell library itself has since been dispersed and probably lost, considering the text within that Sarah likely read—and, moreover, considered herself part-owner of, offers a glance into the internalized norms and wifely-identity that ultimately won out.

By focusing on themes of courtship and marriage, as well as the gender dynamics within that relationship, eighteenth century expectations of marriage—as well as warnings—become clearer to the reader. In the exchange of vows itself in a mid-eighteenth century Anglican ceremony, the groom promises to “to love and to cherish” his wife, while the bride promises “To love, cherish, and to obey” her husband. These very attitudes, in which women are expected to love, cherish, and obey, are revealed

368 William hoped, even in late 1775, that the machine would revolutionize rice cultivation and convince the wealthiest South Carolinian planters that he was, indeed, their friend.

369 Despite attempts to track down surviving volumes from the Campbells’ library that were sold at auction in late 1775 or early 1776, it appears that they are no longer extant in South Carolina collections.

370 Because the Campbells’ books have not yet been located and there is no marginalia or annotations to consider, I take a cue from François Furstenberg, “Atlantic Slavery, Atlantic Freedom: George Washington, Slavery, and Transatlantic Abolitionist Networks” William and Mary Quarterly 68 (April 2011): 247-286.
through Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and Sheridan’s *Memoirs of Sidney Bidulph*. While Eve and Sidney occasionally challenge the hierarchy, they both ultimately defer to males and, in Sidney’s case, the overbearing mother in their lives. On the one hand, being obedient and faithful kept the protagonists from sin. On the other, and especially in *Sidney Bidulph*, virtue and faithfulness were not rewarded with a happy ending. These works, and their presence in the Campbell’s Charlestown library, ultimately underscore that sentimental literature read by women like Sarah reinforced contemporary ideals about marriage and one’s duty to a husband. Moreover, these ideals, as part of the sociocultural and intellectual milieu in which a woman like Sarah moved, in part informed her decisions and actions within and outside of the household.

*Paradise Lost*, written by John Milton and first published in 1667, was an epic poem that explored and expanded upon the Fall of Man. Milton, who had served under

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371 These books have been chosen because of their position within the library inventory. Both appear in the “Books in the Library Continued” section in the Memorial of Lord William Campbell in North America Loyalists Claims, T 1/541 p. 398, PRO. The two volumes of *Paradise Lost* were farther away—if not on a different shelf entirely—from the three-volume “History of Sid. Biddulph,” which stood between thirteen volumes of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and *The History of Miss Clarinda Catheart and Miss Fanny Renton* (1765). Praised by one French reviewer as a straightforward and an “*ingénieux Roman*” (ingenious novel), “History of Catheart & Renton” was an English sentimental novel centered on a rich, likable, young lady with whom Sarah may have identified. For the review of *Catheart and Renton*, see *Journal Encyclopédique, Octobre 1765, Tome VII* (Bouillon, France: Printed for the Journal), 95-96. Beside *Catheart and Renton* on the book shelf was the one-volume *Clementina, or The History of an Italian Lady, Who Made her Escape from a Monastery, for the Love of a Scots Nobleman* (1768), written by Eliza Haywood and published posthumously. This run of sentimental literature was capped off by Charlotte Lennox’s snarky *Female Quixote* (1752) and *Letters from Juliet Lady Catesby* (1760). While men certainly read novels in the eighteenth century, the titles and textual content of this particular section of the library could reasonably be assessed as Sarah’s.
Oliver Cromwell’s Commonwealth, completed the work while secluded in the country following the restoration of Charles II. A second edition was published in 1674, in which Milton clarified “why the poem rhymes not.” Milton died in 1674. By the turn of the century, the book was rediscovered despite “the unpopularity of the author,” as a supporter of Cromwell during Charles II’s reign, and “attracted the general admiration of mankind.” Throughout the eighteenth century, one hundred and twenty-five editions of *Paradise Lost* were published and circulated throughout the British Atlantic. In exploring the relationship between Adam and Eve, Milton underscores traditional ideals of marriage that predated and also pervaded eighteenth-century thought on the subject.

To an eighteenth-century reader like Lady Campbell, however, Milton’s description of Adam and Eve, and their marriage, probably seemed untenable in reality.

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375 The eighteenth-century sentimental novel, which will be explored later through Frances Sheridan’s *Sidney Bidulph*, stressed emotional response to the trials of a virtuous protagonist. M.H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms, Seventh Edition* (Boston: Heinle & Heinle, 1999), 283. For more on eighteenth century sentimental literature, see Leo Braudy, “The Form of the Sentimental Novel” *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 7 (Autumn 1973): 5-13. It may be also worth noting that Milton himself was estranged from his first wife, whom he married in 1642, but he married twice more after her death, in 1656 and 1662.
For example, Samuel Johnson, another author represented in the Campbells' library, criticized the work. This contemporary critic complained that the story did not inform readers of anything they did not already know: “what we knew before, we cannot learn; what is not unexpected, cannot surprise.” Additionally, Johnston was concerned that Milton’s characters were otherworldly, rendering female readers unable to identify with a character like Eve. If Eve was truly wrong to suggest working in another area of the garden separate from her husband, for example, then Sarah was perhaps just as guilty for influencing her husband’s pursuit of a career in South Carolina. There is little evidence, however, to suggest that Sarah spent significant time apart from her husband outside the household in 1775, and, given the political climate, she probably felt little to no temptation to as Eve did in the garden. In contrast to Eve, Sarah could move freely between the rooms of her house and, given the arrangement of material objects, very clearly did. Ultimately, Johnson concludes, “we read Milton for instruction, retire harassed and overburdened, and look elsewhere for recreation.” In at least one critics estimation, then, *Paradise Lost* offered little useful instruction for a reader like Sarah, who was surely acutely aware of original sin and more traditional ideas of loyalty within marriage. Regardless, it was still highly regarded and diffused throughout Atlantic libraries, demonstrating that a wife was inferior to and ought to obey her husband.

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376 John Milton, *Paradise Lost: With the Life of the Author, to which is Prefixed the Celebrated Critique by Samuel Johnson* (London: C. Whittingham, 1799), xliv.


In contrast, contemporary popular sentimental literature owned and read by women like Sarah offered a more entertaining, if not melodramatic, take on love and marriage. Published just shy of a century after *Paradise Lost*, Frances Sheridan’s *Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph* was an epistolary novel that took the form of a diary. Sheridan, the daughter of an Anglo-Irish Episcopal clergyman, published the novel in 1761 after years of moving between London, the English countryside, and Dublin. Also notable, especially in contrast to the novel, is Sheridan’s own relationship with her husband, which was, by all accounts, “one of mutual love and respect.” She dedicated the book to Samuel Richardson, a close friend who authored widely read sentimental novels like *Pamela* (1740) and *Clarissa* (1748). It is impossible to know for certain how the Campbells acquired the book—whether Sarah already owned it when she married William, whether she received it as a gift, or if she purchased it in London some time after herself. Newspaper advertisements suggest that *Sidney Bidulph* was in circulation in the southernmost British North American colonies by at least 1765, as seen in an advertisement in the *Georgia Gazette*. It was also continuously published in London throughout the 1760s and 1770s.

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380 Garret and Hutner, eds., *Conclusion of the Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph*, 10.

381 Interestingly, neither of these volumes appear in the Campbell library inventory.


Nonetheless, *Sidney Bidulph* served as a critique of both the institution of marriage, as well as the idea of a perfectly virtuous wife. Sidney, aiming to please her mother, turned away from a whirlwind romance with her brother’s friend, Orlando, in favor of a more financially stable, socially suitable, yet altogether dull husband. This choice reflected the notion that marriage was nothing more than a business transaction in which bridges were “bought and sold with no regard for their future happiness of compatibility with their husbands.” With serial engravings like William Hogarth’s *Marriage à la Mode* (1745) circulating throughout the British Atlantic, this critique would have been familiar to a reader like Sarah Campbell. Increasingly from the mid-century on, however, young single women began to exert more influence in their choice of husband and “companionate marriage” was encouraged so that women “forged emotionally satisfying as well as financially prudent matches.” In the end, Sidney demonstrates that doing the right thing — being a dutiful wife to the ‘right’ husband — did not necessarily lead to a happy ending. Indeed, for all the reader could tell and despite being reunited with her first love, she does not have a happy ending at all. Instead, the “editor” concludes that “Mrs Arnold’s interesting story broke off; that unhappy lady not having continued her journal any farther.” Too distraught to finish her own diary, Sidney Bidulph served as a model of an unhappy woman in marriage who, in contrast to

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Eve in *Paradise Lost*, remained virtuous and faithful to her husband. Furthermore, the reader is left wondering whether all of Sidney’s troubles were, in the end, worth it, given that sudden rupture at the story’s end.

For a reader like Lady William Campbell, the other-worldly Eve, on the one hand, demonstrated that women — although intellectually curious and maybe even capable — should defer to their husband’s in all matters, lest they be tempted by sin. Sarah’s fictional contemporary Sidney Bidulph, on the other, offered a more complicated lesson: even when a young woman was faithful and obedient to her husband (just as Eve was told to be), educated, and virtuous, she was not guaranteed a satisfying ending. As she stepped on board the *Tamar* at the close of 1775, could she have recognized her own sad ending on the horizon?

When Sarah died in 1783 at Kensington Palace, she left all of her possessions to her three children and their maintenance. Although her apartments were fitted out with mahogany tables, walnut chairs, and japanned screens, Sarah evidently did not have a bookcase like the one she had left behind in Charlestown. Although she was able to replicate her writing desk and “black ink stand,” these were cheaper to replace than a seventeen-foot bookcase. Moreover, she had nowhere to publicly display her books. Those we find alongside “eight prints, two leather cushions and [an] Old Box,” in a singular line: “a Parcel of Books.”

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387 Probate inventory of the Rt. Hon. Sarah Campbell, commonly called Lady Sarah Campbell, widow of Royal Palace of Kensington, Middlesex. Probate inventory, or declaration of the estate of the same; 9 July 1785 in PROB 31/742/528, PRO.
saw little value in the books Sarah owned—finding no reason at all to list them.\footnote{150}

Unfortunately, there is no way to know what books composed Sarah’s “parcel” at the time of her death—which, if any books, were replacements for those lost in Charlestown or were newly published works she acquired in town or while traveling continental Europe.\footnote{150} Thus concealed by her deceased husband’s family, Sarah’s choices in reading material from 1778 to 1783 are irretrievably lost.

Never to return to South Carolina, and robbed of her possessions, Sarah may or may not have questioned her loyalty to her husband and her identity as a wife in late 1775. Although the companionship between the two was evident by the arrangement of furniture and other objects, including books and other accessories of reading, in the inventory, perhaps Sarah was \textit{resigned} to her identity as “Lady William Campbell,” and may even have recognized that she—despite all the privileges life had afforded her—was

\footnote{150}{In fact, more effort was made to appraise her silver trinkets and jewelry. Jeweler “D. Drury” was enlisted to assist in this appraisal. See Probate inventory of the Rt. Hon. Sarah Campbell, PROB 31/742/528, PRO.}

\footnote{150}{Settled in England, Sarah frequently traveled to the continent with her daughter and niece, sculptor Anne Damer, before her own death in 1784. See Jonathan David Gross, \textit{The Life of Anne Damer: Portrait of a Regency Artist} (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014), 59, 77, 84; \textit{The Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney Volume III}, Lars E. Troide and Stewart J. Cooke, eds. (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1994), 339. She was described as “a very reasonable woman” but “shy,” as quoted in Gross, \textit{Life of Anne Damer}, 85.}
not guaranteed a life of happiness in the midst of such troubled times.\footnote{Amanda Vickery maintains that “the majority were consciously resigned to the most enduring features of an elite woman’s lot: the symbolic authority of fathers and husbands, the self-sacrifices of motherhood and the burdensome responsibility for domestic servants, housekeeping and family consumption.” Vickery, The Gentleman’s Daughter, 285.} Moreover, that her South Carolinian friends referred to her as “Lady William” in private correspondence, rather than “Sarah,” suggests a shift in her identity also recognized by others.\footnote{Harriott Pinckney Horry never refers to her as “Sarah” in her correspondence of 1767 and 1770, see n. 305 and n. 308. It is compelling that a preliminary search of British contemporaries, following her return to London in 1777 and until her death in 1784, referred to her interchangeably as both “Lady William Campbell” and “Mrs. Izard of South Carolina,” widow of Lord William.} Having internalized this identity—that of the wife of the son of a Scottish duke, a retired naval captain, former governor of Nova Scotia, and exiled last royal governor of South Carolina—and accepted mid-eighteenth century ideas about marriage, Sarah’s decision to leave her Charlestown and thereby sever her own ties to a provincial identity can be explored with more depth.

