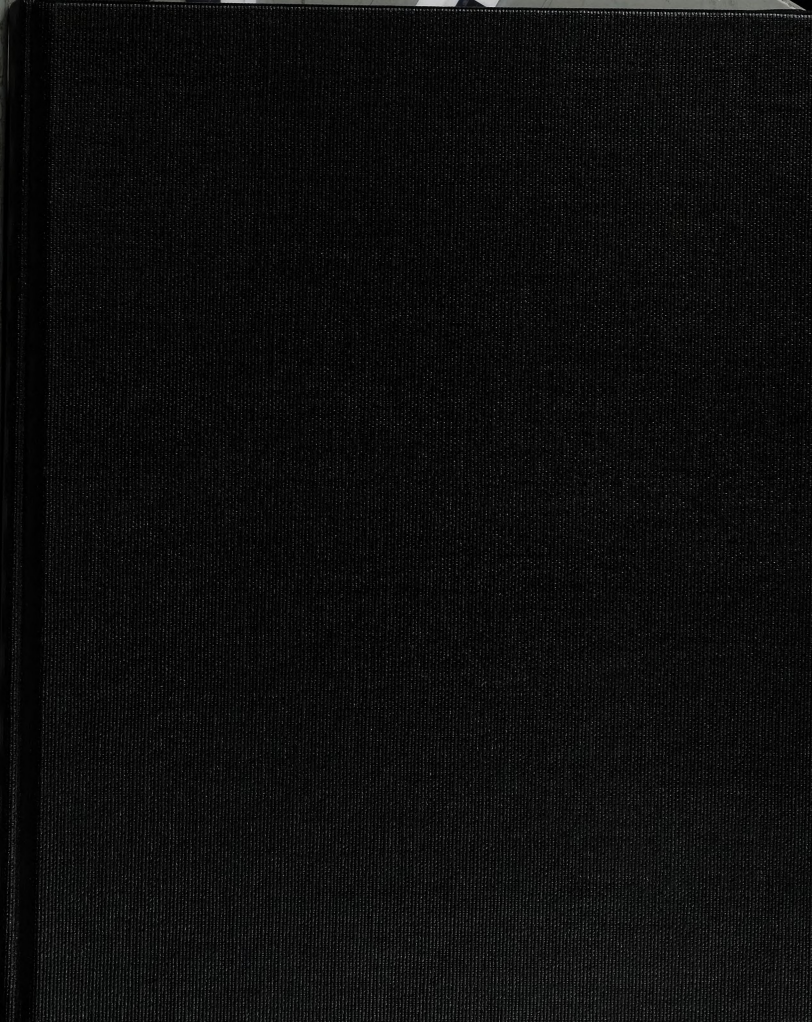






This is to certify that the
dissertation entitled

THE TRADITION OF DIDACTICISM IN
AMERICA'S EARLY READING TEXTBOOKS, 1780-1830

presented by

Douglas Alan Jones

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

PhD degree in English

Stephen N. Tchudi
Major professor

Date June 18, 1990

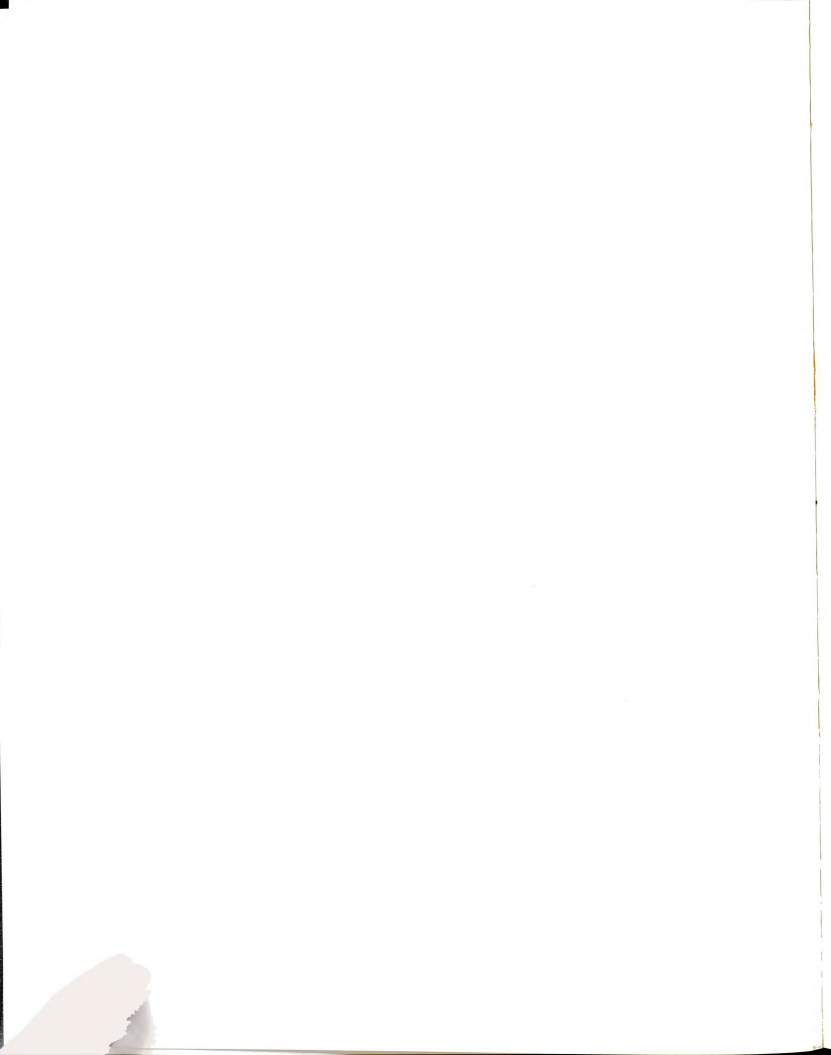
**LIBRARY
Michigan State
University**

PLACE IN RETURN BOX to remove this checkout from your record.
TO AVOID FINES return on or before date due.

