

0. EARLY INFLUENCES - Story Preface

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3. EARLY INFLUENCES

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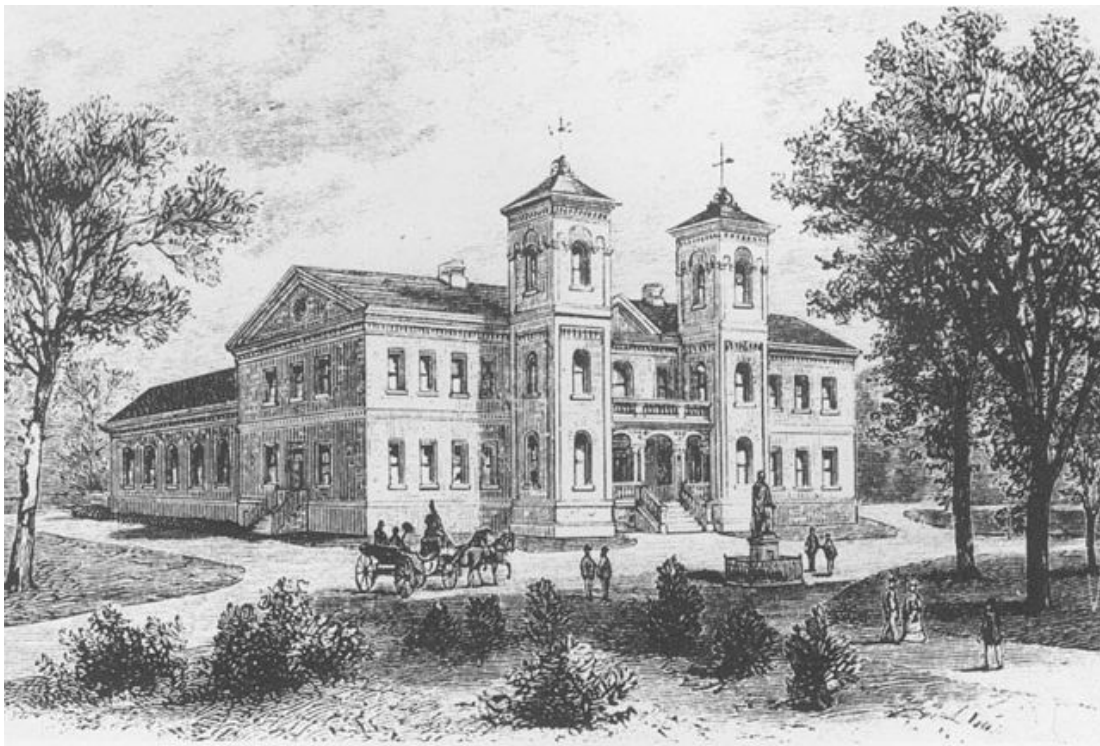
12. IMMEDIATE IMPACT

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When Thomas Jefferson attended William & Mary College, he lived in this building (now known as the "Wren Building"). Named for Sir Christopher Wren, it is currently the oldest-academic building in America. Etching of the Wren Building, on the William & Mary Campus, published in Scribner's Monthly, XI(1), November 1875. Online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

While attending Rev. Maury's school, Tom Jefferson met Dabney Carr. The two boys became close friends, riding their horses for hours on the Jefferson family land. They particularly loved one spot: A great oak tree which provided shade as they studied at the top of an 867-foot hill they called "Tom's Mountain."

As Jefferson began to dream of someday building a home at the top of his "mountain," the two teenagers made a promise to each other. If one died first, the survivor would bury the dead friend under their favorite tree.

After completing their studies with Rev. Maury, Tom and Dabney applied to, and were accepted by, William and Mary College. Tom was sixteen.

During his first year, he joined the "Flat Hat Club" - a collegiate society dedicated to (among other things) having fun. Jefferson seriously pursued that endeavor, regretting - at the end of the term - that he had wasted so much time. When he offered to pay back his first-year costs, his guardian reportedly told him:

If you have sown your wild oats, the estate can well afford to pay for it.

Continuing at William and Mary, Jefferson determined to do well. He studied law with George Wythe, who later became America's first law professor. Living with his mentor as he studied in Williamsburg, the fatherless Jefferson referred to Wythe (who also became one of America's founders) as a "second father."

Jefferson was still a law student in Williamsburg - location of Virginia's House of Burgesses - when Parliament passed the Stamp Act in 1765. As Virginia's colonial representatives debated the legality of the act, Jefferson listened-in.

He heard Patrick Henry defiantly criticize Parliament - on 30 May 1765 - and was present when the fiery orator ended his remarks with strong words considered, by some, to be treason.

After he finished his legal studies, Jefferson was admitted to the Virginia Bar. He was twenty-four years old when he began to practice law. (See *Thomas Jefferson, Lawyer* by Frank L. Dewey.)

Dabney Carr, meanwhile, had become more than Jefferson's best friend. In 1765, he'd married Tom's sister Martha. Both would soon be caught up in the boiling cauldron of discontent which was spreading across Britain's colonies in America.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/EARLY-INFLUENCES-Thomas-Jefferson>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

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Media Stream

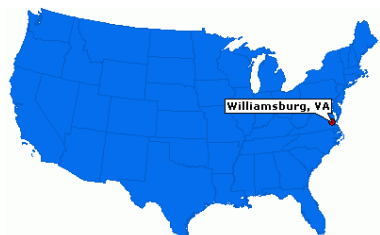


George Wythe - America's First Law Professor

Image online, courtesy the history.org website.

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Patrick Henry - Portrait

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