I am not suggesting that reading literature in her library was the sole reason Sarah ultimately made the decision to leave Charlestown between December 12th and 15th in 1775. Instead, the meticulous documentation of “Books in the Library,” as evidenced in the Campbells’ inventory, indicates that Sarah valued some, if not all, of the books on the mahogany shelves just as much as she valued her “Large Elegant Lady’s Writing Desk of
Mahogany” and the family’s slaves. We might read between the itemized lines to see Sarah as both reader and book-owner in her own home. The books’ value, both monetary and intrinsic, would have placed them in a position of conversational usefulness and moral authority in Sarah’s life. Moreover, such consideration adds another dimension to our study of eighteenth-century readers, particularly woman.

With an identifiable library of her own—or, in the historian’s case, even just the titles and number of volumes, Sarah’s experience as both a reader and as historical actor can be better understood and explained, rather than simply relying on outdated assumptions that women read only what the men in their lives had laying around. Addition, by reading the texts, the eighteenth-century tension between obedient wife providing for a husband’s comfort and as a loyal companion is highlighted. Until the Campbell family books are located, and without Sarah’s own voice expressing personal opinion, looking to something as simple as a room-by-room inventory provide a glance into the Campbell’s marriage and Sarah’s domestic life at a tumultuous time in the British North American colonies. Put together, these glimpses help to reconstruct not only the lived experience of one Atlantic family’s life on the eve of a revolutionary age, but also

Moreover, that the contents of the house were seized and sold at public auction within the days and weeks after her own quiet departure are suggestive of radical colonial attacks on loyalist furniture—just as targeted a statement as the stealing of the Campbells’ carriage. This underscores Jennifer Anderson’s argument that, at times of political upheaval, personal mahogany objects were targeted as a “deliberate mode of performative violence.” See Anderson, _Mahogany_, 63. For more, see Robert Blair St. George’s chapter on “Attacking Houses,” which explores performative violence upon conspicuous loyalist or crown official homes in New England. Robert Blair St. George, _Conversing by Signs: Poetics of Implication in Colonial New England_ (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998): 205-296.
expand our understanding of the ways in which the house and its furnishings underpinned
gentility and social status in the colonial world while also setting the stage for the conflict
between cosmopolitan and provincial identity to play out.

Sarah, Lady William Campbell, “Mrs. Izard of South Carolina, widow of Lord
William”—whatever you wish to call her, remains elusive. Quite simply, she was caught
between a province that, after years longing to return, ultimately saw her as an enemy and
rejected her, and a London society that put a roof over her head but never quite saw her as
one of their own. Although an accomplished women of independent wealth, married to a
powerful public figure, no known writings of Sarah’s survive. And, in surveying family
and friends’ correspondence, she seems more like a pitiable victim to a sad ending in a
sentimental novel. But, when looking to the household inventory submitted as part of the
Campbell family claim, we can begin to fill in some of the blank spaces in Sarah’s story.
Indeed, it is only in this way that the “silences in the epistolary record” are given a
voice.393 In the end, it is through Sarah Izard Campbell’s particular story, sad though it
may be, that we more clearly see both the uncertainty of identity and the variability of
lived experience during the revolutionary age.

393 Pearsall, Atlantic Families, 246.
CHAPTER V. A VINDICATION OF THE BOOKS OF WOMEN

From her earliest Youth she had discovered a Fondness for Reading, which extremely delighted the Marquis; he permitted her therefore the Use of his Library, in which, unfortunately for her, were great Store of Romances, and, what was still more unfortunate, not in the original French, but very bad Translations.

The deceased Marchioness had purchased these Books to soften a Solitude which she found very disagreeable; and, after her Death, the Marquis removed them from her Closet into his Library, where Arabella found them.394

So begins the reader’s introduction to Arabella, heroine of Charlotte Lennox’s Female Quixote, and the private collection of books that would shape her subsequent, ridiculously foolish behavior. Secluded from society on her widowed father’s estate, Arabella devours her mother’s novels. She mistakenly interprets the romances as reality.

and, when presented with male suitors, acts according to the conduct of those fictional heroines she so idolized.

As a satire on the genre, *The Female Quixote* warned readers—contemporary and modern—of the potentially detrimental effects inexperienced or careless reading might have on personal character and behavior. It was this very message that Elizabeth Chalmers Huger picked up on in 1775, when she offered to lend a friend, Eliza Lucas Pinckney, her own copy. Although it was “not quite so well wrote as the Don, of that name,” she thought it was “a very proper Book for young Folks, to shew them the consequence of being too fond of those Books which all Girls wou’d rather read than things of more consequence.”

Elizabeth’s observation is striking for several reasons, foremost of which is the challenge it poses to current scholarship on Southern women as book owners and readers in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Not only does her remark suggest that she has read *Don Quixote*—a popular novel, but certainly not stereotypical fare, like *The Whole Duty of Man*, that some historians might expect—but it also reveals a singular title of a book in her own private collection, to read and lend out as she pleased.

In general, historians have rejected the notion that women like Elizabeth Huger curated private libraries, let alone owned books, in the eighteenth century. Most historians have assumed that “men’s” books, although sometimes listed in the probate inventories of

colonial women, were not in fact owned by them. They suggest that Southern women were merely passive inheritors of books. One historian even went so far as to suggest that, if wives or daughters had any interest in books at all, they were drawn only to religious works, cookbooks, and conduct manuals.\textsuperscript{396} And, while more enlightened historians have recently suggested that women did read (even if material was confined to a male’s professional and personal interests), consensus seems to be that women were not amassing their own libraries before 1800.

Unfortunately, this grossly outdated idea that women in the South did not have libraries of their own has long been accepted and perpetuated by historians. So much so that the image one gets of Southern women in the eighteenth century is of the plantation mistress with her pannier-supported silk skirts, elegantly draped in a mahogany and damask easy chair, uncritically reading whatever she happened to lay her hands upon that day. Rather than accepting the idea that Southern women simply did not collect books of their own, and that their choices in reading material were largely influenced by someone else’s taste, it is crucial to re-evaluate surviving sources. Doing so reveals a lost archive that historians have ignored for far too long. Elizabeth Chalmers Huger—as well as countless other middling and elite female contemporaries—emerge from portraits, probate inventories, correspondence, and extant books in archives, libraries, and private collections, offering a much fuller sense of the culture of reading and book ownership in which Southern women most certainly participated. Not only were their homes filled with the newest \textit{accoutrements} of reading—from library cases and book presses to mahogany

\textsuperscript{396} Edgar, “Libraries of Colonial South Carolina,” 46.
book stands—but women also discussed the latest works, carefully kept track of volumes (even during the ravages of war), scribbled in the margins and invaded the text itself, and exchanged books as gifts to solidify bonds between friends, mothers and daughters, aunts and nieces, husband and wife.

Seated at a cloth-covered table, Martha Vinson wears a fashionable blue silk gown with a gauzy fichu tucked into a buttoned stomacher (Figure 5.1). Her left arm and lace ruffle rest daintily atop two plain, gilt-ruled duodecimos. The gilding of the spines’ raised bands and covers, though slight, stands out in sharp contrast against the black tablecloth beneath. The red labels of their spines read “MILTON.” Her alabaster skin, the iridescence of her gown and triple-strand pearl choker, as well as the abundance of fine lace suggest a comfortable life spent indoors. The two books on the table, most likely *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regain’d*, in addition to the plain interior backdrop are also suggestive of the sitter’s virtuousness: even in her leisure time, Martha chooses to read one of the most popular seventeenth-century English epic poems, rather than frivolous novels also available in colonial Charlestown. In so doing, and through her portrait, she is projecting a particular identity—a cultivated and moral colonial woman.

*Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regain’d* were both, to borrow David Hall’s term, “steady sellers” throughout British North America. In late 1753, for example, printer

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397 Iannaccaro and lamartino, *Enforcing and Eluding Censorship*, 38.

Figure 5.1. *Mrs. Martha Vinson*, ca. 1766; oil on canvas by Jeremiah Theus. Bequest of Martha Blake Washington; collection of the Gibbes Museum of Art, Charleston, South Carolina.
Peter Timothy imported and sold copies of John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* “with Cuts” and “very neatly bound”—perhaps like those in Martha Vinson’s portrait—at his shop. His advertisement, however, targeted the “gentlemen” of Charlestown to whom he promised quick delivery of any book order. While it may be true that, as Cathy Davidson notes, men did “or were credited with doing” most of the book-buying in the eighteenth century, it would be more useful—and certainly more insightful—to reject this sort of coverture. For example, one 1753 auction advertisement of “A large COLLECTION of curious, valuable and entertaining BOOKS” held at a shop on Broad Street ended with a call to potential female customers: “The Ladies can no where else furnish themselves so well, and at so easy Rates, with the best, and most entertaining Books.” Moreover, the very same year Vinson sat for her portrait in 1766, Harriott Pinckney Horry wrote to a friend about her frustration in trying to find a copy of *The History of Lady Julia Mandeville* (1763). “My inquiries for Lady Julia Mandiville has extended to every Store and Book seller’s shop in Town but hitherto without Effect,” she complained. Around


400 Davidson, *Revolution and the Word*, 65. As Elizabeth Carroll Reilly and David D. Hall note in “Customers and the Market for Books,” as more women became conspicuous readers, they were “increasingly courted by booksellers and writers who sensed a new audience for their work among the ‘ladies’ or ‘fair sex’ whom they addressed. See “Practices of Reading” in *History of the Book in America*, 397.


the time Martha Vinson sat for her portrait, copies of Milton were still being imported and sold by local booksellers. Whether or not it was Mr. Vinson who purchased the two volumes, or if she, like Horry, sought to acquire them on her own, it is ultimately in her portrait Martha chose to display both her literacy and possession of them.

Very few women who sat for Jeremiah Theus, the preeminent local portraitist of mid-eighteenth century Charlestown, were depicted with books. In one, the portrait of Rawlins Lowndes’ third wife, Sarah Jones, the subject stands upright with a book in hand (Figure 5.2). Unlike those of Martha Vinson, the spine of the book is obscured and its title label just out of frame. The larger typeface on the page, however, as well as the darker binding, evoke a style more common of late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century books. Here, again, the female subject appears virtuous—reading quietly in a moment of down-time in an otherwise plain interior.