DATE DUE	DATE DUE	DATE DUE
NOV 12 1997		
MAR 21 1998		
NOV 25 2000		
APR 17 2001		
06-28-01		

MSU Is An Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Institution

c:\circ\datedue.pm3-p.1



THE TRADITION OF DIDACTICISM IN
AMERICA'S EARLY READING TEXTBOOKS, 1780-1830

By
Douglas Alan Jones

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of English

1990

646-5596

ABSTRACT

THE TRADITION OF DIDACTICISM IN AMERICA'S EARLY READING TEXTBOOKS, 1780-1830

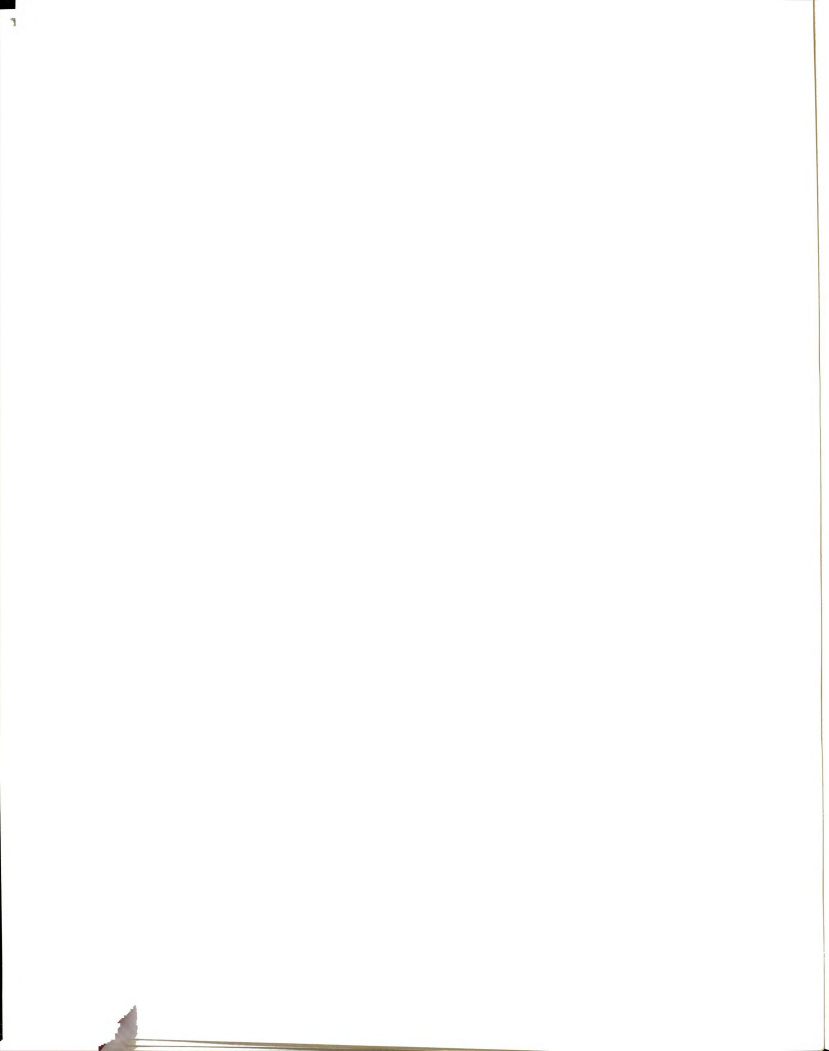
By

Douglas Alan Jones

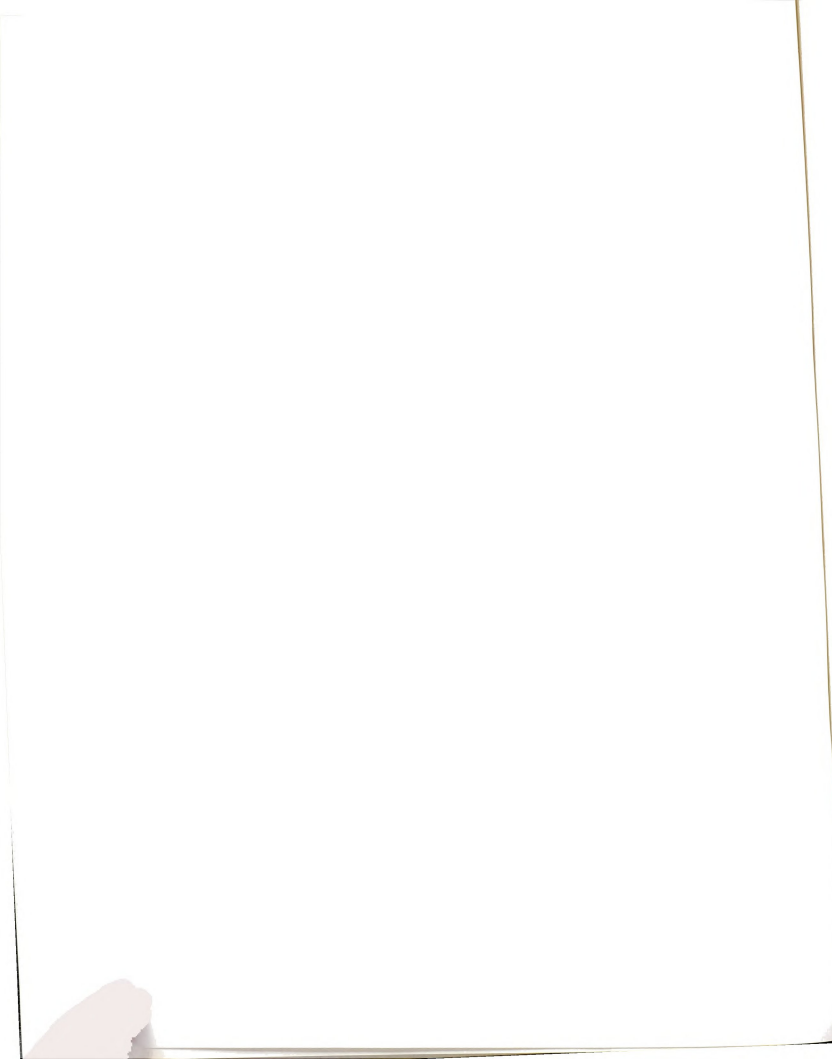
Didacticism, a moralistic instructiveness centering on religious and social values, pervades the pages of virtually all early American school books. The authors of reading textbooks, in particular, often plainly stated that their goal in presenting lessons for reading was not only to offer literacy skills, but to provide moral examples for the students' lives.

This dissertation documents and analyzes the didactic content in the reading texts published for beginning students during the half-century following the Revolutionary War, the time when an American consciousness and identity began to emerge, and a time of proliferation of reading texts. These fifty years are notable for the rise of several significant reading texts (i.e. Murray, Webster, Bingham) that broke from the set pattern of the New England Primer. Yet, the content of the textbooks in most cases adheres to the tradition of didacticism established early on in religious primers.

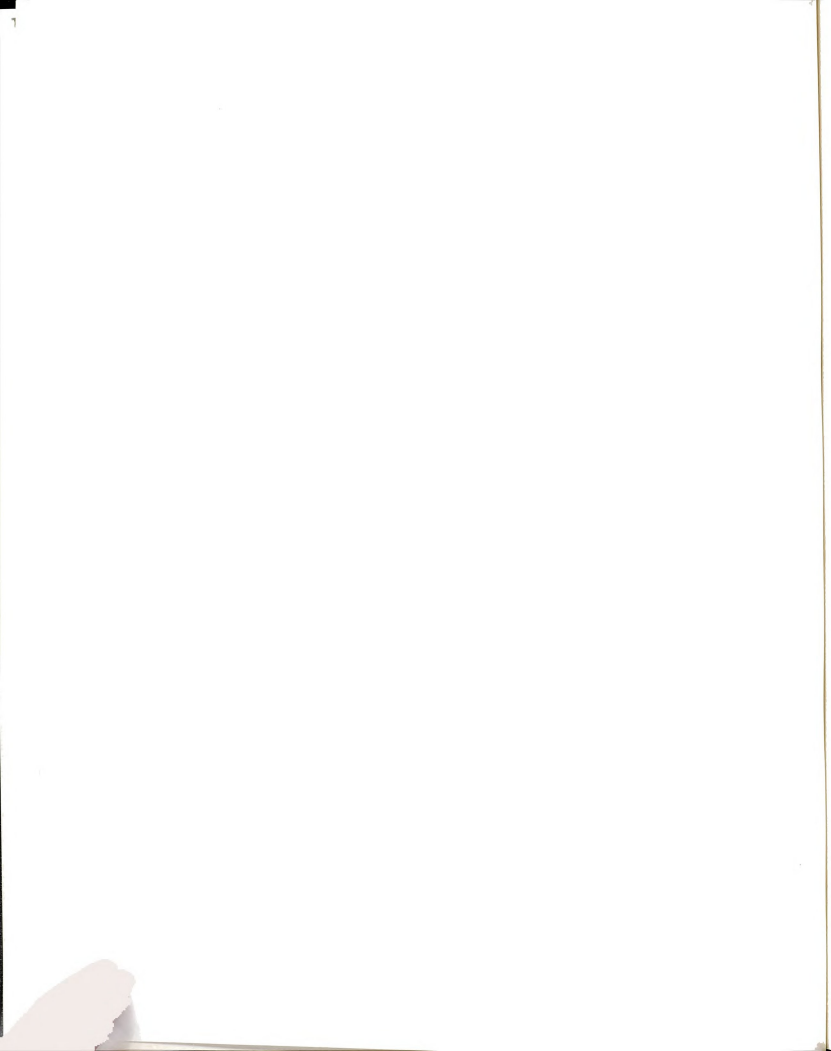
The primers, spellers, and grammars examined in this study include didactic lessons that fall into three basic categories of content: religious, social, and nationalistic. Thematic emphases within the religious



didacticism include lessons devoted to a belief in God, doctrinal or church-related teaching, Bible stories, and lessons dealing with death from a spiritual perspective. The social didacticism branches into several themes, as well, offering lessons devoted to virtuous behavior, excessive behavior, family matters, community awareness, industriousness, and literacy. The nationalistic didacticism is approached by shifts in word choice within the lessons to favor America, patriotic orations, and examples of moral virtue drawn from the lives of famous Americans.



Copyright by
DOUGLAS ALAN JONES
1990

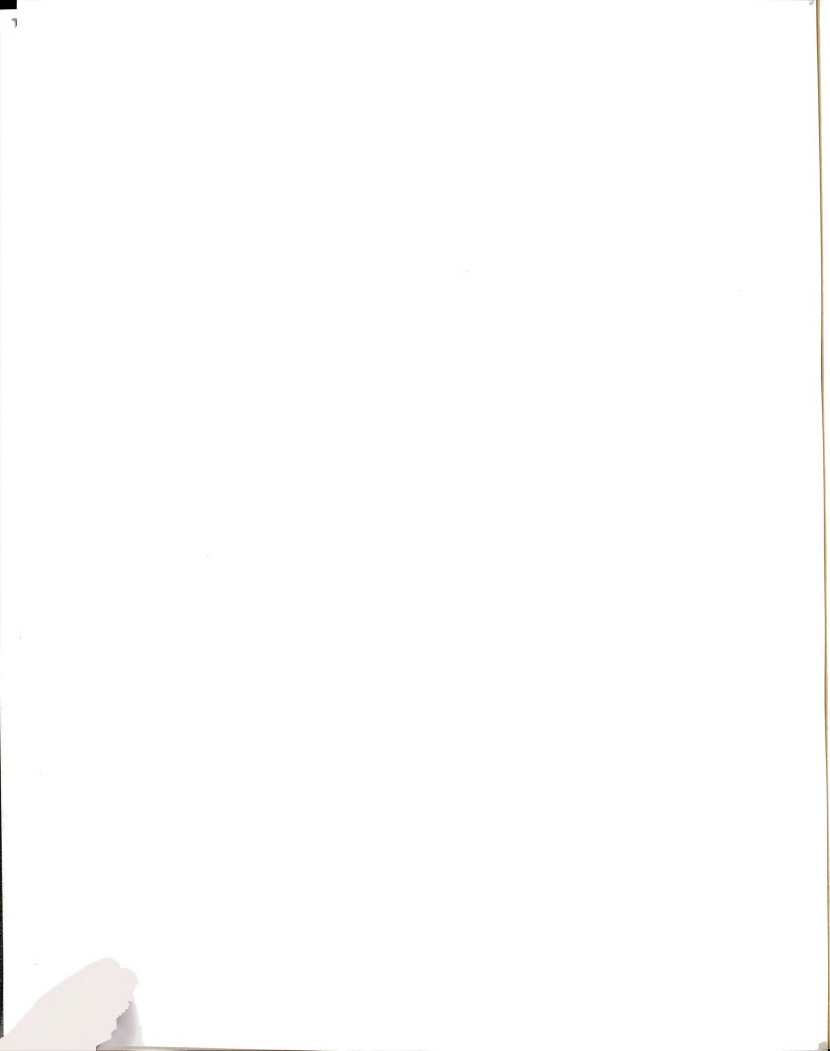


ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My appreciation and thanks go first to my doctoral committee members. Stephen Tchudi, my committee chair, has given me careful attention to detail, invaluable editorial advice, and patient encouragement. His guidance and friendship throughout my doctoral studies have provided me with a deeper understanding of professional commitment and excellence. Similarly, Marilyn Wilson has offered her support, her time, and her expertise to make this dissertation a completed and satisfying task. My other committee members, Arthur Athanason and Michael Lopez, I thank for their support and encouragement.

I also want to acknowledge the cheerful assistance given me by the staff of the Special Collections Department of the Michigan State University Library. In particular, Anne Tracey's expert suggestions and untiring efforts to locate dusty, old textbooks were invaluable to me during my primary research.

My colleagues at Andrews University have provided me with encouragement and support as I have worked on this project. I particularly want to thank Meredith Jones and Delmer Davis, who as chairs of the English Department have made it as easy as possible for me to teach full-time and



make progress on my dissertation. Georgina Hill and Bruce Closser have provided me with critical readings and suggestions as well as with invaluable computer assistance. I also thank three students--Kenneth Ursin, Jonathan Peters, and Julie Hill--who have assisted me in library searches and proofreading.

In addition, I want to thank my friend Nancy Johnson at Seattle Pacific University for her critiques of early drafts and for all her enthusiastic encouragement during my doctoral studies.

