

**Myles Cooper to Jonathan Boucher, March 22, 1770,  
Letters to Washington and Accompanying Papers.  
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**FROM THE REV. MR. COOPER TO THE REV. MR. BOUCHER.**

KING'S COLLEGE,<sup>1</sup> NEW YORK, 22d. Mar. 1770.

MY DEAR SIR,

I hold myself much obliged to you for good will, as well as good offices, towards this College, as instanced in your Conduct respecting Mr. Custis: and I am under still weightier Obligation, when I consider your very friendly Suspension of Belief, with Regard to some Reports, which, You tell me, have been circulated in your parts to our prejudice. I am conscious that we have Enemies in Abundance—that every Dissenter of high principles, upon the Continent, is our Enemy—that many of their Missionaries, from the northern into the southern provinces, make it their Business, nay, have it in Charge from their Masters, to decry this Institution by all *possible* Means; *because* they are convinced, from its very Constitution—(being in the Hands only of Churchmen,—which is very far indeed from being the Case of any other College to ye. northward of Virginia,—and I know of none to the southward of it—they are convinced) that it must eventually prove one of the firmest Supports to ye. Church of England in America:

Hence there arose an Opposition coeval with ye. College itself—or, rather, with the very first Mention of an Institution so circumstanced; which hath been continued, without Interruption, to this very Day, with much Resentment, Inveteracy, and Malice.<sup>2</sup> The

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College of New Jersey—and those of New England—were already in their own sole Direction, and yet they could not be satisfied that ye. poor Church should have any Influence in one: not that Dissenters of any Denomination are excluded from either Learning or Teaching; nay, we have educated many, and have several at this very Time, who do Honour both to us and themselves.

However, owing either to the very Opposition, or to our own Care & Circumspection,—which may, perhaps, have arisen from the former, our numbers yearly encrease, and our present Apartments overflow. It would ill become anyone, to boast of the Advantages enjoyed by a Seminary over which he himself presides: but I will venture to affirm, that, with Respect to *Discipline* (which, it seems is one heavy Accusation exhibited against us,) we are far from being outdone by any College on the American Continent: and I *know* of none in Europe, to which, in this Article, we are really inferior. Add to this, that the Expence—however such Things may be magnified by our Adversaries, is not half so much as at any of the latter; and, I believe very little, if at all, more, than at most of the former. Our Tuition is only five pounds—one Dollr. passing for 8 Shillings—New York Currency; Room-rent four; and Board, including Breakfast, Dinner and Supper, at ye. Rate of eleven Shillings a Week, for ye. Time each Student is actually in College. Those, (saving Firewood, Candles, & Washing, which must be had every where) are the principal Expences, indeed almost the only ones, of the truly Collegiate kind: *Others*, indeed, *may* run higher—as in Dress, and *sometimes* in Company, than they do at Colleges in the Country; tho' even these will not be materially different to a Student of *real gentility*: For such a one will chuse to appear handsomely-habited in all Situations; and when he *does* go into Company, he will chuse the best for his Associates.

With Regard to our plan of Education, it is copied, in the most material parts, from Queen's College in Oxford; with the whole System of which (having been for many years both Learner and Teacher in that Seminary, with the Character of which you are by no means unacquainted,) I looked upon myself as perfectly acquainted familiar:

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The young Gentleman's Guardian may rely on every Thing in my Power for his Ward's Emolument: but as to my turning *private Tutor*, as it were—it seems to me so inconsistent with my Office (whatever others in my situation may think of it) that I must beg to be excused. But I repeat—That I will shew Mr. Custis every Mark of Care & Attention, and see that his other Teachers shall do the same.

I have only to add, that I *wish* he may be here in June, as we do not admit enter pupils when absent—that I beg my best Respects to Coll. Washington, whom I shall be exceedingly happy to wait upon in New York (yourself, I hope, in Company)—and that I am, Dr. Sr. yr. affe. Friend

and very obedt. servant &c M COOPER.

I hope you will have patience with me,— at present I suffer much by a severe Fit of the Gravel.

1 A bill was ordered, October 22, 1746, to raise £250 by lottery towards erecting a college, and from that humble start Columbia College, known at first as King's College, has grown.—ROBERTS' New York.

2 Trinity Church gave the college a part of its estate in 1752, and over an effort to place the control under Episcopal supervision a controversy arose which divided parties and arrayed partisans, so that in politics as well as in religion Presbyterian and Episcopalian served as distinctive titles.—ROBERTS' New York. This dissension began even before the gift to King's College in 1752. Trinity Church rented from Governor Fletcher in 1697 a tract of sixty-two acres of land known as the King's Farm and Garden, situated north of the present Fulton Street, between Broadway and the Hudson River. Originally this land had belonged to Anneke Jans Bogardus, and by her heirs was sold to Governor Lovelace in 1667, but the deed transferring the property was not signed by her grandson, Cornelius Bogardus, or his mother. In 1746 the descendants of this Cornelius Bogardus laid claim to the property, and a long contest with the Church was begun. As the Bogardus family were Presbyterians, this continued dispute, enhanced by the controversy over the control of the college, led to such bitter partisanship that it entered even the politics of the day, until the contending political parties in New York became known as the Episcopal or Aristocratic party and the Presbyterian or Livingston party.