Other artists painted South Carolinian women reading or posing with books during this period as well. For example, itinerant English portraitist John Wollaston painted Rebecca Bee Holmes in Charlestown at roughly the same time as Vinson sat for Theus (Figure 5.3). Rebecca, recently-widowed mother of John Bee Holmes (whose

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Figure 5.2. *Mrs. Rawlins Lowndes (Sarah Jones)*, ca. 1773; oil on canvas by Jeremiah Theus. Purchased with funds from the State of North Carolina and Joseph Garnier; collection of the North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, North Carolina.
Figure 5.3. *Rebecca Bee Holmes (Mrs. Isaac Holmes)*, ca. 1765-1767; oil on canvas by John Wollaston. Gift of Herbert L. Pratt (Class of 1895); collection of the Mead Art Museum, Amherst College, Massachusetts. Image courtesy of Bridgeman Images.
library—bookcase and books—is now in the collection of the Charleston Museum), is portrayed in a “vandyke” dress and adorned with pearls. On the marble-top table in front of her is a volume of Addison and Steele’s Spectator, which usually came in a set of eight. Its inclusion is indicative of both her fashionable taste in books and metropolitan society. On the other hand, in what was likely painted to celebrate her marriage to Charles Cotesworth Pinckney and to complement his own portrait by Henry Benbridge the previous year, Sarah Middleton Pinckney sits under a portico (Figure 5.4). A quarto-sized volume lays open on her lap—a quiet moment of reading interrupted—as storm clouds gather in the background. She wears a golden stola over a white tunic, with a Tyrian purple palla draped around her. This style of classical dress, particularly in portraiture, was popular among elite British women at the time and served as a symbol of female intellectualism. Moreover, female classical education—as evidenced in correspondence as well as symbolically in Pinckney’s portrait—was increasingly common among Lowcountry elites. This contradicts what Caroline Winterer maintains

404 Van Horn, Power of Objects in Eighteenth-Century British America, 222-23.

405 For example, Pinckney’s contemporary, English historian Catharine Macaulay was often painted in classical attire. See also Catherine Kerrison, Claiming the Pen: Women and Intellectual Life in the Early American South (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015), 127. For more on female republicanism in this period, see Philip Hicks, “Portia and Marcia: Female Political Identity and the Historical Imagination, 1770-1800” Williams and Mary Quarterly 62 (April 2005): 265-94.
Figure 5.4. Mrs. Charles Cotesworth Pinckney (Sarah Middleton), ca. 1774; oil on canvas by Henry Benbridge. Museum Purchase with funds from the Dorothy Waring Bequest; collection of the Gibbes Museum of Art, Charleston, South Carolina.
was an educational barrier “keeping men in one sphere, and women [in] another” as a “part of the natural order of things” in the southern colonies.406

Contrary to what one historian has deemed only “several women more than capable of holding their own in learned elite circles,” female participation in all facets of reading culture was widespread in the latter half of the eighteenth century.407 A number of women in Charlestown offered lessons in “reading English and French” to young girls before the Revolutionary War.408 Women also appear in printing subscription lists, both alongside their husbands and as individuals in their own right. For example, twenty-eight women are listed in the subscribers list to Twenty Sermons ... Preach’d in the Parish of St. Philip, Charles-Town, South Carolina by the Reverend Samuel Quincy (Boston, 1750).409 The book, which first appeared as a proposal in the Boston Weekly Post-Boy in the fall of 1749, was advertised as “One Volume Octavo” delivered “ready bound,” for

406 Caroline Winterer, “Classical Taste at Monticello: The Case of Thomas Jefferson’s Daughter and Granddaughters” in Thomas Jefferson, the Classical World, and Early America, eds. Peter S. Onuf and Nicholas P. Cole (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 81. Reilly and Hall also vaguely claim that women, although “ever more literate” still found themselves “excluded from some circles.”

407 Raven, London Booksellers and American Customers, 70.

408 For example, Rebecca Woodin taught “young Ladies, in the different branches of Polite Education” in an newspaper advertisement in 1767. See 29 June 1767, South Carolina Gazette, 4.

409 Samuel Quincy, Twenty Sermons On the following Subjects, Viz. ... Preach’d In the Parish of St. Philip, Charles-Town, South-Carolina (Boston: Printed and Sold by John Draper, in Cornhil, 1750), [vi-xvi], MPF.
which subscribers would pay £3 upon delivery. Although it was printed and bound in Boston, the subject matter drew a large number of subscribers from South Carolina. Of those twenty-eight women, sixteen appear unaccompanied by their husbands, including “Jane Gaddesden,” Christopher Gadsden’s first wife (d. 1759) and Martha Chalmers, wife of physician Lionel Chalmers. Interestingly, Henry Laurens, whose large signature appears at the top of the subscription list, is not himself listed. One “Mrs. Elizabeth Laurans,” however, is, having subscribed for “2 Books”—a relation, perhaps, or, even more likely, a typographical error on the printer’s part, having mistaken Eleanor Ball Laurens, whom Henry married in the summer of 1750, for “Elizabeth.”

“Mrs. Elizabeth Pinckney,” better known as Eliza Lucas Pinckney, was also among the subscribers to the collection of sermons, appearing after a semi-colon on the


411 Other subscriptions, all of which had to be placed through either Peter Bours of Newport, Rhode Island, or printer John Draper, came from Boston, New York, Newport, and Newbury. The list itself, however, is largely dominated by South Carolinians from Charles Town, Georgetown, Beaufort, and other towns in the Lowcountry.

412 The other women (all married or widowed at the time of subscription) listed individually are as follows: Deborah Beswick, Susannah Barlow, Jane Blythe, Sarah Champneys, Mary Cooper, Marion Fouquet, Eleanor Griffin, Susannah Hume, Mary Harvey, Ellin Livingstone, Elizabeth Laurens, Jane Millechamp, Hannah Patchaball, and Margaret Stevens. Those listed with their husbands are: Lucy Corbett, Elizabeth Coffens, Eleanor Coblentz, Elizabeth Glen, Margaret Glen, Elizabeth Irving, Sarah Lining, Elizabeth Pinckney, Mary Pinckney, Elizabeth Quincy, Hannah Quincy, Mary Quincy, Sarah Ramsay, and Sarah Shubrick.

413 Quincy, Twenty Sermons, [xii]; MPF.
line following her husband, “The Hon. Charles Pinckney, Esq.” Pinckney has been regarded by some historians as an extraordinary South Carolinian reader. But even among those who identify her as an intellectual in her own right, few focus on the importance of books throughout her life. James Raven, for example, in his study of the Charleston Library Society, suggests that her interest in reading as well as her reading choices were largely the work of her father and her husband, the latter of whom “set her off reading Locke” and Virgil. (Moreover, he neglects to mention the fact that Pinckney was the first honorary female member of the Charleston Library Society.) By looking more closely at Eliza’s experience, as well as the experiences of her female contemporaries, it becomes clear that a far greater number of Southern women were readers and book collectors in their own right than previous historians have been willing to admit. Rather than assuming that the bookish woman was “hardly typical” in this period, then, it is more useful to acknowledge that, no matter one's gender, books were simply a part of daily life.

Eliza Lucas read voraciously, and she shared her interest in reading and books with her female friends. Two years after moving to South Carolina, eighteen-year-old Eliza wrote to a friend in England that, in addition to managing her father’s lands

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414 Quincy, Twenty Sermons, [xiii]; MPF.

415 For example, although Walter Edgar largely dismisses the idea that women owned books or had any interest in reading diversely, he singles out Eliza Lucas Pinckney as a remarkable female reader in her day. Even so, he says, “especially for a woman, Eliza Lucas’ reading was rather heavy” (emphasis added). See Edgar, “Libraries of Colonial South Carolina,” 207.

416 Raven, London Booksellers and American Customers, 70.
while he was in Antigua and experimenting with indigo cultivation, she spent time every day reading in the “little Library well furnished” by her father’s book collection at Wappoo Plantation.\footnote{Eliza Lucas Pinckney to Mary Steer Boddicott, 2 May [1740] in The Papers of Eliza Lucas Pinckney and Harriott Pinckney Horry Digital Edition, ed. Constance Schulz. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2012. http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/PinckneyHorry/ELP0152 (accessed January 10, 2018).} She disclosed to another female friend, Mary Bartlett, that she hesitated at first to read Virgil, convinced she would “enter upon battles storms and tempest that puts one in a maze and makes one shudder while one reads” but was pleasantly surprised to find “the calm and pleasing diction of pastoral gardening” complemented the South Carolina spring.\footnote{Eliza Lucas Pinckney to Mary Bartlett, [1742], in Papers of Eliza Lucas Pinckney and Harriott Pinckney Horry Digital Edition (accessed February 8, 2017).} In fact, Eliza turned to books in the same way men did—not simply following through on a man’s advice but to make sense of her own experiences. For instance, in returning to the plantation following a trip to Charlestown, she was deeply concerned that her “personal Identity” had changed because the country “appeard gloomy and lonesom[e].” Unsure of herself, she consulted John Locke (hardly the conduct or devotional literature some historians might expect) “over

In her reading, she thus found both comfort and distraction, connecting what she read with her own experiences and daily life. For example, she found that Virgil, “tho’ he wrote in and for Italy” suited South Carolina “in many instances.”\footnote{Eliza Lucas Pinckney to Mary Bartlett, [1742], in \textit{Papers of Eliza Lucas Pinckney and Harriott Pinckney Horry Digital Edition} (accessed February 8, 2017).} She reflected upon a passage in \textit{Memoirs of Prince Eugene of Savoy}, loaned to her by Charles Pinckney, that reminded her of her father while he was away.\footnote{Eliza wrote, “I mett with a paragraph in it w[hi]ch gave me a good deal of pleasure because ’tis exactly similar to my papa’s Case at Cavalla [Puerto Cabello].” See Eliza Lucas Pinckney to Elizabeth Lamb Pinckney, [1743] in \textit{The Papers of Eliza Lucas Pinckney and Harriott Pinckney Horry Digital Edition}, ed. Constance Schulz. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2012. http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/PinckneyHorry/ELP0881 (accessed March 24, 2017).} Years later, while living in England with her husband and up late worrying about a friend making it home one evening, she turned to her “new books Boadicea and Sir [Charles] Grandison just receive[d].”\footnote{Eliza Lucas Pinckney to Lady Nicholas (Katherine Martin) Carew, [1754] in \textit{The Papers of Eliza Lucas Pinckney and Harriott Pinckney Horry Digital Edition}, ed. Constance Schulz. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2012. http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/PinckneyHorry/ELP0161 (accessed February 8, 2017).} (They, unfortunately, did not prove distraction enough to put her mind at ease and she was up past one in the morning.) Other letters hint at a network of book-lending and -borrowing among South Carolinian women. In the same letter Elizabeth Chalmers offers her copy of
Female Quixote, she also insists that Pinckney “not hurry yourself with The Books you have,” while returning “the Earl of Salisbury” which Pinckney had loaned her.423 Such exchanges between women were common during this period, not only in South Carolina on the eve of the Revolutionary War, but also in Great Britain. According to Abigail Williams, women often loaned one another and discussed books through correspondence as a way of strengthening bonds of female friendship over distance.424

Books also played an important role in Eliza’s relationship with her daughter, Harriott, as well as in Harriott’s own life. When Harriott was twelve years old, Eliza wrote to a friend, George Mackenzie, thanking him on her daughter’s behalf for the books he had sent her.425 Whether or not these books were loaned, Harriott, like her mother, owned a number of books as well. Several of her books are extant in the Charleston Museum archives, including two duodecimos bound in plain calf—volumes three and four of The Spectator (London, 1754)—which are inscribed on the title page


424 Williams notes that “exchanging reading material had the same function as reading aloud: the forging of closeness through enjoyment of the same literary works.” See Williams, Social Life of Books, 123.

with “Harriott Pinckney 1766” (Figures 5.5 and 5.6). That same year, Harriott was trying to track down Frances Moore’s *History of Lady Julia Mandeville*, a popular epistolary novel, in local bookshops. Several months later, in a flurry of correspondence with “Miss R.,” possibly Mary Rutledge, Harriott fretted that she could not forward the next volume because “it is not yet come here” and thus not in her possession. Harriott also wrote that she was “charm’d” with her readings and happy she could share them with her friend via post. More importantly, Harriott turned to her books for improvement, recognizing the influence literature had upon her own characteristics and behavior. She wrote, for example, of one fictional female character, “tho’ I can never hope to arrive at the perfection recommended in those Books I shall read them frequently with pleasure, happy if I can catch in any great degree some of [the] many Virtues he [the

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426 Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, *The Spectator, Volume Third, Carefully Corrected* (London: Printed for the Society of Booksellers, 1754), [i], collection of the Charleston Museum (hereafter CM); Addison and Steele, *The Spectator, Volume Fourth, Carefully Corrected* (London: Printed for the Society of Booksellers, 1754), [i], CM.