Finally, I must acknowledge my deep appreciation for my family's encouragement and understanding as I have worked on this dissertation. My sons, Ethan and Nicholas, have grown up in the shadow of my doctoral work and dissertation, and to them I owe a great debt. My wife, Janell, has always supported my studies with understanding and confidence. I thank her for her patience and love.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	8
CHAPTER 1. A REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	21
CHAPTER 2. METHODOLOGY.....	48
CHAPTER 3. RELIGIOUS DIDACTICISM.....	66
CHAPTER 4. SOCIAL DIDACTICISM.....	88
CHAPTER 5. NATIONALISTIC DIDACTICISM.....	144
CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION.....	160
PRIMARY SOURCES.....	172
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	180



INTRODUCTION

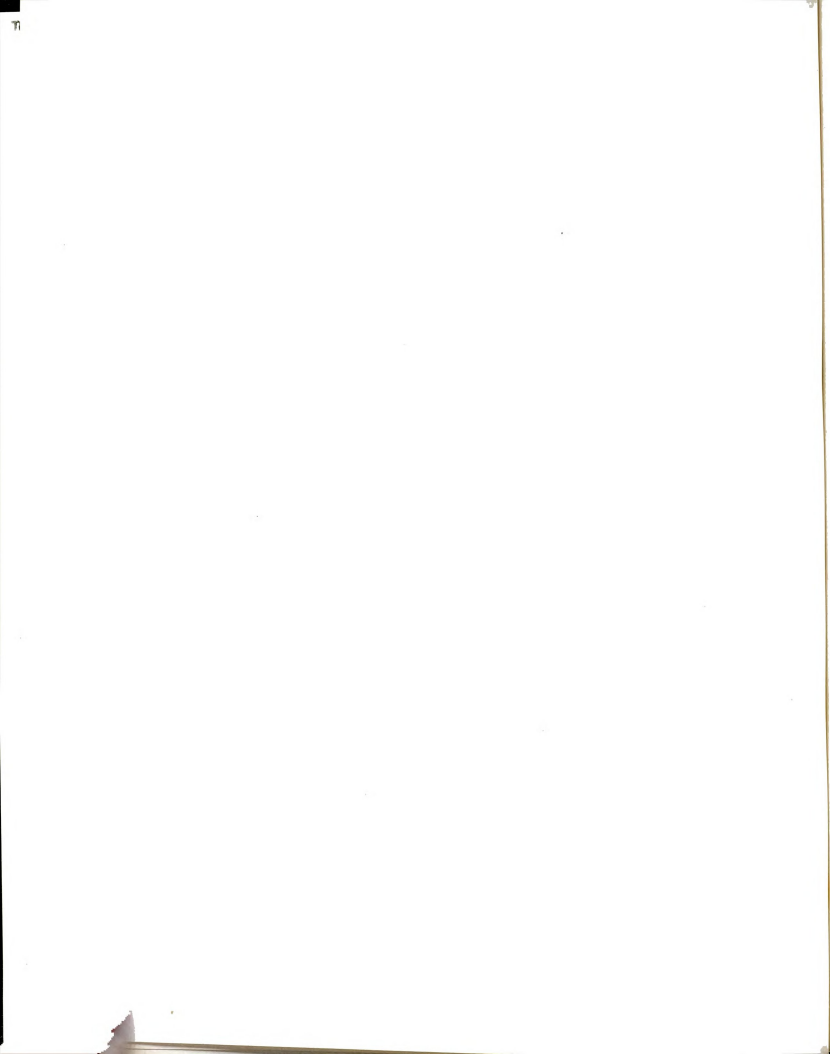
But with your learning always virtuous be,
Or else in vain you learn the a, b, c.

--Moral Stories. Written for the
Instruction of Young Minds (1806)

Somewhere within the vast cerebral storehouse known as the collective American consciousness lie bits and pieces of educational fact and fancy, remnants of this country's early schooling. A few elder sages today recall stories their grandparents told them about going to school in the past. One-room schoolhouses, dunce caps, hickory sticks, and ink wells--stock elements of the stories--all feed into a romanticized vision of schooling in early America.

Much of the aura of our nation's early days in school is preserved in well known early literary pieces. For example, nursery rhymes like "Mary Had a Little Lamb" provide simple--if not comically idealized--pictures of early American education. Washington Irving's popular short story "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" offers insight into the state of the people's education in common schools.

Perceptions of the early Republic's schoolrooms and pedagogy are also undoubtedly colored by an acquaintance with a few surviving textbooks used by the teachers and



students. Current popular knowledge of early reading textbooks ranges from the McGuffey readers of the nineteenth century back to the New England Primer, the standard literacy text of colonial America. The school book--particularly the *reading* textbook--was very much a part of everyday school life for young students.

The American consciousness, early on, embraced the reading book and awarded it a place of honor. In the mid-nineteenth century, Herman Melville incorporates an oblique reference to one respected title deep in the text of Moby

Dick:

"This way comes Pip--poor boy! would he had died, or I; he's half horrible to me. . . . and look now, he comes to read, with that unearthly idiotic face. Stand away again and hear him. Hark!"

"I look, you look, he looks; we look, ye look, they look."

"Upon my soul, he's been studying Murray's Grammar! Improving his mind, poor fellow! . . ."
(434)

By including Ahab's passing reference to Murray's Grammar in this most literate of American books, Melville presents the reading textbook as an icon of American culture.

Further, Melville underscores the influence these reading texts had in (and perhaps over) educated American society.

The reading textbook also held great influence for people at the other end of society. Frederick Douglass maintains that it was a textbook written by Caleb Bingham¹ that first showed him the way to freedom:

I got hold of a book entitled "The Columbian Orator." Every opportunity I got, I used to read this book. Among much of other interesting

matter, I found in it a dialogue between a master and his slave. . . . The slave was made to say some very smart as well as impressive things in reply to his master--things which had the desired though unexpected effect; for the conversation resulted in the voluntary emancipation of the slave on the part of the master. (83)

Not only did Douglass hone the reading skills necessary to function as a free man in American society by reading this textbook, but he gained a knowledge of freedom as well:

"The moral which I gained from the dialogue was the power of truth over the conscience of even a slaveholder. . . . The silver trump of freedom had roused my soul to eternal wakefulness" (Douglass 84).

That Frederick Douglass felt he gained a moral or learned a lesson from the textbook is not surprising. The reading textbooks of the early Republic are characterized by *didacticism*--a moralistic instructiveness centering on religious and social values. This didacticism pervades the pages of virtually all early American school books. Authors of reading textbooks often stated plainly that their goal in presenting lessons for reading was not only to offer skills in reading, but to provide moral examples for the students' lives. For example, in Easy Lessons in Reading; For the Use of the Younger Classes in Common Schools (1825), the textbook author Joshua Leavitt explains in his preface, that "the selections will be found to contain many salutary precepts and instructive examples, for the life of piety and morality, of activity and usefulness" (5).

America's collective intellectual and popular consciousness rightly ascribes to these reading books an awareness of the didactic moralism their lessons underscore. But while students of social and educational history regard the didacticism found in reading textbooks published approximately between 1780 and 1830 as a given in their studies, the didactic content--its tradition and intent--have rarely received in-depth analysis or discussion. This may be so because the didactic reading textbooks of this period are positioned between--and eclipsed in popularity by--the two more noticeable phenomena of early American textbooks: the New England Primer and the popular McGuffey readers.

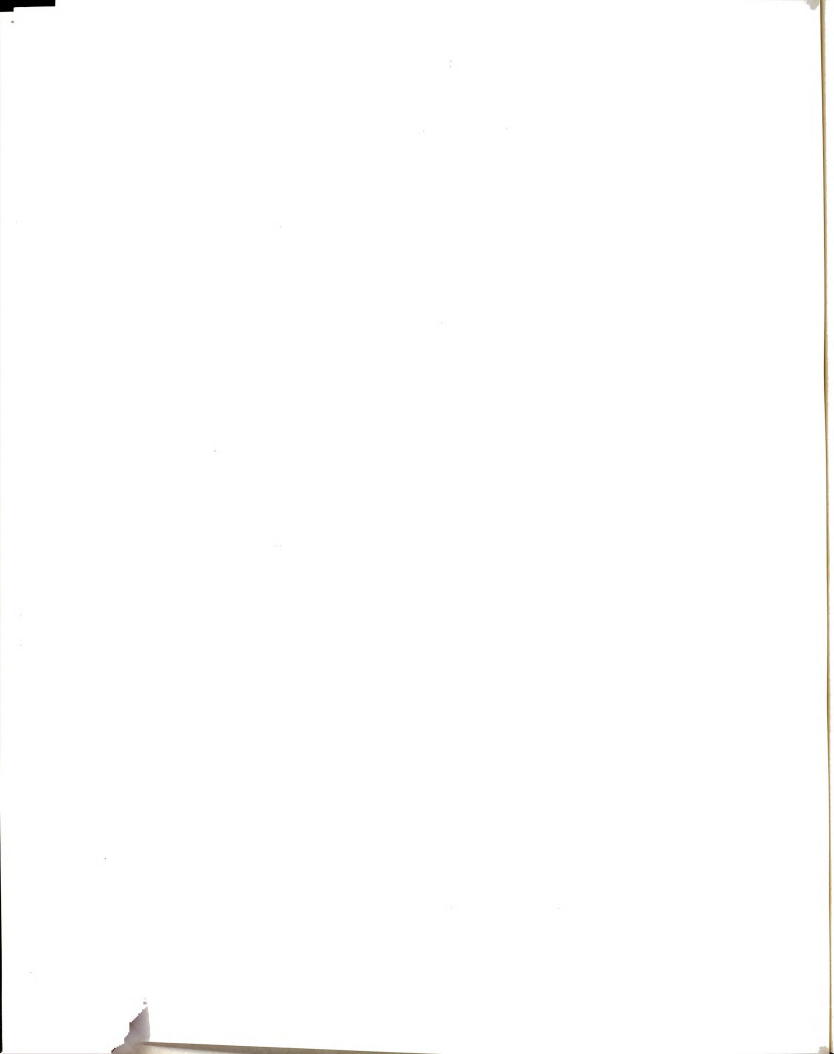
It is this era, an interim period between the New England Primer and McGuffey, that saw Lindley Murray, Noah Webster, Caleb Bingham, and other writers rise in influence and popularity by publishing their textbooks--primers, readers, spellers, and grammars--that further confirmed the tradition of didacticism in America's reading instruction for beginning readers. In addition to these better-known authors' works, scores of lesser-known writers published texts, providing American school children with innumerable didactic charges from which they could gain reading proficiency, knowledge, and--most importantly--moral rectitude.

Significantly, it is with the use of these early reading textbooks published for beginning students that

perceptions of literacy, in general, and reading, in particular, were often established in the hearts and minds of the American public. Just as an individual's early experiences with texts tend to influence, or set, his or her attitudes and expectations about reading, I maintain that the early trends and experiences in reading instruction created a collective expectation for reading and literacy in an emerging nation.

Throughout my research I have explored the possibility that the early primers and reading texts shaped the nation's view of literacy. Certainly the biblical injunction to "train up a child in the way he should go" that appeared so often on the title pages of the reading textbooks of the period was intended to apply to the young readers individually. These early lessons served to instruct the younger citizens of the United States, yet they also set up expectations within the national consciousness about the benefit of reading. In many cases the domineering didactic tone of the early reading texts may even have served to limit or color the collective consciousness of the young Republic as it thought about reading.

