

tenance from their salaries. Let each pupil pay for each course of lectures two or three guineas.

Let the degrees conferred in this university receive a new name, that shall designate the design of an education for civil and public life.

In thirty years after this university is established, let an act of Congress be passed to prevent any person being chosen or appointed into power or office, who has not taken a degree in the federal university. We require certain qualifications in lawyers, physicians and clergymen, before we commit our property, our lives or our souls to their care. We even refuse to commit the charge of a ship to a pilot, who cannot produce a certificate of his education and knowledge in his business. Why then should we commit our country, which includes liberty, property, life, wives and children, to men who cannot produce vouchers of their qualifications for the important trust? We are restrained from injuring ourselves by employing quacks in law; why should we not be restrained in like manner, by law, from employing quacks in government?

Should this plan of a federal university or one like it be adopted, then will begin the golden age of the United States. While the business of education in Europe consists in lectures upon the ruins of Palmyra and the antiquities of Herculaneum, or in disputes about Hebrew points, Greek particles, or the accent and quantity of the Roman language, the youth of America will be employed in acquiring those branches of knowledge which increase the conveniences of life, lessen human misery, improve our country, promote population, exalt the human understanding, and establish domestic, social and political happiness.

Let it not be said, "that this is not the *time* for such a literary and political establishment. Let us first restore public credit, by funding or paying our debts, let us regulate our militia, let us build a navy, and let us protect and extend our commerce. After this, we shall have leisure and money to establish a University for the purposes that have been mentioned." This is false reasoning. We shall never restore public credit, regulate our militia, build a navy, or revive our commerce, until we remove the ignorance and prejudices, and change the habits of our citizens, and this can never be done 'till we inspire them with federal principles, which can only be effected by our young men meeting and spending two or three years together in a national University, and afterwards disseminating their knowledge and principles through every county, township and village of the United States. 'Till this be done

—Senators and Representatives of the United States, you will undertake to make bricks without straw. Your supposed union in Congress will be a rope of sand. The inhabitants of Massachusetts began the business of government by establishing the University of Cambridge, and the wisest Kings in Europe have always found their literary institutions the surest means of establishing their power as well as of promoting the prosperity of their people.

These hints for establishing the Constitution and happiness of the United States upon a permanent foundation, are submitted to the friends of the federal government in each of the states, by a private

CITIZEN OF PENNSYLVANIA

3. *Washington to Congress on a National University, 1790, 1796*

All of the first six presidents of the United States agreed on the desirability of a national university, and Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and John Quincy Adams sent requests to Congress asking for the establishment of such an institution. Washington left a bequest to Congress for this purpose, but it was never used. For the idea of a national university, see Edgar B. Wesley, *Proposed: The University of the United States* (Minneapolis, Minn., 1936), and J. S. Brubacher and Willis Rudy, *Higher Education in Transition*, chap. xi.

JANUARY 8, 1790

Nor am I less persuaded that you will agree with me in opinion, that there is nothing which can better deserve your patronage than the promotion of Science and Literature. Knowledge is in every country the surest basis of public happiness. In one in which the measures of Government receive their impression so immediately from the sense of the Community as in ours, it is proportionably essential. To the security of a free Constitution it contributes in various ways: By convincing those who are intrusted with the public administration, that every valuable end of Government is best answered by the enlightened confidence of the people: and by teaching the people themselves to know and to

John C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Writings of George Washington, 1745-1799*, XXX (Washington, D.C., 1939), 493-94; XXXV (Washington, D.C., 1940), 316-17.

America can Higher Education. A Documentary History

is this true today?
I don't think so.
Some ppl can be knowledgeable and unhappy like doctors

value their own rights; to discern and provide against invasions of them; to distinguish between oppression and the necessary exercise of lawful authority; between burthens proceeding from a disregard to their convenience and those resulting from the inevitable exigencies of society; to discriminate the spirit of Liberty from that of licentiousness, cherishing the first, avoiding the last, and uniting a speedy, but temperate vigilance against encroachments, with an inviolable respect to the Laws.

Whether this desirable object will be best promoted by affording aids to seminaries of learning already established, by the institution of a national University, or by any other expedients, will be well worthy of a place in the deliberations of the Legislature. . . .

DECEMBER 7, 1796

The Assembly to which I address myself, is too enlightened not to be fully sensible how much a flourishing state of the Arts and Sciences contributes to National prosperity and reputation. True it is, that our Country, much to its honor, contains many Seminaries of learning highly respectable and useful; but the funds upon which they rest, are too narrow, to command the ablest Professors, in the different departments of liberal knowledge, for the Institution contemplated, though they would be excellent auxiliaries.

Amongst the motives to such an Institution, the assimilation of the principles, opinions, and manners of our Country men, but the common education of a portion of our Youth from every quarter, well deserves attention. The more homogeneous our citizens can be made in these particulars, the greater will be our prospect of permanent Union; and a primary object of such a National Institution should be, the education of our Youth in the science of *Government*. In a Republic, what species of knowledge can be equally important? and what duty, more pressing on its Legislature, than to patronize a plan for communicating it to those, who are to be the future guardians of the liberties of the Country?

The Institution of a Military Academy is also recommended by cogent reasons. However pacific the general policy of a Nation may be, it ought never to be without an adequate stock of Military knowledge for emergencies. The first would impair the energy of its character, and both would hazard its safety, or expose it to greater evils when War could not be avoided. Besides that War might often not depend upon

also good for a
democracy, so public does not have to

I agree with this a lot. an educated, well informed public is crucial in a democracy. Without it, it's not much better than a monarchy.

I think it's interesting he says homogeneous if everyone was homogeneous in thought, we wouldn't have scientific breakthroughs or social progress.

its own choice. In proportion as the observance of pacific maxims might exempt a Nation from the necessity of practising the rules of the military Art, ought to be its care in preserving and transmitting, by proper establishments, the knowledge of that Art. Whatever argument may be drawn from particular examples, superficially viewed, a thorough examination of the subject will evince, that the Art of War is at once comprehensive and complicated; that it demands much previous study; and that the possession of it, in its most improved and perfect state, is always of great moment to the security of a nation. This, therefore, ought to be a serious care of every Government; and for this purpose, an Academy, where a regular course of instruction is given, is an obvious expedient, which different Nations have successfully employed.

4. Ezra Stiles on Changes in the Yale Corporation, 1792

Ezra Stiles (1727-95) is the commanding figure in the history of Yale College during the latter part of the eighteenth century. There he was student (1742-46), tutor (1749-55), and president (1778-95). While serving as pastor of the Second Congregational Church of Newport, Rhode Island (1755-77), Stiles also played an important role in the chartering of Rhode Island College (Brown University)—see Part II, Doc. 9. During his Yale presidency Stiles demonstrated immense learning in languages and history, profound intellectual curiosity in scientific matters, devotion to the American Revolution, and skill in administration. No man then in academic life displayed more admirably the viewpoint of the American Enlightenment.

A major development during his regime was a change in the college charter, whereby several state officials were made ex officio members of the Yale Corporation with all the rights of the original Fellows and Yale received some financial aid from the state. The following excerpts from his *Diary* in the early summer of 1792 record his views on the matter.

The best brief survey to date of Stiles's life, apart from his massive *Literary Diary* (3 vols.) cited below, is Harris Elwood Starr's account in Dumas Malone (ed.), *Dictionary of American Biography*, XVIII (New York, 1936), 18-21. On

F. B. Dexter (ed.), *The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles* (New York, 1901), III, 460-63, 452-56. Reprinted with the permission of Yale University Library.

is "necessary" and what is just exercising military power over the innocent for profit