428 Harriott Pinckney Horry to Miss [Mary] R[utledge?], 14 January 1767, in *Papers of Eliza Lucas Pinckney and Harriott Pinckney Horry Digital Edition* (accessed February 8, 2017). In this same letter, Harriott wrote, evidently in response to her friend seeing Harriott’s qualities in one of the book’s characters, “happy should I be to come any thing near so excellent a model I might then deserve ye compliment you pay me.”
Figure 5.5. Gilt-stamped spines of three volumes belonging to and inscribed by Harriott Pinckney Horry: *The Spectator*, Vols. 3 and 4 (1754) and Trimmer’s *Sacred History* (1783). Collection of the Charleston Museum, Charleston, South Carolina.
Figure 5.6. Title page of *The Spectator, Volume 4* (London, 1754) with signature of Harriott Pinckney. Collection of the Charleston Museum, Charleston, South Carolina.
While Harriott’s love of books and reading that she shared with her friends were no doubt influenced by her mother, she was in fact taking part in a broader cultural phenomenon that extended beyond the Pinckney household. For example, the detached front flyleaf in a worn, plain calf copy of *An Introduction to Botany* (London, 1776) is doubly inscribed, providing evidence of book exchanges between female friends. The first inscription indicates that the book was given to "Mrs. Izard" by Martha Swinburne, wife of English travel writer Henry Swinburne, in London on December 7, 1782. Below that, further evidence of book-borrowing networks: “N.B. Mrs. Izard lent this book to Mrs. Pinckney and, it having been soiled by accident, she presented Mrs. Izard with a new Edition in lieu thereof.” The book, however, was not so badly soiled that


430 Another Pinckney example is found in a copy of *Sunday Thoughts*, where the inscription reads “Frances Pinckney to her Daughter, Mary G. Elliott.” Frances Brewton Pinckney (1733-1795) was the mother of Charles Pinckney (1757-1824). Her daughter Mary (1761-1820) married Thomas Odingsell Elliott in 1785. See Moses Browne, *Sunday Thoughts: adapted to the Various Intervals of the Christian Sabbath* (London: Printed for A. Millar, 1764), RBSC.

431 This is likely Alice DeLancey Izard, who was living in London at the time.

Pinckney did not keep it for herself. Instead, sensitive to the fact that a book's appearances mattered—and that latest editions were typically the most sought after by South Carolinians—she purchased the work anew.

If Eliza and Harriott are any example, books served as a way for South Carolinian women to strengthen bonds with the men in their lives as well. For example, in returning a book loaned to her by Charles Pinckney, she explained to his first wife how much she enjoyed it and passed along her sincere thanks. Not only did her husband loan her books, but he clearly recognized the importance of books to his wife as evident in his will of 1756. In addition to jewelry, silver, art, and household furniture, Charles Pinckney also left Eliza his “large family Bible and any other fifty Volumes she shall chose out of my Library.” He ordered the remainder of his books to be sold and put towards Charles Cotesworth Pinckney’s education and, when he turned twenty, his own book purchases. Instead of passing his library entirely to his sons or another male relative, as was common in the period, it was Eliza herself who had first pick of books from her husband’s library. Such a gesture speaks volumes of the nature of their relationship, as well as the place of books within it.


Women did not merely take reading recommendations of their husbands. They, too, offered suggestions. Alice DeLancey Izard, for instance, wrote to her husband, “If you have time, or can readily meet with Littleton’s dialogues of the dead, pray read that between Ulysses & Circe.” By interjecting a book into her husband’s reading list, Izard demonstrated her ability to contribute to her husband’s intellectual and leisurely pursuits. Moreover, Lyttleton’s *Dialogues* was a book she assumed he had not yet read but would complement the other works he planned to next read. She went on to tell him where he would find the book (“probably in the Library”) as well as her own appraisal of it. “It is long since I read it, & I do not recollect the whole of it but I remember that I liked it once.” She, like Sarah Campbell in the previous chapter and other female contemporaries clearly knew what books were in the family library. While this perhaps was merely a function of her role as mistress of the household, it is also likely that she herself had contributed the volume given her familiarity and implied history with it.

Indeed, sharing and reading books together as a couple was exceedingly normal. Women and men of the middling and upper classes viewed reading aloud together as a

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“companionable” and “virtuous” pastime. In a letter to her daughter, Margaret, Alice DeLancey Izard revealed one such intimate moment of reading Mary Wollstonecraft’s *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) aloud to her husband:

I have just finished reading the rights of Woman to your Father, i.e.
as much of it as I could read, for I was often obliged to stop, &pass over, & frequently to cough & stammer it. He is as much
disgusted with the book as I am, & calls the author a vulgar,
impudent Hussy.

While we do not know under what circumstances *Vindication* came into Izard’s hands—whether she or her husband purchased it, borrowed it, or received it from friends—we know that the South Carolinian couple agreed to read it for the first time together. And although Izard strongly disagreed with Wollstonecraft’s ideas, she still endeavored to finish reading it rather than set it aside. Importantly, she also reveals how she read—unrehearsed, skipping over the passages she deemed too inflammatory to share with her partner. Whether or not it was, as one historian contends, "practically mandatory" for her as an American woman to "formally reject” the work, Izard’s uneasiness with *Vindication* ultimately led her to censor as she read. Doing so allowed the pair to maintain the virtuousness of the act of reading aloud itself.


438 Alice DeLancey Izard to Margaret Izard Manigault, 29 May 1801 in Manigault Family Papers, South Caroliniana Library.

Women also shared physical copies of books with male friends and family members, as three surviving books of Eliza Lucas Pinckney’s personal library demonstrate.\textsuperscript{440} For instance, \textit{The Complaint, or Night-Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality} (London, 1743), is in the collection of the South Caroliniana Library. \textit{Night-Thoughts} was first advertised for sale at the King Street print shop of Peter Timothy in 1744.\textsuperscript{441} Although it has since been rebound in a pebbled black morocco, it still retains its interior pages, including a flyleaf that reads, in one hand, “This is the Gift of The Revd. Mr. Charles Lorimer. 20 Febr[uar]y 1749 To John Rattray” and, below that, “The Gift of John Rattray Esq. To Eliza Pinckney.”\textsuperscript{442} John Rattray was an attorney in Charlestown and Commons House of Assembly representative of St. Helena Parish.\textsuperscript{443} Except for this one volume, however, no evidence of his relationship with Pinckney survives.\textsuperscript{444} Yet

\textsuperscript{440} Admittedly, these books most likely survive because of the men with whom they are associated, not simply because of their possible connection to Eliza Lucas Pinckney, especially in the case of the two volumes in a private collection.

\textsuperscript{441} “[Advertisement],” 14 May 1744 \textit{South Carolina Gazette}, 3. Timothy advertised the same volume for sale in the September 10th edition of the same year, as well.

\textsuperscript{442} Edward Young, \textit{The Complaint: or, Night-Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality} (London: R. Dodsley, and sold by M. Cooper, 1743). 102-103; Pinckney, Eliza Lucas (c. 1722-1793) MP, vol. bd., 1743, South Caroliniana Library (hereafter SCL).


\textsuperscript{444} The nature of Rattray’s relationship with Lorimer, like his relationship with Pinckney, is also unknown. Moreover, while the title was for sale in Timothy’s shop, it is impossible to say whether Lorimer originally purchased the volume there or acquired it through other means.
there must have been some friendship between the pair for Rattray to give her a book from his own library. And, judging by heavily thumbed through pages and more recent binding, Eliza made the book her own by squeezing a manicule into the small margins of the page and adding a notation referencing an eighth volume of *The Spectator.*

The two other volumes, tree-calf octavos of Jedidiah Morse’s *Universal Geography,* are held in a private collection (Figure 5.7). “Eliza Lucas Pinckney” is inscribed across the top of title pages of both volumes, probably written by Charles Cotesworth Pinckney instead of Eliza herself. Very ill and suffering from advanced breast cancer, she was urged by Charles Cotesworth to travel to Philadelphia to undergo additional treatment. These ultimately failed, and Eliza died on May 26, 1793. If the books were indeed hers, she likely acquired the two just-published volumes during those

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445 Young, *Night-Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality,* 102-103, SCL. While the nineteenth-century binding may have been an aesthetic decision by a subsequent owner, it is not hard to imagine that the original binding was so beat up that it had to be replaced, given the textblock’s physical signs of wear and tear.

446 Jedidiah Morse, *The American Universal Geography, or, a View of the Present State of all the Empires, Kingdoms, States, and Republics in the Known World, and of the United States of America in Particular; In Two Parts* (Boston: Isaiah Thomas and Ebenezer T. Andrews, 1793), [i]; the two-volume set is in a private collection. It is also possible that Charles Cotesworth Pinckney purchased and inscribed the volumes for his third daughter, also named Eliza Lucas Pinckney, who would have been eleven years old at the time. This, however, still supports the argument, made later in this chapter, that South Carolinian men encouraged their daughters to read and acquire books, and make them their own. The younger Eliza Lucas Pinckney also may have received these books from a sister or an aunt, however no other inscriptions, besides that in Charles Cotesworth’s hand, are to be found in either volume.
Figure 5.7. Signature at top of title page of Eliza Lucas Pinckney’s first edition copy of *American Universal Geography, Volume 1* (Boston, 1793). Courtesy of a private collection.
five weeks she was in Philadelphia—either purchasing them herself, or receiving the set as a gift from a visitor. Morse’s *Universal Geography* was noted for its “handsome” binding as well as its contents, which one critic praised for being full of “a greater variety of the most interesting facts & original discoveries respecting our own country … than perhaps in any work hitherto published.” The books were not available in Charleston until at least the summer, and continued to be available throughout the 1790s. For example, Young, one of three booksellers outside of Boston authorized to sell the work, advertised an “assortment of Books” for sale, including “Morse’s Universal Geography, 2 vols. … and variety of other new publications.” The inscription of Eliza’s name by her oldest son, and its incorporation into his own collection of books, suggests that the set functioned as a memorial to his mother’s memory and love of reading, much like a mourning ring or other sentimental token might.

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450 As Leah Price suggests, “books can link their successive readers, owners, and handlers … even across the line that divides the living from the dead.” Price, *How to Do Things with Books*, 13.
While mothers and sons shared books, fathers, too, encouraged and bonded with daughters over reading material. Edward Rutledge, for example, frequently encouraged his daughter, Sarah, to focus on her books while abroad in the 1790s—just as he did for his son. In one particular letter, he jokingly complained that her “Readings & writing, & French, & Geography, and playing & dancing” must have gotten in the way of letter-writing, as evidenced by her short missives. Further evidence in volume one of *Memoirs of the Bloomsgrove Family* (Boston, 1790) also suggests Charles Pinckney shared books with his daughter. Dedicated to Martha Washington, *Memoirs* was female prescriptive literature “suited,” as both the subscription proposal and title page claimed,

451 Edward Rutledge to Sarah Rutledge, Charleston, August 13, 1794; Rutledge, Edward, 1749-1800, Letters to Sarah Rutledge, 1793-1799, SCHS Folder 43/770. Given that Sarah was purposefully sent to England for her studies, just like her brother, Rutledge’s actions clearly demonstrate that he viewed his daughter as equally capable of book learning. In fact, Rutledge explicitly expressed this idea in another letter to her: “I never had the least doubt, my charming little Girl about either your Capacity or Inclination to learn; because I have watched over your Genius, and there I discover’d the first.” See Edward Rutledge to Sarah Rutledge, 11 January 1793 in Letters to Sarah Rutledge, 1793-1799, SCHS Folder 43/770. This, moreover, contradicts Alice DeLancey Izard’s observation, in response to Wollstonecraft, that girls should not be educated in the same way as boys. See Alice DeLancey Izard to Margaret Izard Manigault, 29 May 1801 in Manigault Family Papers, SCL.


“to the present state of Society, Government and Manners in the United States.”