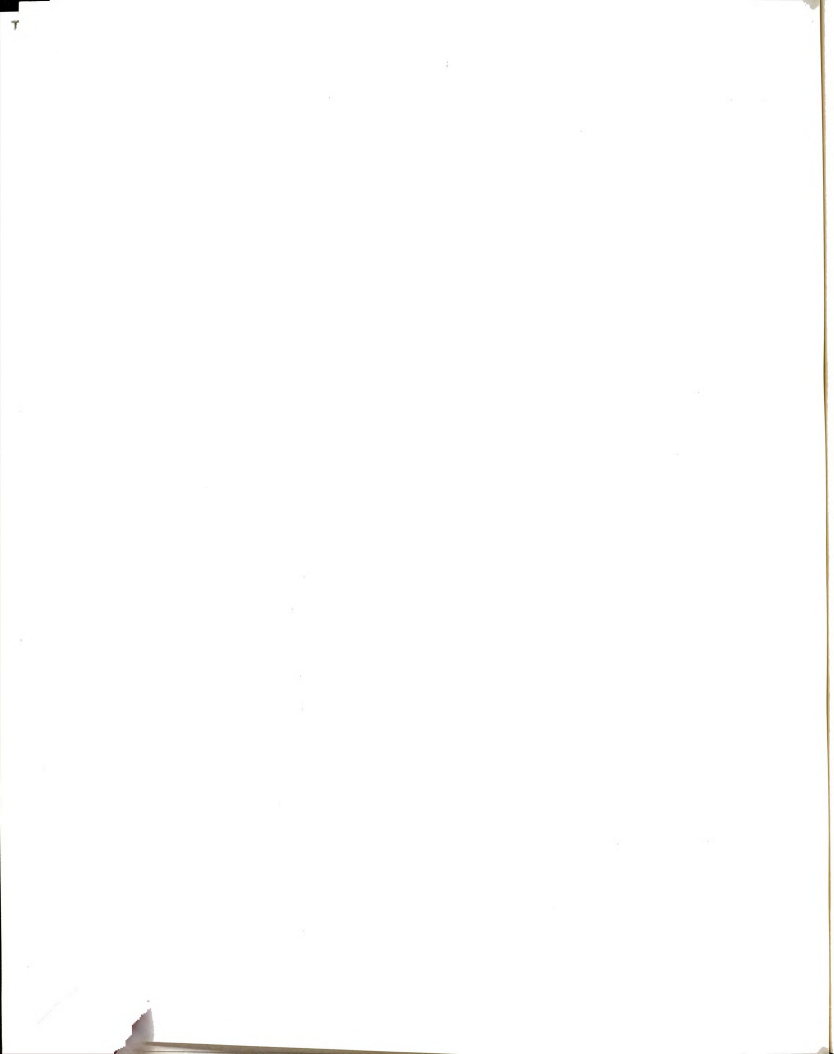
In this dissertation I document and analyze the didactic content in the early reading textbooks of the half-century following the Revolutionary War, the time when an American consciousness and identity began to emerge, and a time of proliferation of reading texts intended for



beginners. My study examines the tradition of didacticism found in American reading textbooks and explores the expectations of an educational orientation steeped in instructive precepts and moral edification.

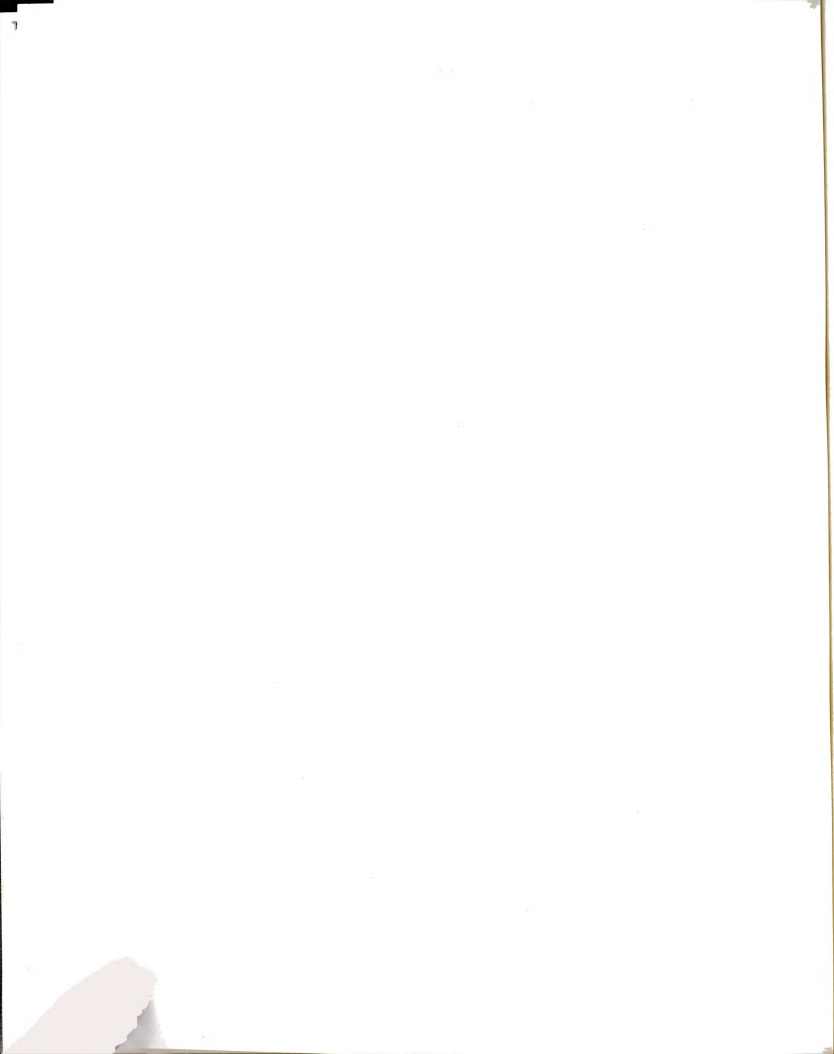
An examination of the reading textbooks requires an understanding of the earliest of American textbooks, the New England Primer, and it is necessary to explain the background to this landmark text to provide a setting to the tradition of didacticism in America's early reading texts.

Soon after the Puritan settlement of English colonies in North America (1620) reading instruction (other than that initiated within the home) had become an issue for the leadership of the community to consider. In most cases, the educational system that developed in the colonies resembled that of England. Young people received instruction in basic literacy--reading and writing--in school. But basic literacy was not the only concern of early colonial education; formal learning was meant to be instructive in religious matters as well. The reading materials were typically the Bible or those textbooks--primers, usually--brought with the settling families from Europe, or those which were commercially imported. The primers were compact textbooks that covered the basic elements of reading. They typically followed a format consisting of an *abecedarian*, or alphabet; often a *syllabarium*, or *syllabary*, in which syllables and consonant



pairings were presented; and a brief *catechism* of church doctrine (Ford 23-24; Smith 30, 35).

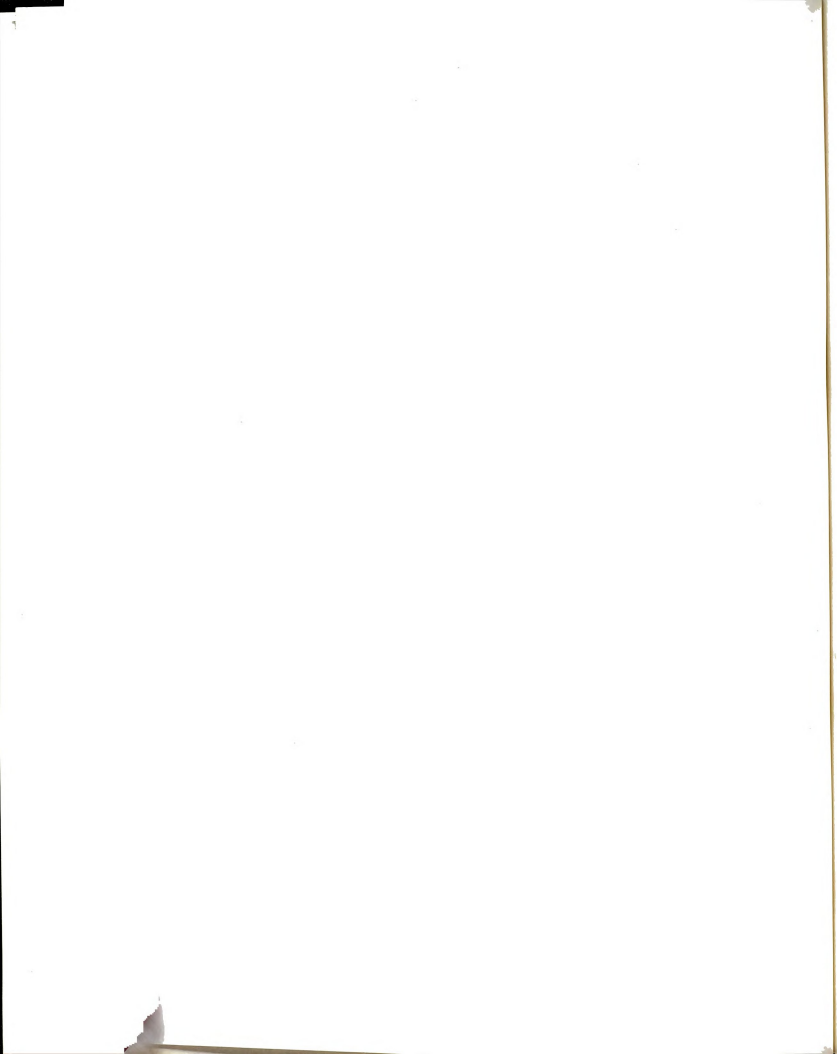
The most notable, and indeed the dominant, reading text found in colonial America was the New England Primer. The forerunner of this well-known (and now rare) book was printed and published in England, as early as 1607, under the title of the Protestant Tutor, a religious primer, according to Charles Carpenter (23). It was published periodically in England, and by 1679 Benjamin Harris had printed it again before leaving for Boston where he subsequently printed the text around 1685 (Ford 16, Carpenter 23, Smith 18). The New England Primer's format and relatively standardized text (as it is popularly thought of today) evolved from the Protestant Tutor through various textual changes that caused its users to regard the work to be a school text as opposed to a religious primer (Ford 16, Carpenter 23). While the New England Primer that was used to instruct colonial students was one printed in England expressly for import to the colonies early on, over the course of several years it was eventually produced in the American colonies, probably circa 1685 (Carpenter 23). This textbook endured throughout numerous printings, publishers, and revisions, but essential to its various manifestations is its didactic tone. Underscoring its instruction in basic reading skills, the New England Primer introduced the tradition of didacticism into American reading school books. In perhaps the Primer's most



memorable epigram illustrating the letters of the alphabet, the Puritans' Calvinistic doctrine was imprinted on the minds of its young learners: "In Adam's fall / We sinned all."