Similar to other works in this genre, it also praised the virtues of the country’s female citizens. Inside the plain calf volume with “Domestic Memoirs” gilt-stamped on its spine, Pinckney signed and dated the book “August 2d. 1790,” two years after his marriage to Mary Eleanor Laurens. On a rear flyleaf, a second hand inscribed “M L P 1812” in white chalk, evidently while the book was turned upside-down (Figure 5.8). Because Mary Laurens Pinckney, Charles’ wife, died in 1794, the inscription must have been made by his second oldest daughter, Mary Eleanor Laurens Pinckney, when she was nineteen or twenty years old. Whether she read the entirety of Memoirs, she evidently felt that the book was as much hers as it was her father’s. Claiming the volume as her own was just one way a young woman like Pinckney could actively take charge of her own development as a citizen in the early republic era.

None of these women, however, ought to be considered outliers because of their privileged status. A survey of South Carolina probate inventories suggests that women in

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454 Hitchcock, Memoirs, [i]; “Proposal,” January 20, 1790, Gazette of the United States, 324.

455 Norton, Liberty’s Daughters, 243.


457 This is in contrast to the colonial era when, as Rosemarie Zagarri argues, “women’s place was primarily ornamental. In a republic where the people governed themselves, women could shape the values and ideals of the populace.” See Rosemarie Zagarri, Revolutionary Backlash: Women and Politics in the Early American Republic (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 19.
Figure 5.8. Rear flyleaf (upside down) of *Memoirs of the Bloomsgrove Family, Volume 1* (Boston, 1790). Collection of the Irvin Department of Rare Books, University of South Carolina-Columbia.
the eighteenth-century South did indeed own books and, just like their male counterparts, integrated those volumes into their homes and daily lives. If bookcases and their contents, like portraits, are viewed as carefully constructed displays of personal identity, it is especially striking, then, when one shows up in a woman’s probate inventory. While owning a bookcase did not necessarily mean a woman owned books—or even that her books were necessarily kept or displayed there—a number of South Carolinian women had such furnishings in their homes. A sample of female probate inventories reveals that bookcases were increasingly common furnishings as the eighteenth century wore on. In the 1750s, bookcase-ownership was largely confined to elite women like Elizabeth Bellinger Elliott, who had one “Book case” full of “Sundry books.” By the 1770s, however, more women were likely to count a bookcase among their possessions. Bookcases, especially fashionable ones, were often the most valuable pieces of household furniture, like the “desk and book case with glass doors” that planter Benjamin Webb left his widow, appraised at £150. The inventory of Margaret Darby, on the other hand, is

458 It is nearly impossible, however, even in inventories that include such case furniture, to know what books if any were on display in a woman’s bookcase using probate inventories alone.

459 Inventory of Elizabeth Bellinger Elliott, 12 April 1755, vol. 82B, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

460 Inventory of Benjamin Webb, 16 November 1776, vol. 100, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.
much more typical. It includes her desk, bookcase, “toilet and some Boxes” as one line item, valued altogether for a combined £55.\textsuperscript{461}

At the same time, a bookcase was not a necessary \textit{accoutrement} for a proper personal book collection. Just like men of the period, women kept books in corner cupboards and chests, or stacked on tables, stools, or desks. It was also fashionable to keep books close at hand on tabletops and desks.\textsuperscript{462} For example, Mary Seabrook, whose estate included a “Bible and Parcel of Old Books,” may have kept this collection on a “Large Mahogany Table,” “round Tea” table, or on top of her “old wrinting Desk.”\textsuperscript{463} But it is also worth bearing in mind that books just as easily may have been stored in closets, out of view of visitors as well as estate appraisers.

In general, the impression one gets from probate inventories is that women’s personal libraries were rarely the most financially valuable part of their estate. For instance, Sarah Waring of St. James Goose Creek’s “Parcel of Books” were valued £5 less than her small collection of rings, buckles and a locket, and paled in comparison to the value of her seven slaves, who were appraised at

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{461} Inventory of Margaret Darby, 11 September 1777, vol. 98, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

\footnote{462} Williams, \textit{Social Life of Books}, 54.

\footnote{463} Account of the Estate of Mary Seabrook sold at Vendue, 3 February 1753, vol. 82A, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL. All of these, with the exception of the writing desk, were purchased by William Harvey. He paid £5 for her book collection.
\end{footnotes}
£770.464 Pricilla Arthur’s collection, worth ten shillings of her £370 estate, seems even more paltry relative to her ten enslaved Africans valued at £6,400.465 Old books were particularly common and also the least valuable, as demonstrated by Ann Stevens’ “Parcel of old Book[s]” appraised for ten shillings out of an estate worth £4,282.466 Indeed, for most women who owned books in this period, their collections were typically small and valued at £10 or less.467

Moreover, the contents of these personal libraries are often obscured by male valuators’ vague language. Appraisers also regularly lumped books together. For example, Sarah Hext owned a bible and “[several] other books.”468 Her contemporary, Mary Cole of John’s Island, had a “Lott of Books” and one “Large

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464 Inventory of Sarah Waring, 3 May 1756, vol. 82B, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

465 Inventory of Pricilla Arthur, 29 January 1779, vol. 99B, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

466 Inventory of Ann Stevens, 19 September 1753, vol. 82A, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL. Jane Baynes Taylor, who also died in the 1750s, also owned “2 Old Books,” however they were likely large folio volumes given their £5 appraised value. See inventory of Jane Baynes Taylor, 14 March 1757, vol. 84, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

467 For example, Elizabeth Broughton had “a Parcell of Books” valued at £10, or £2 less than her gold buckle and buttons; Inventory of Elizabeth Broughton, 2 May 1757, vol. 84, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

468 Inventory of Sarah Hext, 2 June 1755, vol. 82B, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.
“Parcels” were also common. At other times, “books” were all that was listed, buried in a line of seemingly random articles like trunks and jugs. Although such terms are frustrating, they nonetheless conceptually attribute books to female owners in the years prior to 1800.

Other appraisers offered slightly more detail in their inventories, for example delineating women’s books by language. Charlotte La Tour owned a “folio French Bible £3 and other French Books £10,” as well as a “Parcell of English Books £5.” Christina Ehny possessed a “Lott [of] German Books,” possibly kept on one of two mahogany desks. Although she published the *South-Carolina Gazette* from 1739 to 1746 and sold books out of her shop, printer Elizabeth Timothy had only “a parcel of old Books” and two “French Bibles” in her possession when she died in 1757. Where books appear in languages other than English, we thus find evidence of women’s heritage or linguistic skills and, potentially, their desires to sustain connections with distant communities. Other

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469 Inventory of Mary Cole, 31 May 1757, vol. 84, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL. Presumably, “large” here indicates a folio-sized volume.

470 Inventory of Mary Smith, 5 October 1776, vol. 100, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

471 Inventory of Charlotte La Tour, 1 July 1756, vol. 82B, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

472 Inventory of Christina Ehny, September 1777, vol. 98, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

473 Inventory of Elizabeth Timothy, 2 July 1757, vol. 84, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.
inventories provided even more details about books by including subject matter or authors and shortened titles, revealing the interests and preoccupations of their female owners. Elizabeth Harleston, for example, owned one “Book on the discourse of Sin,” and Elizabeth Ladson owned a “Bible & Dictionary.” A five-volume folio set of “Henry on the Bible” was included in Ann Izard’s estate.

All this goes to show just how varied probate inventories are, largely due to the expertise or momentary whims of appraisers.

Of course, not all women owned books or held them in high regard, either because they were illiterate or needed money. Although her husband owned “a Parcel of Old Books” valued at £1 in June 1758, Martha Smith sold the collection for eight shillings a few months later. Tellingly, the mark she left on the copy of the estate sale hints that she was unable to write—and, possibly, unable to read. This was especially

Harleston may have read this book in the easy chair, valued at ten times the price of this singular volume, that was also listed in her inventory. Inventory of Elizabeth Harleston, 14 February 1757, vol. 84, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL; Inventory of Elizabeth Ladson, 30 December 1780, vol. 100, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

Inventory of Ann Izard, 11 February 1755, vol. 82B, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

Inventory of Samuel Smith, 11 July 1758, and Copy of the Sale of the Estate of Samuel Smith, 22 August 1758, vol. 84, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

In the colonial period, it was common for girls to be taught to read, and then to write, at home by one or both of their parents. If Smith could do neither, however, it would explain why she chose to sell her husband’s books, rather than keep them as mementos. See Mary Kelley, *Learning to Stand and Speak: Women, Education, and Public Life in America’s Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 35; E. Jennifer Monaghan, *Learning to Read and Write in Colonial America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 237.
common among poorer sorts. A number of women’s probate inventories, particularly those with smaller estates, do not include books at all. It is worth noting, however, that administrators very well may have misattributed books when compiling inventory their inventories. For example, an “old Oak Desk” and a “Red Bay Desk” were listed in the estate of Elizabeth Graves, while “a Lott of Books” were attributed to her husband, who died on the same day.478

Taken together, though, such evidence contradicts the notion that women did not own books and also forces us to rethink what constitutes a personal library. Collections did not necessarily need to include hundreds of volumes to be recognized as a library. In fact, many did not. But where the record appears silent, especially in probate inventories, extant books, correspondence, portraiture and decorative arts fill in the gaps and allow us to better understand eighteenth-century book culture from a woman’s perspective.

Granted, the majority, if not all, of the female-owned books that survive today belonged to the most elite women of the Lowcountry. That does not mean their individual experiences of reading, book-borrowing, and book-owning are not informative, however. While quantity and quality of books may have varied drastically, literate Southern women—not merely the esteemed Pinckneys or Izards—shared this literary culture. They chose their reading materials carefully, ever mindful of books’ influence on personal character, amassed their own collections, and used books to bond with husbands, children, and one another. And although the subject matter and society’s views of what constituted

478 Inventory of Elizabeth Graves, 9 September 1776, vol. 99A, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL; Inventory of Charles Graves, 9 September 1776, vol. 99A, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.
“appropriate” reading material may have changed over time, women nonetheless read widely of their own volition. It is only by acknowledging their agency as consumers and self-cultivating individuals that we can hope to correct the image of Southern female readers in the eighteenth century.
EPILOGUE. “THE WORLD IS A BOOK OPEN”

Published by Charleston bookseller W. P. Young in 1802, John Drayton’s *View of South-Carolina, as Respects her Natural and Civil Concerns* was a detailed study produced by the state’s governor during his term, and travels, in office. In it, he wrote on the climate, geography, agriculture, government, culture, and society of the state. Turning to literature, he squarely blamed the colonial government and overly-anglophile society for South Carolina’s lack of local educational institutions and a homegrown literary culture. “Before the American war, the citizens of Carolina were too much prejudiced in favour of British manners, customs, and knowledge, to imagine that elsewhere, than in England, any thing of advantage could be obtained,” he lamented. “This prejudice was encouraged by the mother country; and hence the children of opulent persons were sent there for education.” Drayton himself, born on Magnolia Plantation, was one of those “opulent persons” who attended the Inner Temple in London to complete his legal studies. While it is unlikely he regretted his own educational opportunities, he clearly

479 John Drayton, *A View of South-Carolina, as Respects Her Natural and Civil Concerns* (Charleston: Printed by W. P. Young, No. 41, Broad-Street, 1802), 217; private collection.

480 As Drayton also observed, “During the American war … and since the peace of 1783, young men have been sent to colleges in the northern and eastern states of this union, for finishing their education.” He, too, was a product of this popular elite trajectory, having attended the College of New Jersey prior to the completion of his law schooling in London. See Drayton, *View of South-Carolina*, 218.
recognized the divide between wealthy elites and “those who could not enter into this expensive mode of acquiring knowledge” whose studies “seldom exceeded” grammar school.\footnote{Drayton, \textit{View of South-Carolina}, 218.}

Moreover, he recognized the cultural differences between those “leading men in this state,” who had spent time abroad completing their studies and cultivating their refinement on the Grand Tour, and the general population, who had neither the wealth nor opportunity to do so. By making institutions of reading and books more accessible, however, he envisioned a way to bridge the wide—and widening—sociocultural gap in the state. In fact, Drayton was a leading voice in the the founding of the South Carolina College, now the University of South Carolina, at centrally-located Columbia.\footnote{Drayton boasted about the founding of the South Carolina College, himself a trustee, explaining that its establishment sprung “from the united voice of an enlightened legislature” that was intended as “a rallying point of union, friendship, and learning.” See Drayton, \textit{View of South-Carolina}, 220.} Despite being a champion of expanded educational opportunities, though, Drayton was himself a product of the very culture he seemed to deride. His \textit{View of South-Carolina} was not widely published—likely 500 copies or fewer of the octavo volume came off Young’s press—and contained what can only be described as decidedly learned prose, including a five-page annotated bibliography of all South Carolina histories that had been published to date.\footnote{The subheading of “Histories” can be found in chapter three. Drayton, \textit{View of South-Carolina}, 174-79.}
Yet while Drayton bemoaned that “the literature of the state, is by no means arrived at that point of respectability,” many South Carolinians of the revolutionary generation, Drayton included, encouraged reading culture at the turn of the century. Drayton himself transcribed the entirety of *Flora Caroliniana* by Thomas Walter (London, 1788) in 1798 by hand and presented the manuscript—which imitated the printed form—to the Charleston Library Society. He included his own editorial additions, too, such as an appendix and an author’s note, clearly stating his reasoning for producing the work: “As Mr Walter’s *Flora Caroliniana* is not in the Charleston Library, being a book rarely to be met with; and as it contains a greater number of plants indigenous to this State, than any other particular work in the library; it is hoped this

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485 John Drayton, *The Carolinian Florist; as adapted (in English) To the more ready use of the Flora Caroliniana, of Thomas Walter* (Charleston, 1798); Facsimile of John Drayton’s 1798 manuscript from original in the collection of the Charleston Library Society. The Charleston Library Society also has another manuscript Drayton work, the handwritten draft of his *View of South-Carolina* which includes notes to the printer, illustration placement instructions, as well as the layout for the entire text. Manuscripts such as these are as rich as extant printed works with extensive marginalia, but, unfortunately, very understudied by historians. As David Shields reminds us, “every new book, every original article in every newspaper or magazine, every law, every first-run advertisement, derived from manuscript copy” and, moreover, people “often borrowed volumes and copied passages into manuscript” due to the “scarcity of books in British America.” Additionally, Drayton’s manuscript copies of both works would allow book historians to address a glaring gap in our understanding of book design. See David S. Shields, “The Manuscript in the British American World of Print” *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 102 (1993), 404 & 409; Michael Winship, “Publishing in America: Needs and Opportunities for Research,” *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 96 (1986), 143.
manuscript may not be unacceptable.” Not only were books recognized as repositories of useful information, but they were also key to exposing those who might not otherwise travel abroad to different cultures, societies, and worldviews. This is farther evidenced in Drayton’s donation to the South Carolina College Library in 1816. Those books, now found in Thomas Cooper Library, underscore the varied interests of a man who sought to influence young, curious minds. Each volume includes a gift inscription, and one, *Memoirs of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* (Cambridge, 1815), even includes Drayton’s extensive marginalia making the northern-centric publication more relevant to the South Carolinian reader by including distinct vocabulary, phrases, or uses, such as the preference of "Honorable" over “Esquire” or the "unfortunate" popularity of the “barbarous & beastly” practice of “gouging” in "South Carolina, and other Southern states of the Union.” Where books had once helped to knit provincial South Carolinians to the mother country, they instead became tools used to forge state identity and national citizenship in the early republic period.

It perhaps goes without saying that Drayton was largely interested in cultivating “leading men.” Nowhere in his subsection on “Literature” does he speak of female educational opportunities or reading in the state. Yet those far-too-British leading men of

486 Drayton, *Carolinian Florist*, [v].

487 John Pickering, “Memoir on the Present State of the English Language in the United States of America; with a Vocabulary, containing various words and phrases which have been supposed to be peculiar to this country” in *Memoirs of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Volume III—Part II* (Cambridge: Printed by Hilliard and Metcalf, 1815): 476, 482-83; RBSC. Drayton also cites his own publication in a manuscript footnote for the word “pine-barrens” that reads “See Drayton’s View of So: Carolina for an explanation of this phrase” on page 534.
the revolutionary generation imprinted the same interest in books and reading upon their own children—including the girls who continued to participate in book culture into the early years of the new century. Indeed, for a brief period throughout 1806, the Charleston Spectator and Ladies’ Port Folio encouraged women, particularly mothers with daughters, to cultivate worldly children for the benefit of the nation. “The World is a book open to women;” the editors wrote, “Yet a prudent mother of a family, instead of being a woman of the world, lives as recluse a life as a nun.”

Women, then, ought to be worldly and well-read themselves, the authors argued, or else one would be unable to introduce “her daughter” to the world “in its real colours.” The Charlestonian vision of republican motherhood thus included the culture of reading so prevalent in the latter half of the eighteenth century.

South Carolinian women also participated in interstate and transatlantic book culture in the early nineteenth century, particularly exchanging books with the women and girls in their lives—patterns begun in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Margaret Izard Manigault complained to a friend in 1809 that although “anybody can now get books from England,” she hoped she could still serve as a conduit for literature

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to Mary Stead Pinckney.\(^{490}\) “If I can be of any use,” she wrote, “Pray command me. Your books — that is 5 volumes of [Papillon] — & 3 of Dutens, I have packed up & will deliver to Mrs. Heyward to keep until you come to Town.”\(^{491}\) Such exchanges were not limited to Charleston. They were also increasingly commonplace in the upstate. In a letter addressed to Mary Chesnut, Esther Cox recommended “a very usefull” “little Book” entitled “the Nurse’s Guide” as well as the “Popular Tales of Maria Edgeworth” for Chesnut’s daughter Serena.\(^{492}\) As a female friend in Philadelphia, Cox thus supported the medical care of Mary’s large family and encouraged reading and book ownership in her friend’s daughter.\(^{493}\)

Into the first quarter of the nineteenth century, however, and across genders, book-ownership—and all of its trappings—began to change. Local cabinetmakers were edged out of the market by northern cabinetmaking firms who, recognizing the potential for profit, opened up Charleston showrooms that drew increasingly wealthy South Carolina


\(^{492}\) Esther Cox to Mary Chesnut, 19 July 1806, Cox and Chesnut Family Papers, South Caroliniana Library, Columbia, SC.

\(^{493}\) While Maria Edgeworth’s works were popular in America at the time, it is also worth noting that Edgeworth’s literary career was encouraged by her father. See Elizabeth Harden, *Maria Edgeworth* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1984), 1.
consumers. The form of bookcases also changed. It became fashionable to tack vibrant fabrics to the backs of glazed doors, thereby concealing personal libraries and highlighting the craftsmanship of evermore fanciful mullions and detailed veneers. Disguising one’s private collection in this way may also have been an evolution in book display triggered, on the one hand, by the end of the hand-press period when production became increasingly cheaper and ownership more widespread around 1820, and, on the other, fears of literacy among the state’s large enslaved population.494

Books, nonetheless, remained important to this older generation of South Carolinians into the first half of the nineteenth century. Charles Pinckney, for his part, continued to inscribe his books with the date and location where he read them. In several instances, he even documented when he reread books. For example, on the front pastedown of *Thoughts in Prison* (Boston, 1782), he inscribed three times: “Charles Pinckney. Boston October 8 1784” (in ink), “July 4 1812” and “February 10, 1814” (both in pencil).495 Pinckney also reread Hester Piozzi’s *Letters to and from the late Samuel* 494 For more on anxiety about proper book ownership among elite classes, see Leah Price’s *How to Read Books in Victorian Britain*; on slave literacy, see E. Jennifer Monaghan’s “Reading for the Enslaved, Writing for the Free: Reflections on Liberty and Literacy” *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* (2000): 309-341.

495 William Dodd, *Thoughts in Prison: In Five Parts* (Boston: Printed by Robert Hodge, at his Office, in Marshall’s Lane, near the Boston Store, 1782); RBSC.
Johnson (Dublin, 1788) in 1810, twenty-two years after he first purchased and read the book in Charleston.\textsuperscript{496}

During these same years, the libraries of the revolutionary generation were divided, sold, or lost as their original owners passed away. Edward Rutledge left his wife his entire library, except for his law books which he gave to his son.\textsuperscript{497} Christopher Gadsden (1724-1805) gave all of his “books and pamphlets in Hebrew Greek and Latin … together with the proper books of Gram[ma]r &c. appertaining thereto” to grandsons Christopher Edwards, John Gadsden, and James Gadsden, while his other grandsons, Christopher, Thomas, and James Morris, received “all my English books.”\textsuperscript{498} William Alston (1756-1839), whose bookplates—including the name of the plantation library from which they came—can be found in a number of privately-owned volumes, gave his sons Thomas Pinckney Alston and Charles Cotesworth Pinckney Alston “all my books both in Charleston and in the country.”\textsuperscript{499} A number of volumes featuring the signature of

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\textsuperscript{496} Hester Lynch Piozzi, *Letters to and from the late Samuel Johnson, LL.D. to which are added, Some Poems Never Before Printed. In Two Volumes.* (Dublin: Printed for Messrs. R. Moncrieffe, L. White, P. Byrne, P. Wogan, W. Porter, H. Colbert, J. Moore, J. Jones, 1788); RBSC. Pinckney inscribed the front pastedown once on December 6, 1788 (“Charles Pinckney. Charleston December 6 1788”) and again, decades later, with the date “May 24, 1810.”

\textsuperscript{497} Will of Edward Rutledge, 7 February 1800, Charleston County Wills, Vol. 25 1793-1800; Charleston County Wills, CCPL.

\textsuperscript{498} Will of Christopher Gadsden, 5 June 1804, Charleston County Wills, Vol. 30, Book D, 1800-1807, CCPL.

\textsuperscript{499} Will of William Alston, 29 November 1838, Charleston County Wills, Vol. 41, 1834-1839, CCPL.
Margaret Izard Manigault and the circa 1818 bookplate of her son, Charles Izard Manigault, are also indicative of the partial journeys of surviving volumes.\textsuperscript{500} Gift inscriptions, like that found in a duodecimo bible in the Charleston Museum’s archive, are indicative of patronage, friendship, and intellectual respect between the artist Charles Fraser and one of his repeat clients, John Gadsden.\textsuperscript{501}

Individual books were repurposed, altered, and, sometimes, prior owners’ marks rendered anonymous entirely. John C. Calhoun vigorously crossed out David Ramsay’s small signature on a flyleaf and made his own mark—a sweeping signature taking up the width of the octavo page—in order to claim his ownership over a book (Figure 6.1).\textsuperscript{502} More dramatically, some ownership marks may be preserved but, earlier, eighteenth-century owners are obscured or removed entirely, as is the case with Charles Izard

\textsuperscript{500} For example, Charles Izard Manigault’s bookplate is found on the front pastedown of \textit{Letters on Greece}, the title page of which is signed by his mother, Margaret Izard Manigault. See M. Savary, \textit{Letters on Greece; being the Sequel of Letters on Egypt} (London: Printed for C. Elliot, and T. Kay, opposite Somerset Place, No 332, Stand, London; and C. Elliot, Edinburgh, 1788); RBSC.

\textsuperscript{501} The front free endpaper of the morroco-bound volume, in a hand that matches Fraser’s ink signature on the front fly, is inscribed “given to me by Jno. Gadsden;” \textit{Book of Common Prayer}, CM. In the 1820s, Charles Fraser depicted both Gadsden and himself with books in hand in their individual portraits. See Charles Fraser’s \textit{John Gadsden}, 1827, watercolor on ivory and \textit{Self-portrait}, 1823, watercolor on ivory in the miniature collection of the Gibbes Museum of Art. It is worth noting that Fraser depicts neither himself nor Gadsden with a background of packed library shelves, as were popular backdrops in the latter eighteenth century portraiture.