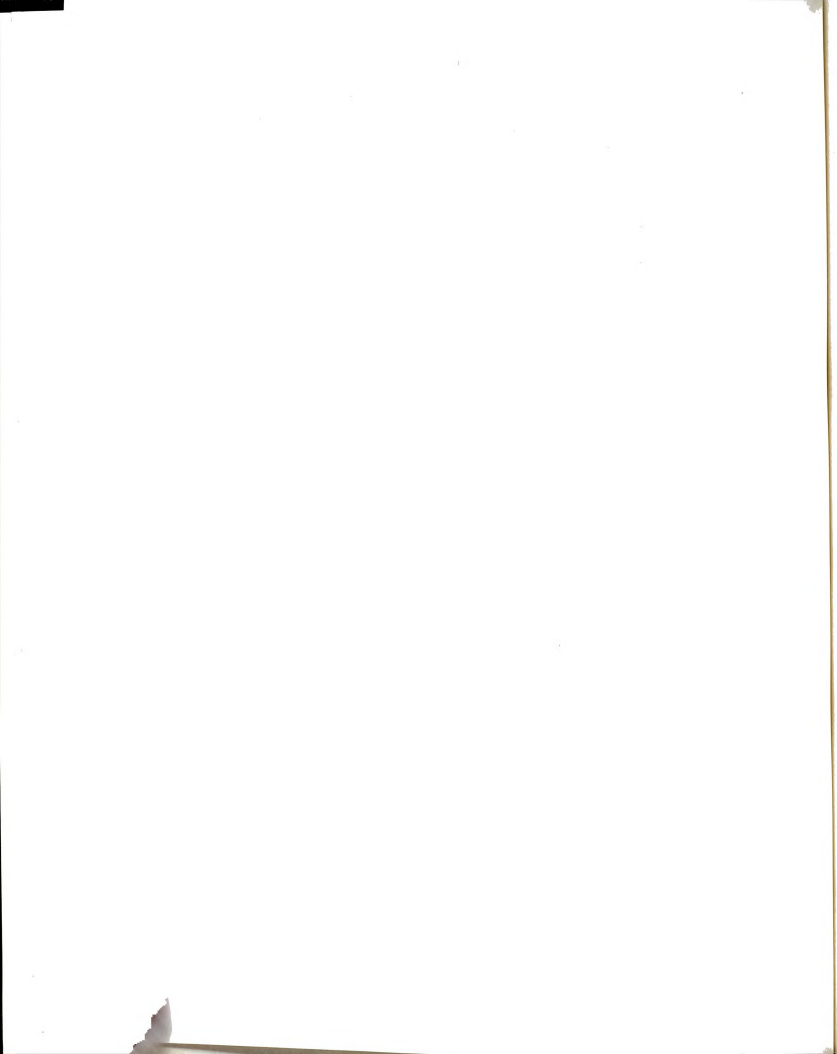
The New England Primer was an enormously successful textbook, selling 37,000 copies in America between the years 1749 and 1766 alone, according to Paul Leicester Ford's introduction to his classic study, The New-England Primer: A History of Its Origin and Development. Its use as the quintessential textbook of colonial and Revolutionary America is undisputed. But historians generally agree that 1780 is the date of its decline in popularity as a contemporary textbook.² By 1814, one publisher described the New England Primer as outdated: "The New-England Primer of latter time, having become almost useless, unless on account of the Catechism, . . . it appears . . . likely to become nearly if not quite obsolete" ("Preface" in Beauties of the New-England Primer ii). Rudolph Reeder says that the New England Primer made a "brave fight to maintain its place and influence . . . as a school book," but that more and more publishers in the last decades of the eighteenth century looked to more "attractive" texts to promote (19).

This decline in the Primer's popularity came about because of a new generation of reading texts, many of which Reeder describes as "trifling little books in paper covers, three or four inches square" (41). Educational historian



Monica Kiefer adds that "most of these books were published in the middle states, particularly in the cities of Philadelphia and New York" (139); another educational historian, Rosalie Halsey, adds Boston to that list of textbook publishing centers (100). These new reading textbooks were authored by various educators: Noah Webster, Caleb Bingham, and Lindley Murray, among the most prominent. The new, contemporary reading textbooks for elementary learners seemed to subsume the New England Primer, yet they were cast in the same tradition of didacticism. This was a more sophisticated, controlled didacticism, however, that served a variety of concerns, chiefly nationalistic themes that I will explore in greater depth. For example, the New England Primer had seen basic changes in its didactic tone regarding the establishment of a nation independent of England.³ This shift to a nationalistic spirit was characteristic of most popular media during the Revolutionary War period, and the textbooks published during this time are no exception.

Soon after 1800, the extreme nationalistic didacticism in the reading textbooks began to even out and blend with a social, or moralistic, didacticism that had been present all along. American educators and textbook writers took great pains to indoctrinate young readers with their expectations of a model citizenry. It is during this period that the content of the primers, readers, and spellers dictated to the young citizens of America



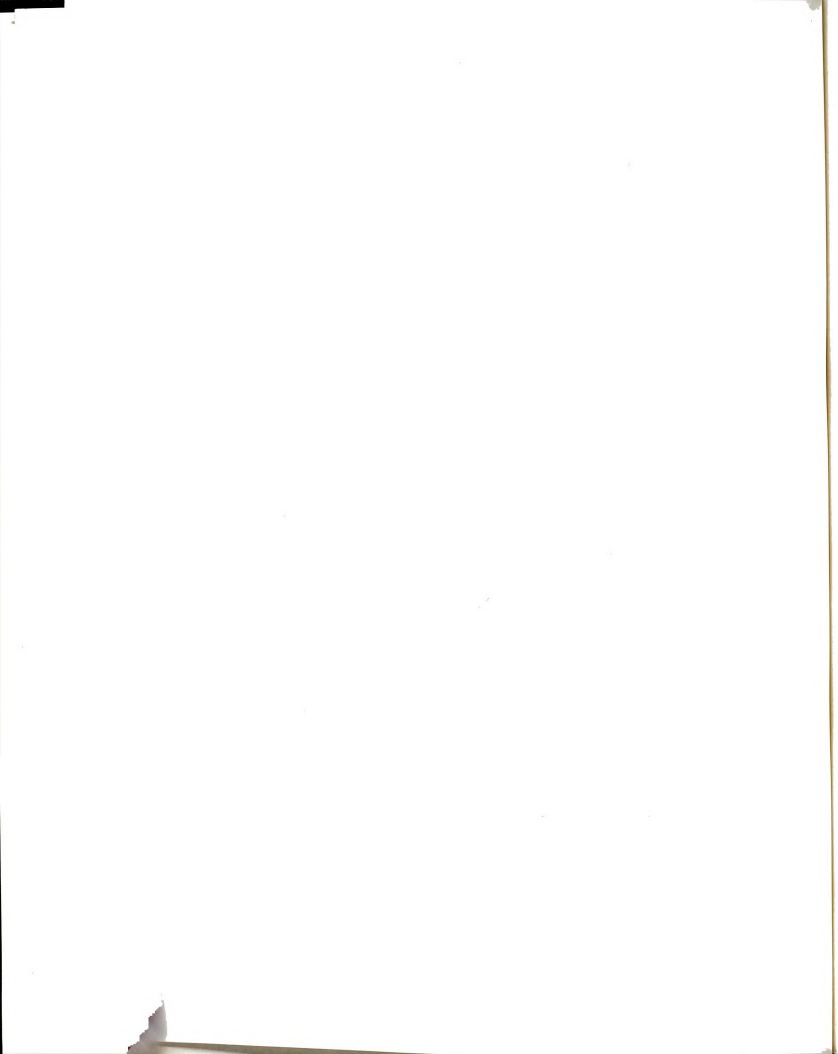
appropriate social behavior, manners, and attitudes in league with standardly acceptable religious thought and patriotic virtue.

In this dissertation I explain the tradition of didacticism in early America's beginning reading textbooks and document the occurrence and affective position of didacticism in reading instruction during the years 1780 to 1830, the era often called the National period.

In Chapter 1, I discuss the general body of research that addresses early American reading textbooks, pedagogy, and didacticism. I offer a review of general studies of early American reading instruction as well as more specific research into the areas of early American literacy, literature for children, textbook authorship and publication, and the tradition of didacticism.

In the second chapter, I explain my method of research, outlining the procedures and practices I used in examining the primary texts. I also delineate and justify the boundaries of my research. In this chapter I also discuss the methods of reading instruction upheld by the various textbook authors as well as examine their pedagogical attitudes and didactic intentions by analyzing the prefaces and introductions to the textbooks.

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 classify and document the various types of didacticism found in the early reading textbooks. Three general categories of didacticism emerged in my analysis of the contents of the readers' and primers'

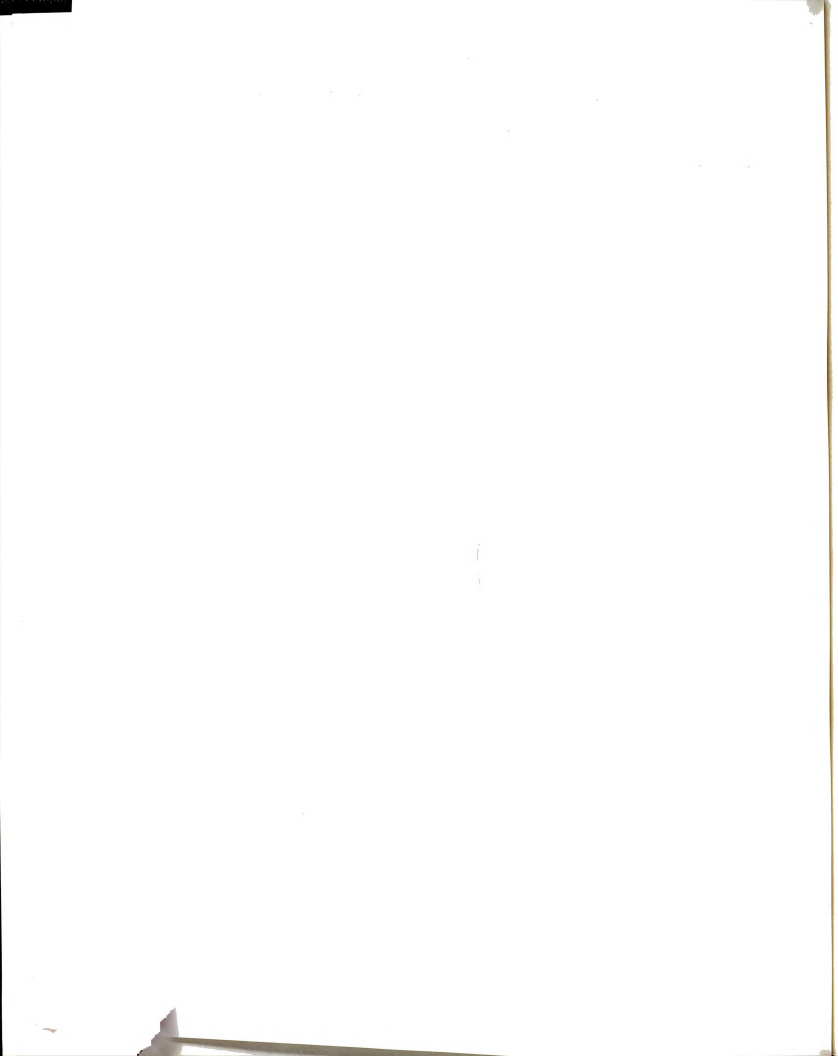


lessons and exercises, coupled with my survey of authors' various pedagogical intentions as mentioned in their texts' titles, prefaces, and forewards.