\textsuperscript{502} \textit{The Origin of Laws, Arts, and Sciences and their Progress among the most Ancient Nations, Volume III} (Edinburgh: Printed for George Robinson, Paternoster-row, and Alexander Donaldson, St. Paul’s Church-yard, London, 1775); private collection.
Manigault’s signature and bookplate in *Dr. Radcliffe’s Practical Dispensatory* (London, 1730), but the signature of a prior owner at the top of the title page has been clipped out.  

Charles Cotesworth Pinckney Alston, in contrast, collected the signatures of revolutionary-era relatives, tipping the rectangular slips of paper into the front pastedown of his 1826 edition of *The Federalist*, transforming the political tract into a memorial to his relations (Figure 6.2).  

Others still served as both useful references as well as tokens of friendship, as with André Michaux’s copy of *Flora Caroliniana*, an octavo in original blue boards that contains Michaux’s manuscript marginalia, corrections and index as well as a pressed Maple leaf, owned by Henry Middleton (1770-1846) and used as a reference when redesigning the gardens at Middleton Place in the early nineteenth century.  

Some

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503 Edward Strother, *Dr. Radcliffe’s Practical Dispensatory. Containing a Complete Body of Prescriptions, Fitted for all Diseases Internal and External, Digested under proper Heads … Fifth Edition, with Additions and Amendments*. (London: Printed for C. Rivington, at the Bible and Crown in St. Paul’s Church-yard, 1730), [i]; private collection. Manigault sometimes included information identifying past owners of books, such as an inscription that reads “This Old Family Bible belonged to our Esteemed Ancestor GABRIEL MANIGAULT, who Died in 1781, Aged 77 Years” in David Martin’s *La Sainte Bible* (Amsterdam, 1707), also in the same private collection.

504 *The Federalist, on the New Constitution, written in the year 1788, by Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Madison, and Mr. Jay: with an Appendix, containing the Letters of Pacificus and Helvidius, on the Proclamation of Neutrality of 1793; Also, the Original Articles of Confederation, and the Constutition of the United States, with the Amendments Made Thereto. A New Edition. The Numbers Written by Mr. Madison Corrected by Himself*. (Hallowell, Maine: Printed and Published by Glazier & Co., 1826); private collection.

505 Thomas Walter, *Flora Caroliniana* (London: J. Fraser, 1788); MPF. The top of the title page features an inscription in pencil, “(N. B. This was Michaux’s Copy),” in addition to Henry Middleton’s signature in ink. The maple leaf can be found pressed between pages 216 and 217.
Figure 6.2. Tipped-in signatures of Charles Cotesworth Pinckney Alston’s revolutionary relatives in his copy of *The Federalist* (Hallowell, 1826). Courtesy of a private collection.
books provided paper upon which later generations doodled, as seen in a charming portrait of the Gilchrist children drawing in their father’s law book, as they surely did in the eighteenth century, too (Figure 6.3).\textsuperscript{506} It was not until after the first quarter of the nineteenth century, however, that the more formal portraits of gentlemen at ease in their libraries, like those of David Ramsay and Edward Rutledge in the mid-1790s, were edged out by sitters in more informal arrangements. While books were still a popular prop in nineteenth-century portraiture, the background of mahogany shelves lined with books bound in calf had, for most sitters and their painters, fallen out of fashion.

While some books were packed away in trunks or boxes and forgotten—seemingly long past their expiration date of interest to readers of later generations—others merely functioned (and continue to function to this day) as decorative objects, giving an air of gravitas and history to modern living rooms and studies. Despite this, those volumes that do survive provide physical proof of the culture of reading and book ownership that shows up time and again in correspondence, commonplace books, wills, and inventories in the South Carolina Lowcountry prior to 1800. In fact, it is largely thanks to the accidental preservation efforts of families that any of the books, and bookcases, survive today at all.\textsuperscript{507} Personal libraries need not have been large, nor the

\textsuperscript{506} George Cooke, Robert and Elizabeth Gilchrist, 1836, oil on canvas; Gibbes Museum of Art. In the double portrait, Robert completes the tail of a horse in the title page’s blank space in William Harper, Reports of the Equity Cases Determined by the Courts of Appeals of the State of South Carolina (Charleston, 1824).

\textsuperscript{507} As David Hall points out, “other than by descent within families, few means were available for preserving any of these collections” of eighteenth-century family libraries. See David D. Hall, “Learned Culture in the Eighteenth Century” in History of the Book in America, Vol. 1, 422.
Figure 6.3. *Robert and Elizabeth Gilchrist*, 1836, oil on canvas, by George Cooke. Bequest of Emma Gilchrist; collection of the Gibbes Museum of Art, Charleston, South Carolina.
property and production of elite men, to be worthy of study today. Books were viewed as a means of improvement. It was essential for one to read (and, where possible, own) books in order to become a well-rounded individual and citizen, especially for those who did not have the opportunity to travel beyond South Carolina’s borders. Indeed, as eighteenth-century Lowcountry personal libraries, and the culture of reading that surrounded them, demonstrate, it is through reading widely, carefully, and extensively—purposefully exposing ourselves to narratives, worldviews, and cultures other than our own—that we can better know ourselves and become conscientious, informed individuals.

FINIS.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books, Bookcases, Manuscripts, and Portraiture

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Drayton Hall (Charleston, SC)
Irvin Department of Rare Books (University of South Carolina-Columbia, SC)
Massachusetts Historical Society (Boston, MA)
Middleton Place Foundation (Charleston, SC)
Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts (Winston-Salem, NC)
The National Archives at Kew (United Kingdom)
The New York Public Library Digital Collections (New York, NY)
South Carolina Historical Society (Charleston, SC)
South Caroliniana Library (Columbia, SC)

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Charleston Spectator and Ladies’ Literary Port Folio (Charleston, SC)
City Gazette and Daily Advertiser (Charleston, SC)
Columbian Herald (Charleston, SC)

Federal Gazette and Philadelphia Daily Advertiser (Philadelphia, PA)

Gazette of the State of South Carolina (Charleston, SC)

General Evening Post (London)

Georgia Gazette (Savannah, GA)

Newport Mercury (Newport, RI)

New York Journal (New York, NY)

New York Mercury (New York, NY)

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APPENDIX A. INVENTORIES OF BOOKSELLERS & BOOKBINDERS

The following inventories, transcribed from probate inventories, highlight the works owned and peddled by Lowcountry booksellers and shopkeepers. They are particularly unique, especially when compared to other itemized library catalogues, because of the details included, such as book size or missing volumes of a set. For example, while George Wood’s inventory is arranged by “folio,” “quarto,” “octavo,” et cetera, those in Moses Darquier’s inventory are simply listed with a number that corresponds to book size. In contrast, although he too sold books, printer Charles Crouch’s inventory is the least detailed. While values are listed in these inventories, I have ultimately decided not to include these because it was not clear if value was determined by prices the booksellers had themselves set and written inside the books’ covers, or if values were instead determined by the appraisers.

1. Moses Darquier, Bookseller of Jacksonburgh, South Carolina. 546 volumes appraised at £60. Appraised 27 May 1771, in vol. 94A, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

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Ditto of Prince Eugene 8 1
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1 Vol of a sett pocket bibles
Dictionary of Arts and Sciences 6 4
Calthrops [Reports] 8 1
A Fathers Council to his Son 8 1
Aristotles problems 8 1
4 Pamphlets
2 Musick Books Bound
Life of God in the soul of Man 12 1
1 Vol. of Jouph Andrews 8
1 Old pocket Bible

2. **George Wood**, bookseller of Charlestown, appraised 1777; vol. 100, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL. Wood’s inventory is also unique in that it begins by including binding details, suggesting that the assessors of his estate set out paying attention to the material aspects of the books, but ultimately switched to classification by book size for efficiency. Moreover, the spelling and shortness of book titles, as
they appear in the inventory, suggests that the appraisers copied titles from spine labels.

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\(^{508}\) Shorthand for *Book of Common Prayer*.

\(^{509}\) “Small” here probably means smaller than a duodecimo, which is the smallest size that appears in the categorized portion of the inventory.
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<td>2</td>
<td>Twelve-month prayer book</td>
<td>Small Black gilt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Twelve-month prayer book</td>
<td>Small Morocco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>French prayer book</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>French prayer book</td>
<td>Plain Sheep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>French prayer book</td>
<td>Smallest Morocco gilt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>French prayer book without psalms</td>
<td>Blue gilt</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Companion to the Alter</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Scots Psalm books</td>
<td>Black gilt</td>
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_Folios_

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<tbody>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Stackhouse on the Bible</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Burket on New Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Flavels Works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ainsworth’s Dictionary</td>
</tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Beauvis Lex Meriato</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Hawkins Pleas on the Crown</td>
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<td>Jacob’s Law Dictionary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>System of Geogafey [sic.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Delphens Spanish Dictionary</td>
</tr>
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<td>Montfousan’s Travels</td>
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<td>Quantity</td>
<td>Title</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Cruden’s Concordance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Langley’s Architect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Swan’s Carpenter Instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Boyer’s French Dictionary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Preceptor</td>
</tr>
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<td>Guthrey’s Cicero</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Virgil Delphene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Horace [Delphene]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Schreveli Lexicon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Nelson’s Festivals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Stanhope’s “hempes”?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Kent’s Luccan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Matt’s Logich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Juvenal Delphene</td>
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<td>Do. Second hand</td>
</tr>
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<td>Smith’s Longinas</td>
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<td>Demosthenes Orations</td>
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<td>Clark’s Salcust</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quantity</td>
<td>Title</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Shurlock on Death</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Demonsthenes Cicernisque Vitae</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Davidson’s Phadreis</td>
</tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Plackloch’s Paradeseus</td>
</tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Martin’s Pheloso Grammar</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Natural Shorthand books</td>
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<td>Every man his Own Lawyer</td>
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**Duodecimos**

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<td>Theobold Shakespear[e]</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Molier [Molière] Plays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Peregren [Peregrine] Pickle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Jiti Livi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Harvey’s Letters</td>
</tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Continental Journey</td>
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<td>British Apollo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Plutarch’s Lives</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Guardian</td>
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<td>Westley’s hymns</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Brahen’s fariery</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Persian &amp; Turkish tales</td>
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228
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<td>Bragen’s Pocket fariery</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Gilblas</td>
</tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Don Quixote</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Tom Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Young’s Works</td>
</tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Mayer’s Arithmatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rollens’ Belles letters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pope's Odycceys [Odysseus]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Jenks Devotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pope’s Works</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Pleni Epestale</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Scots Christian’s Life</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Boston fourfold Stall</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Cook’s Terrence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>LaBell Assemblee</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Nelson’s Trece Devotion</td>
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<td>Hudson’s french Guides</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Young Mans Companion</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Dodd Comport</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Afflected Mans Companion</td>
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<td>Quantity</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
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<td>----------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Gay’s Fables</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Clarke’s Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Cyrus Travels</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Dodredg’s [Doderidge’s] Rise &amp; Progress</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Payton’s french Grammar</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Culpepper’s English Physician</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Setts [of] Nature Display’d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Family Instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Lettes prayer books</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Religious Courtships</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Matrimony[?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sett [of] Peruvian Tales</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Moral Tales</td>
</tr>
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<td>Gulliver’s Travels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sammon’s Gazeteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Greek &amp; Lattin Testaments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Paradice Regain’d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Hoyl’s Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Greek Testaments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lott of School Books & Odd Vol[umes]
3. **Charles Crouch**, Printer of Charlestown, South Carolina; appraised [1777], vol. 98, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL. Crouch began the *South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal* in late 1765 and, like many printers, also sold books in addition to newspapers, pamphlets, and forms.

*Listed Title*

Addison’s Swift’s, & Pope’s Works 27 volumes

[Tillotson’s] Advisors

Harvey’s Meditation [and] Dialogues

Christian Warrior

Young’s Works

Thomson’s Works

[Locke’s] Essays

Nelson’s Liberties

Addison’s [Works]

Freethinker

[Gentleman’s] Library

[Doddridge’s] Life

2 Bibles, 1 prayer Book

1 old Garretteen, Bailey’s & Johnson’s Dictionary

4. **James Taylor**, Bookbinder of Charlestown, South Carolina; appraised 23 August 1776, vol. 100, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL. While Taylor’s probate
inventory is dominated by quires of paper of varying sizes, calf skins, and morocco “of different Colours,” he also kept a number of books on hand, presumably for sale, in his shop.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Volumes</th>
<th>Listed Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Gilt Prayer Books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Psalm Books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52 vols.</td>
<td>new Books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lott [of]</td>
<td>Blank Books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot [of]</td>
<td>French Bibles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B. ESTATE SALES

Estate sales were just one of the ways South Carolinians acquired books in the eighteenth century. As demonstrated in chapter 2, they were evidently popular enough just before the mid-century that at least one frustrated buyer devised a more efficient method for running them. While these auctions were clearly frequent, the results rarely survive. For example, the 340 books of Andrew Rutledge’s library that, according to extant newspaper advertisements, were auctioned by Robert Wells in 1757, we do not know to whom the books were sold, or what titles did not sell at all. The sales receipts that appear in the Chalmers and Knott inventories thus provide rare insight. These not only include specific titles, but also the prices individual volumes reached and to whom they were sold, like the medical book sold to Doctor David Ramsay in 1777. The estate sale record of Mary Seabrook’s possessions is also unique—not only being the estate of a woman, but, unlike the Knott and Chalmers receipt, does not include specific titles at all.

1. **Estate of Jeremiah Knott**, sold 23 February 1757, transcribed from the Inventory of Jeremiah Knott, 21 February 1757, vol. 84, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

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510 Rutledge’s Charlestown house library was valued at £340; Inventory of Andrew Rutledge, 2 December 1755, vol. 82B, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL; “To be sold at Auction at the usual place in Elliott Street, by Robert Wells,” 3 March 1757, *South-Carolina Gazette*, 4.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Sold to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rapins history of England</td>
<td>£15</td>
<td>Maurice Harvey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible &amp; 2 Prayer Books</td>
<td>£7 10s</td>
<td>Maurice Harvey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 folio Books</td>
<td>£12</td>
<td>Maurice Harvey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Sett Spectators &amp; Amelia</td>
<td>£7 10s</td>
<td>Alexander Shaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Books</td>
<td>£5</td>
<td>Stephen Cater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Lott [Books]</td>
<td>£6</td>
<td>Maurice Harvey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Estate of Lionel Chalmers**, sold 29 July 1777, transcribed from the Inventory of Lionel Chalmers, 7 July 1777, vol. 100, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Sold to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hippocrates Works</td>
<td>£6 15s</td>
<td>George Logan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoffman’s [Works] &amp; 1 Odd Book</td>
<td>£15</td>
<td>Isaac Huger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a Lot of Books</td>
<td>£1 15s</td>
<td>George Logan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morgagne on Diseases</td>
<td>£18 10s</td>
<td>David Ramsay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaw’s Abridgement</td>
<td>£5 15s</td>
<td>Tucker Harris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyster’s Surgery</td>
<td>£5</td>
<td>Adam Petsch</td>
</tr>
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</table>

3. **Estate of Mary Seabrook**, sold 3 February 1753, transcribed from the Inventory of Mary Seabrook, January 1753, vol. 82A, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Sold to</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Price</td>
<td>Seller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible</td>
<td></td>
<td>William Harvey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parcel of Old Books</td>
<td>£5</td>
<td>William Harvey</td>
</tr>
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</table>
APPENDIX C. ESTATE INVENTORIES

When surviving estate inventories included identifiable libraries, rather than the far more common “parcel” or “lot of books,” the details of those collections vary significantly. The following library inventories serve as examples of this variety. Generally, though, these lists became more detailed through the latter half of the eighteenth century—and, especially among the wealthy elite, demonstrate just how large personal libraries were.

1. **Barnaby Bull, Esq.,** 14 March 1755, vol. 84, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

   Titles and author’s names have been corrected from the original manuscript.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Volumes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Tatler</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Spectator</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Guardian</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addison’s Works</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bailey’s Dictionary</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folio Bible</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Dr. Thomas Dale,** [1755], vol. 84, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL. Dale’s inventory is particularly unique in that it does not include titles, but instead hints at a
highly organized personal library—1,358 books and 915 pamphlets valued at £810, a significant portion of his total estate valued at £3,317 3s 9p—based on genre. The range of genres reflect the many interests of one Lowcountry book collector whose personal library clearly included far more than medical and scientific texts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Volumes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medicinal Anatomical &amp; Botanical Books</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Phylosophy &amp; Gardening</td>
<td>101</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mathematicks</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law Ethicks &amp; Commerce</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History C[h]ronology Geography &amp; Voyages</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clas[s]ical &amp; Grammatical</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry Wit &amp; Humour</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divinity</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epistles of Learned Men &amp;ca.</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. **John James**, 16 August 1776, vol. 100, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

James, a bricklayer of Charlestown, owned a mahogany bookcase valued at £75; the appraisers of his estate listed his book collection (which may or may not have entirely been stored in the bookcase) separately and valued the entire collection at £30. “Some old books” were not included in the list of titles and were valued in a separate lot with a tobacco box, mirror, slate, pen knife, and two old boxes at £10. In contrast, his “Working tools” and “14 thousand bricks”—tools of the trade, as it
were—were valued at a total of £56. Where possible, titles and author’s names have been corrected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Volumes</th>
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<td>Jenning’s Geography</td>
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<td>Gordon [Geographical] Grammer</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prideaux’s Old &amp; New Testament</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dictionary of Arts &amp; Sciences</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Drummond’s Travels</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drelincourt on Death</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Man’s Companion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maundvel’s Journey to Jerusalem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spectators</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bailey’s Dictionary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole Duty of Man</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ryder’s Almanack 1765</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 Books of Designs &amp;c.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gordon’s Counting House</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Views of London</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunt’s Essays</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Builder’s dictionary</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wingate’s Arithmetic</td>
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<td>Title</td>
<td>Quantity</td>
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<td>Virgil</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pope’s Homer</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pope’s Stiad[?]</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Independent Whig</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Jones</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salmon’s Gazetteer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambray’s Telemachus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawkey’s Art of Measuring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law on a Holy Life</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roger’s Arithmetic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secret History of White Hall</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confession of Faith</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay on the Lords Prayer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Man’s Companion [a second copy]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Monitor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay’s &amp; Steele’s Plays</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Prayer</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. **Peter Porcher**, 2 January 1754, vol. 82A, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

Like many libraries—big and small—of the midcentury, Porcher’s collection of books was largely religious, including Whitefield’s works, and0 is reflective of his
interest (if not participation) in the Great Awakening. His inventory also included

“20 pamphletts” and “6 [pamphlets] on Arethmatick.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Volumes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count D’Estrades</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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<td>Plutarch’s Lives, [volume] 2</td>
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Laws’ Practical Treatise upon Christian Perfection

Beveridge’s thoughts on Religion

Lives of English Divines

Emblems by Edward Benbow

Gordon’s Geographical Grammar

In the life of God in the Soul of Man

Aliens Alarm

The Imitation of Jesus Christ by [Thomas] Ecenspis

Prayers by Benjamin Jenks

Instructions to the Indians

The Design of Christianity by Edward Fowler

The Gospell Way of Escaping the Doleful State of the Damned

Instruction in the Christian Religion

Submission to the Righteousness of God

Mr. Whitefield’s Journals

Description of the World

Sermons by Nathaniel Clap

Sermons by John Stow

The Articles of the Church recited by Henry Case

A Call to the unconverted by Richard Baxter

Sermons by Ezekiel Hopkins

The monarchy of bees by Jos. Warden
Navigation

Mr. Whitefield’s Sermons

Bible, large

Bible, old

Birkett on the New Testament

Addison’s Guardian  2

Memoirs of the Seuis de Ablancourt

Psalm book

Latin Grammar  1

Law Books  2

Hymns & Spiritual Songs

The English Liberties

Beveridge’s Sermons

French Bible, large  1

French books  80

5. Peter Delancey, Esq., 1771, vol. 94A, Charleston County Inventories, CCPL.

Delancey, son of New York’s royal governor, moved to Charlestown in 1771 and was killed in a duel shortly thereafter. The inventory of his Charlestown house, taken room-by-room, reveals not only the wide range of books typical of the last quarter of the eighteenth century but also the two domestic spaces where Delancey kept the
bulk of his personal library: in a book closet off his “Front Room” as well as in a
bookcase in his dressing room.

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\(^{511}\) This is most likely a misspelling for Samuel Johnson’s *Dictionary*. 
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<sup>512</sup> This is most likely a reference to Lady Mary Wortley Montague’s *Letters*.
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[^1] This is likely a phonetic spelling of what is commonly known today as *Aesop's Fables.*
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APPENDIX D. CAMPBELL FAMILY LIBRARY, DECEMBER 1775

The following library catalogue is transcribed from the Memorial of Lord William Campbell (T 1/541/397-398) at the National Archives at Kew. The library belonged to Lord William Campbell, last royal governor of the province of South Carolina, and his South Carolinian wife, Sarah Izard Campbell.

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Tristam Shandy’s Life 4
Lady Catesby’s Letters
Collection of Novels 2
Boyers Dictionary (Small)
Plutarch’s Lives 8
Italian Grammar
Caleston Masonry
Boyers Grammar
Humes History of England 8
Smollet’s D[itt]o. 7
Voltiers Works 35
Swifts D[itt]o. 20
D[itt]o Letters 3
Prayer Book
New Testament
Novia Scotia Acts of Assembly
Odd Volumes 31
D[itt]o in Blue Covers 36
D[itt]o Magazines &ca 60

253
French Coasting Pilot

Burneby’s Travels

Voyage to the Pacifick Ocean

Robinson’s History of Charles the 5th

Piersons Lloyds Sermons
Appendix E. Elite Women’s Libraries

Middling and elite South Carolinian women clearly owned books, although the historical record has done much to obscure this fact. Some of the following were composed based on surviving books in private and institutional collections, while others are chosen from probate inventory records as examples of the typical, and atypical, ways in which female book ownership was recorded in the eighteenth century.

1. **Revolutionary Pinckney Women.** This brief list assembles the titles and locations of surviving books that once belonged to Eliza Lucas Pinckney, Harriott Pinckney Horry, and Frances Brewton Pinckney as discussed in chapter 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviated Title</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Repository</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Night-Thoughts</em></td>
<td>Eliza Lucas Pinckney</td>
<td>South Caroliniana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Universal Geog., 2 vols.</em></td>
<td>Eliza Lucas Pinckney</td>
<td>Private collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sunday Thoughts</em></td>
<td>Frances Pinckney</td>
<td>Irvin Dept. of Rare Books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Spectator, Vol. 3</em></td>
<td>Harriott Horry</td>
<td>Charleston Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Spectator, Vol. 4</em></td>
<td>Harriott Horry</td>
<td>Charleston Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sacred History</em></td>
<td>Harriott Horry</td>
<td>Charleston Museum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Margaret Izard Manigault** (1768-1824). Upon her death, Manigault gave her book collection to her son, Charles Izard Manigault. A fraction of these books, bearing her signature, are held by the University of South Carolina’s Irvin Department of Rare
Books. Unfortunately, even these sets are incomplete. Nonetheless, they reveal an individual reader who read and consumed popular French literature.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author &amp; Abbreviated Title</th>
<th>Extant Vols.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genlis, <em>Adèle et Théodore</em> (1783), 3 vols.</td>
<td>2, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercier, <em>Le Nouveau Paris</em> (1798?), 6 vols.</td>
<td>2-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rousseau, <em>Collection Complète des Oeuvres</em> (1783-89), 34 vols.</td>
<td>2-6, 9-34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savary, <em>Letters on Greece</em> (1788)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>