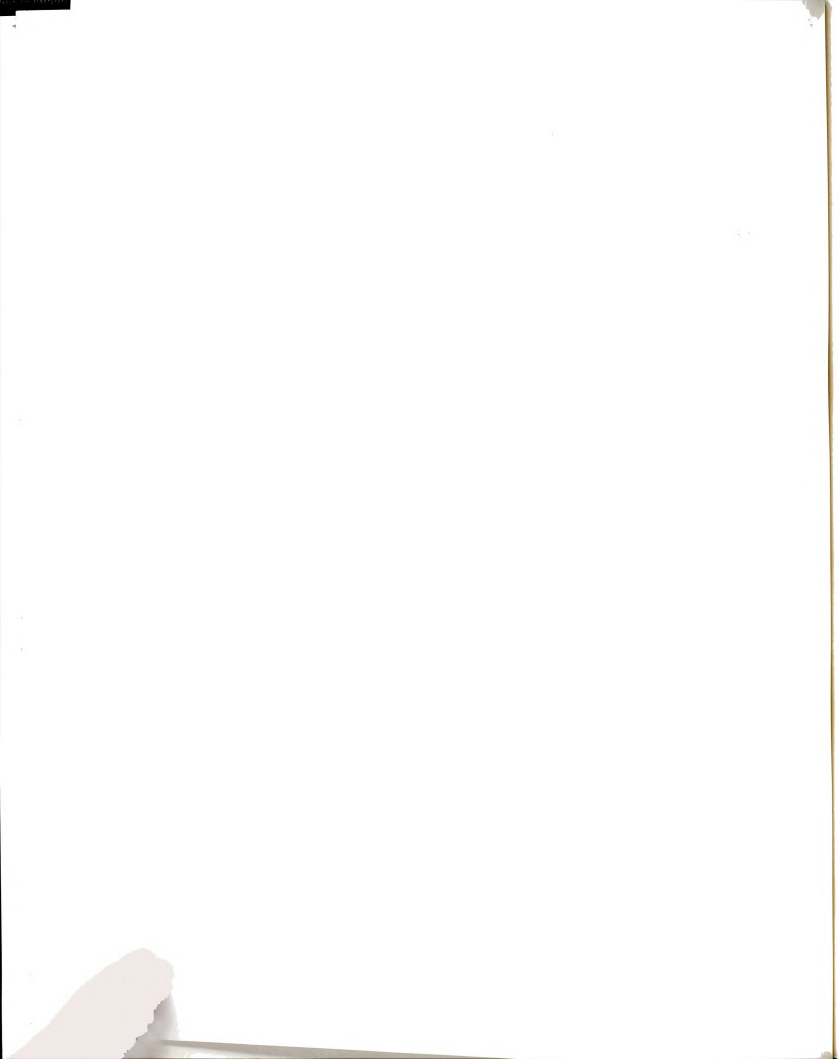
Chapter 3 explores perhaps the most obvious category found in the old textbooks, that of *religious* didacticism. This emphasis, of course, is not surprising when one looks back at the New England Primer, the books' forerunner, and its church-related use.

Perhaps very closely related to religious didacticism is a type of *social* didacticism, by which young readers were instructed in the ways of "good" social behavior. Chapter 4 expands on socially moral instructiveness as an outgrowth of the tradition of didacticism. Among various issues growing out of the period's concept of social virtue, this chapter also charts the era's increasing attention to temperance and sobriety, as well as to learning and literacy, elements which are obvious in various reading lessons.

Chapter 5 continues to explore the three-pronged classification of didacticism by examining the *nationalistic* bias at work in the texts published during the National period, documenting the didactic tone that emphasized American patriotism and superiority throughout the reading lessons. Chapters 3 through 5, which classify and analyze the types of didacticism, document major emphases in content and illustrate how these emphases overlap throughout the fifty years of publication.



The sixth and final chapter offers an overview and summation of the tradition of didacticism in the early reading texts and its effect on the national consciousness. In this chapter I raise questions for further research into America's collective expectations about reading based on the tradition of didacticism in reading textbooks and instruction.

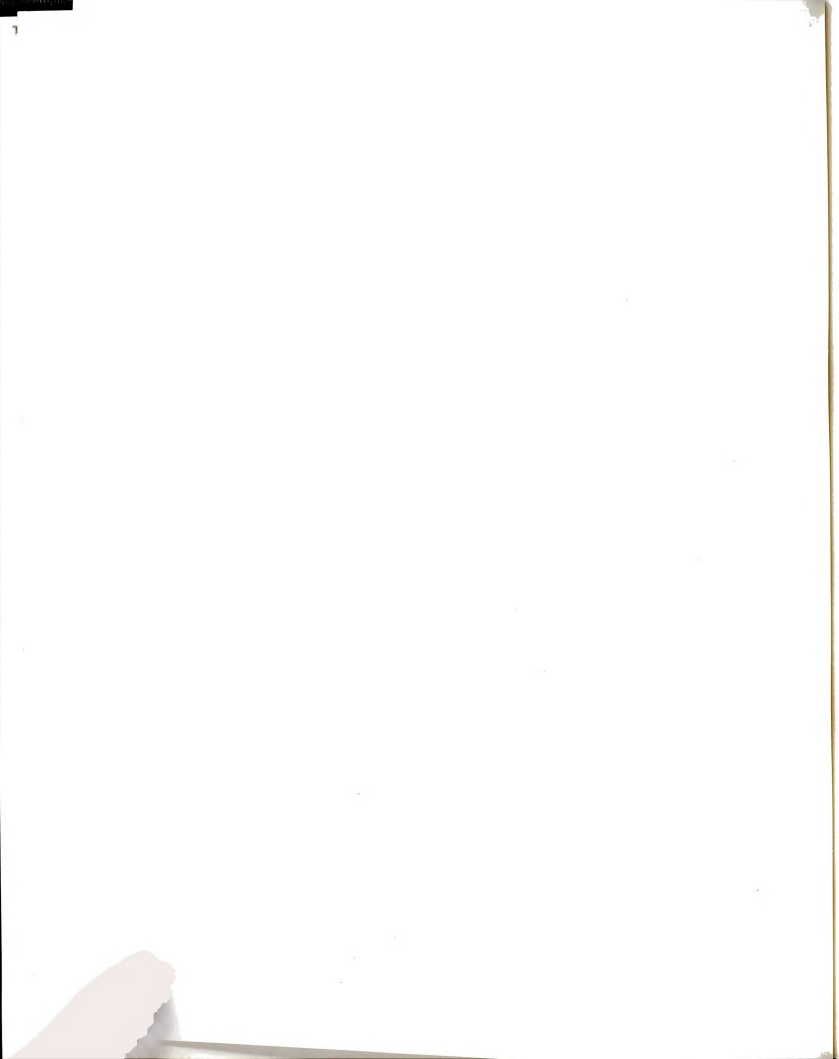


Notes

¹Buell establishes 1797 as the specific publication date for The Columbian Orator, the textbook that taught Douglass to read (138).

²Although the New England Primer was losing its place as the premier reading textbook in America at this time, it still was published and presumably used. The Rosenbach Collection of Early American Children's Books includes over 30 editions of the New England Primer published between 1780 and 1833 with publishing locations ranging from Walpole, N. H., and Concord, Mass., to Baltimore and Pittsburgh. Charles Frederick Heartman's The New England Primer Printed in America Prior to 1830: A Bibliographical Checklist corroborates this claim, indicating that over 230 editions of the New England Primer were published throughout the United States between 1780 and 1830.

³The New England Primer's epigram for the letter K is a good example of the colonies' chafing under and shifting away from Great Britain's authority. According to Rosenbach, editions of the Primer that appeared in America before the Revolution featured a K epigram that reads "Our king the good / No man of Blood" (41) while a 1780 edition seems to chide the former British authority: "The king should be good / No man of blood" (n. pag.). By 1796 the New England Primer's nationalistic tone is victoriously American: "The British King / Lost States Thirteen" (n. pag.)



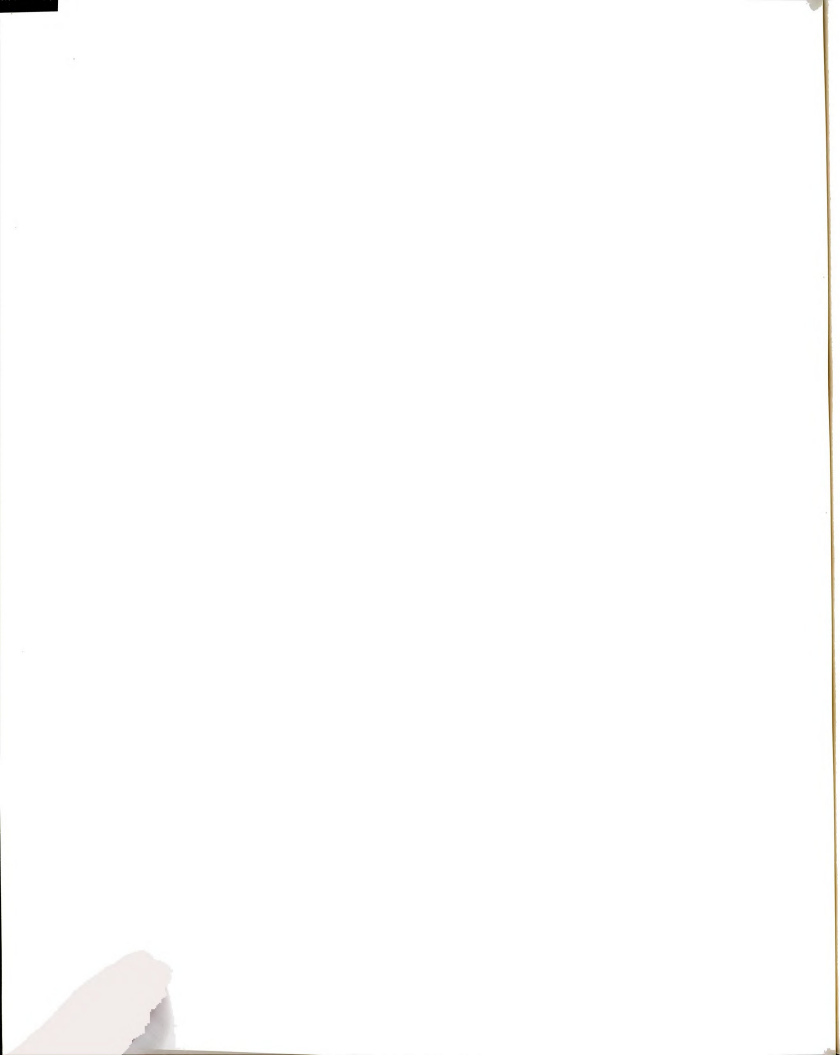
CHAPTER 1

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

My son! now in thy youth attend to instruction,
and season thy mind with the maxims of truth.

--Wisdom in Miniature (1796)

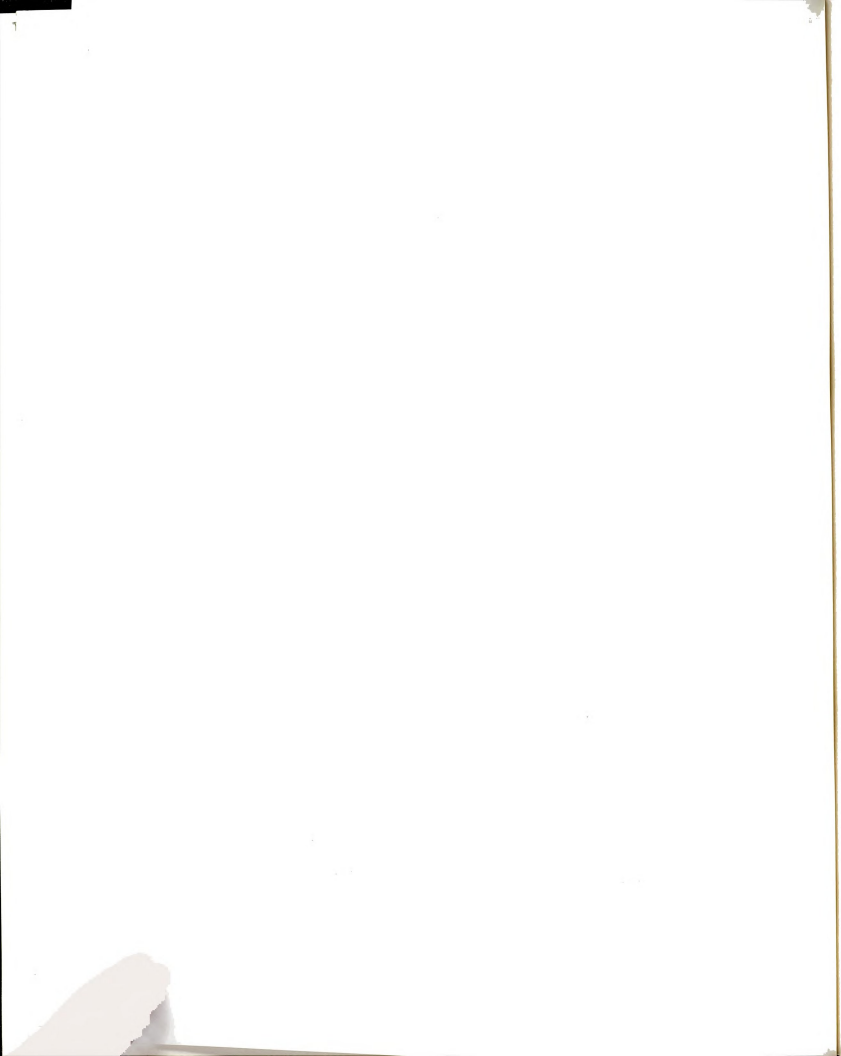
In Tradition and Reform in the Teaching of English: A History, Arthur N. Applebee (1974) presents the antecedents of the modern academic discipline of English in the schools, establishing the tradition of didacticism--a conscious, morally instructive pedagogical stance--as a basic aim in the teaching of reading in early America (4). He addresses the use of the New England Primer, Webster's Grammatical Institute, and the popular McGuffey readers of the mid-nineteenth century and maintains that these three school books, "early educational giants," supplied the young nation with "a common background of culture and allusion . . . a sense of an ethical and cultural heritage . . ." (5). Lawrence A. Cremin (1961) discusses the tone and intention of the American common schools of the early nineteenth century in The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education. Significant to students of didacticism in American reading instruction, Cremin sees "an inextricable relationship between education and national



progress" (8) as the hallmark of the popular education of early nineteenth-century America.

Nila Banton Smith (1965) provides an overview of the state of reading instruction, starting with sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England as background to the American colonial approach to reading (American Reading Instruction). She maintains that English primers were essentially church books and that a book known as an ABC was developed to serve the educational needs--as well as the religious needs--of young students (8-9). She explains that content was more important than pedagogy, especially during the period of religious emphasis in reading instruction (34). Smith delineates the transition from religious motivation in reading instruction to a nationalistic motivation around the time of the Revolutionary War. This stress on nationalism, she contends, includes an emphasis on moralistic didacticism: "In some instances the moral aim of reading instruction constituted a part of the more inclusive nationalistic aim of making good citizens for the United States" (39). Smith further explains the evolution of religious didacticism in the textbooks to one of moralism:

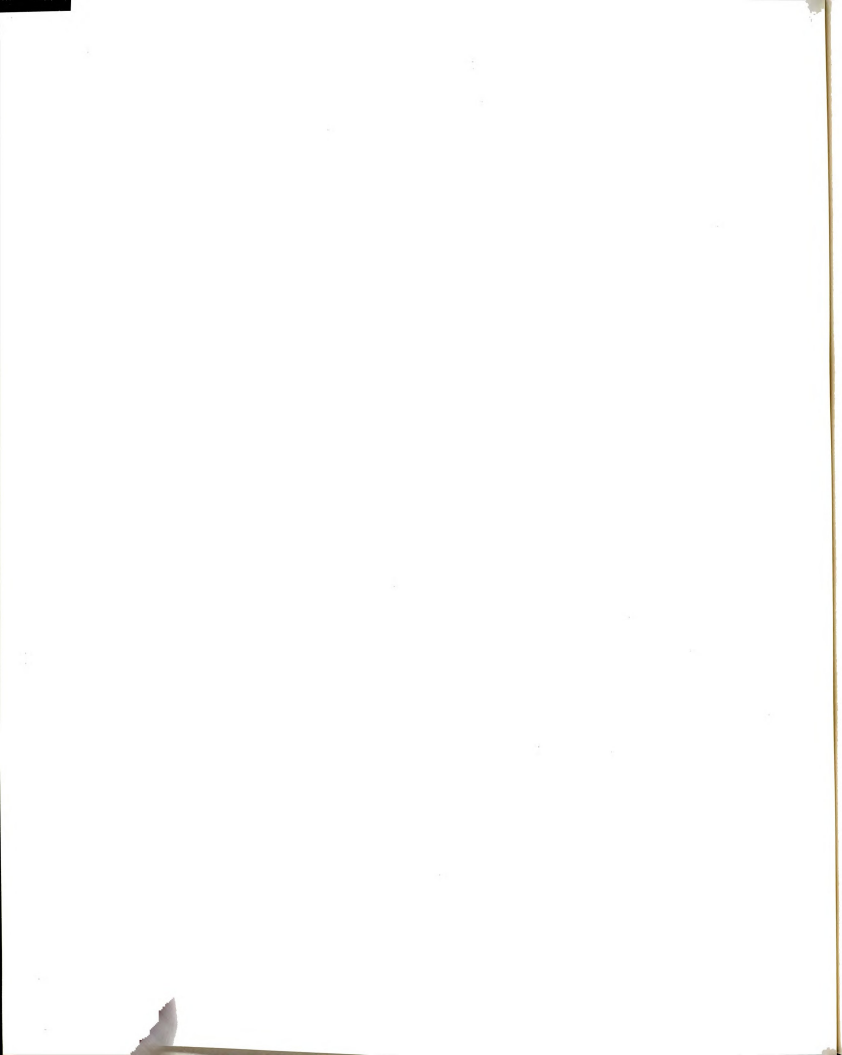
For generations reading had been looked upon as an instrument for promoting "the good life." The broadened interests of the people of this period led them to forsake strictly religious reading instruction as too narrow a program to meet their expanding needs. Many of them, however, still believed that one of the most important functions of education was to make children "good"--in other words, to build character. The method which they considered the most effective in promoting this aim was that of impressing on young minds the



ideals of virtue and moralism; hence, the readers were eagerly seized upon as carriers of moralistic content. This was but the natural transition from the religious motive of the colonial period to the secularized motives of succeeding periods. (39)

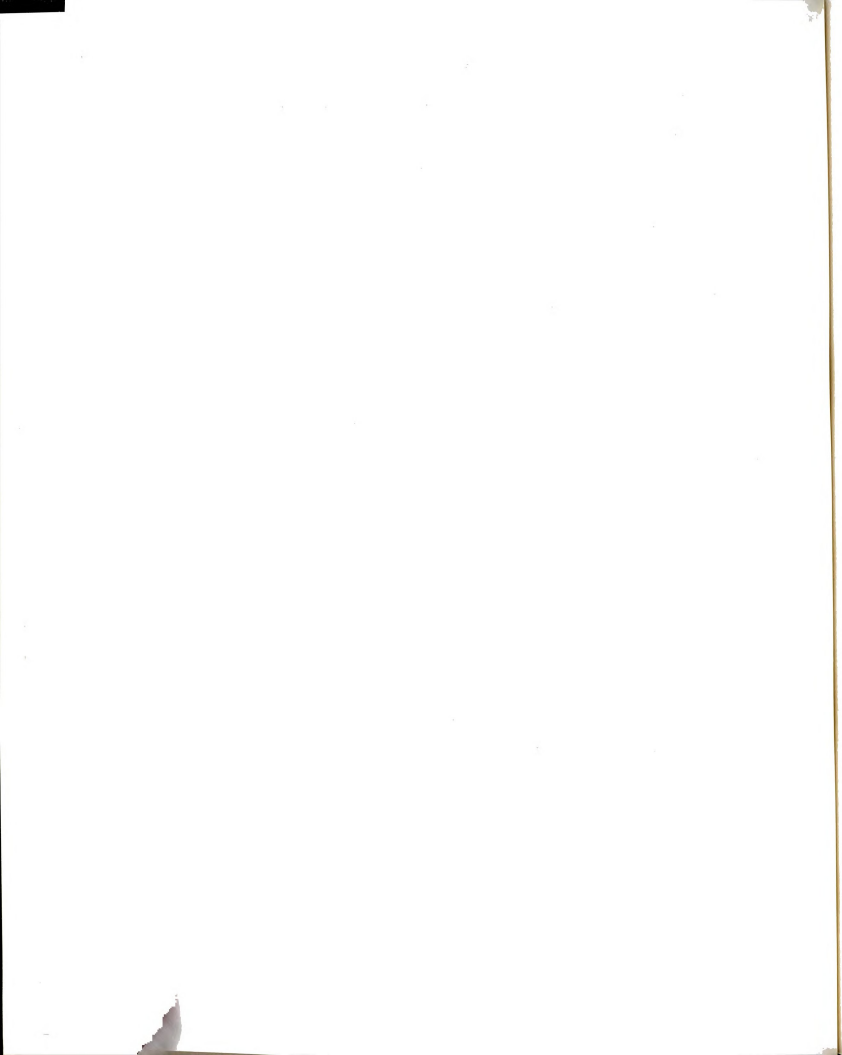
Smith offers further descriptions and explanations of the practices and expectations at work in early American reading instruction. Most significant, her distinction among *religious*, *nationalistic*, and *moralistic* didacticism forms the base on which I rely to classify didacticism in the following chapters of this dissertation. While Smith's study does not readily offer a clear-cut separation between the nationalistic and moralistic, I contend they are distinct thematic entities.

Historical studies of literacy in general are pertinent to this dissertation's overview of America's early reading textbooks. Harvey J. Graff (1987) establishes backgrounds to literacy in Western culture and society in his study The Legacies of Literacy. Particularly significant, Graff deals with literacy in North America during colonization and early nationhood, outlining various literacy rates and discussing underlying premises and reasons for the statistics in readership and reading instruction. Similarly, Kenneth A. Lockridge (1974) defines and describes the colonists' abilities in reading and writing; yet he focuses on New England, the region in which most of the reading textbooks were written and produced in the early Republic (Literacy in Colonial New England).



William J. Gilmore (1989) also limits his study to the New England region as he illustrates the impact of literacy--particularly reading--on rural Americans in the years following the Revolutionary War (Reading Becomes a Necessity of Life). This expansive study provides a detailed portrait of an emerging Age of Reading in America: "Literacy was promoted as a way of sustaining the new nation in its perilous republican experiment and as a means of insuring individual salvation and a 'Bible Commonwealth' by the inculcation of enduring Christian values and behavior" (35). Gilmore narrows his examination to the Upper Connecticut River Valley of Vermont and New Hampshire, suggesting that this region typifies, for virtually all of the early Republic, the changes brought about by commercialization of daily life and rapidly developing print communication. Specifically, Gilmore discusses the rise of literacy within the context of school and home, stating that between the ages of four and eighteen children and youth were taught to read (119), suggesting a target audience for the textbooks in question in this dissertation. Gilmore also documents the instructional sequence and emphasis most early American schools promoted in teaching basic literacy skills:

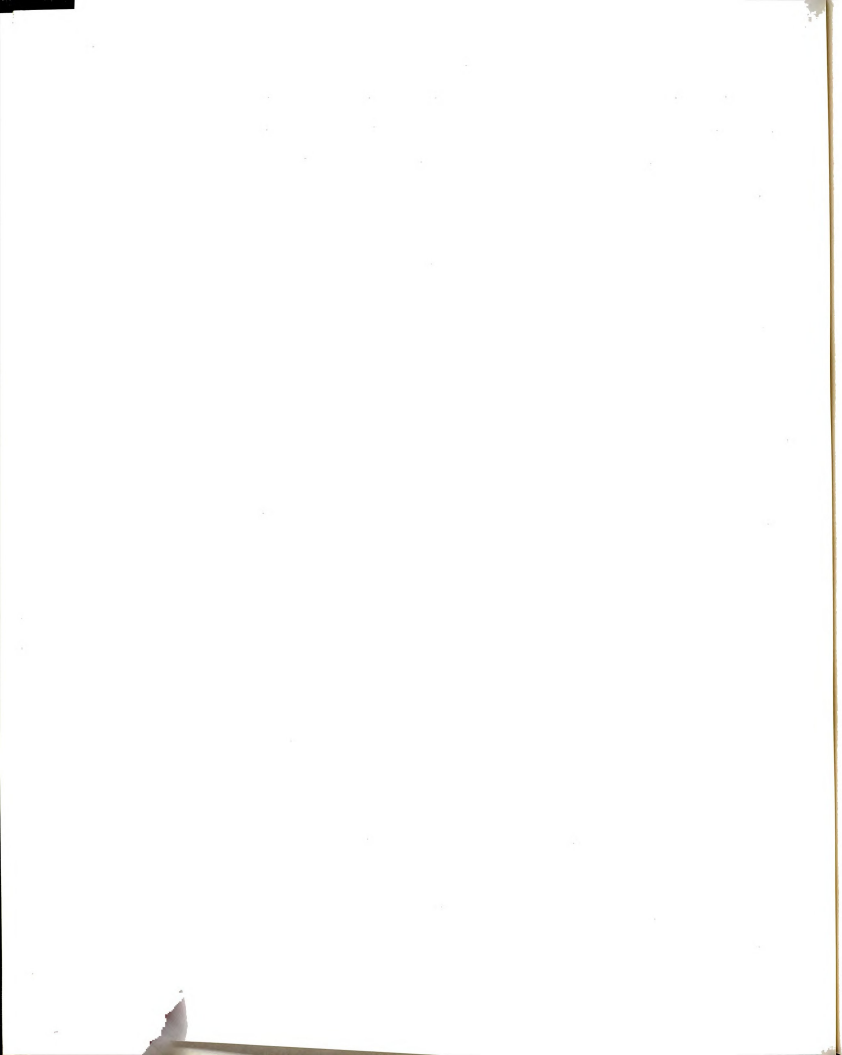
Signing one's name, written letter and word formation, oral pronunciation of letters and words, spelling, and elementary reading (first of sentences then of short paragraphs) were introduced quickly--within 20-30 school days. Moreover, as instruction proceeded, basic grammar, writing (of what was being learned), and further reading were introduced. (124)



Gilmore substantiates the tradition of didacticism in early reading textbooks as he refers to "moral maxims and tales," explaining that the knowledge imparted in reading lessons "accumulated in two well-understood areas, the sacred and the secular" (124).

More pointedly, E. Jennifer Monaghan and E. Wendy Saul (1987) find a disparity of pedagogical emphasis given reading and writing instruction in the American educational system, with reading receiving the majority of attention for various political and social reasons ("The Reader, The Scribe, The Thinker: A Critical Look at the History of American Reading and Writing Instruction" in The Formation of School Subjects, edited by Thomas S. Popkewitz).

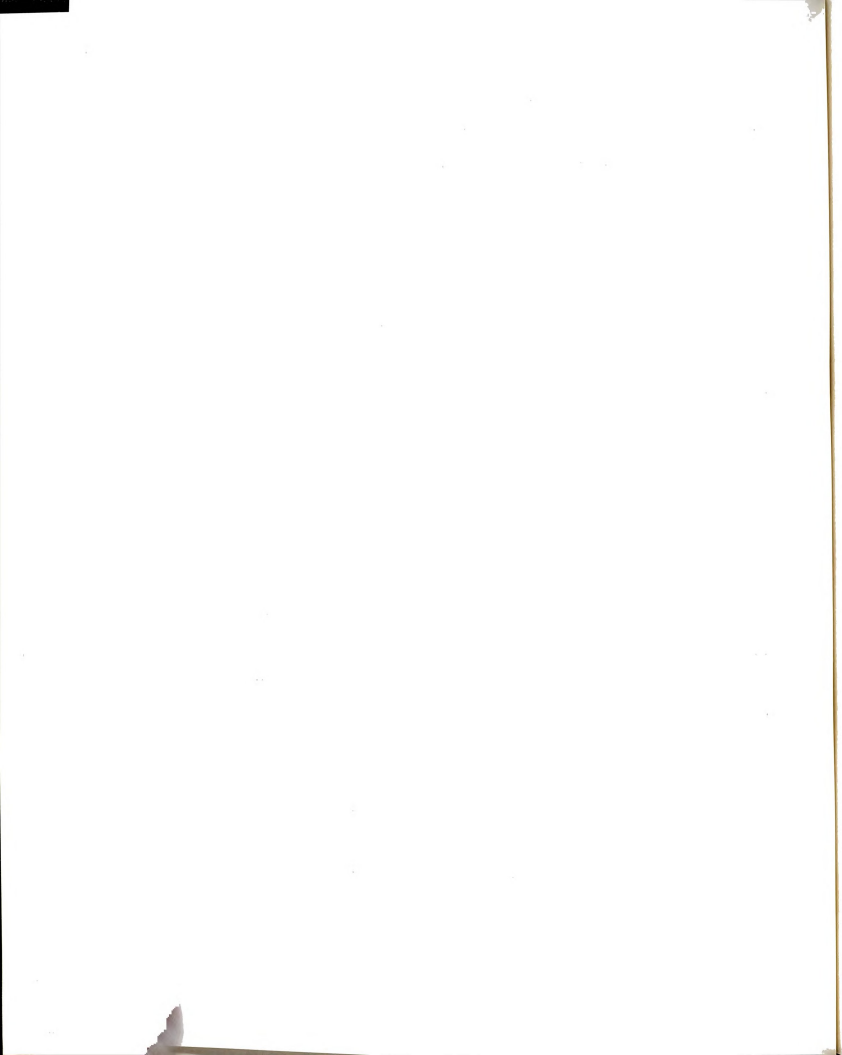
Monaghan and Saul explain that early on in New England, Puritan parents "felt morally and spiritually obliged to teach their children to read" so they could obtain salvation through a reading of Scripture (86). In 1647, the curriculum in Puritan schools included both reading and writing (i.e. penmanship); however, writing was taught as a survival skill for males "with ministerial or commercial ambitions" while females were typically taught sewing over writing (86). Monaghan and Saul explain that instruction in literacy in early American classrooms did not generally emphasize individual creativity or any bent to critical thinking on the part of the students, but it served to instill a law-abiding conformity in the young students, with reading and listening the preferred methods for



indoctrination (91). This disparity in favor of reading instruction is significant in that it underscores the impact of values and didacticism in early American attitudes about education.²

Through a study of literary climate, one is able to see early American reading instruction and texts, as well as the nation's expectations of readership, in an affective light. As Lawrence Buell (1986) gives a comprehensive picture of the New England region's perceptions of literacy and literature, he refers to various textbook authors as components (and proponents) of literary culture (New England Literary Culture: From Revolution Through Renaissance).

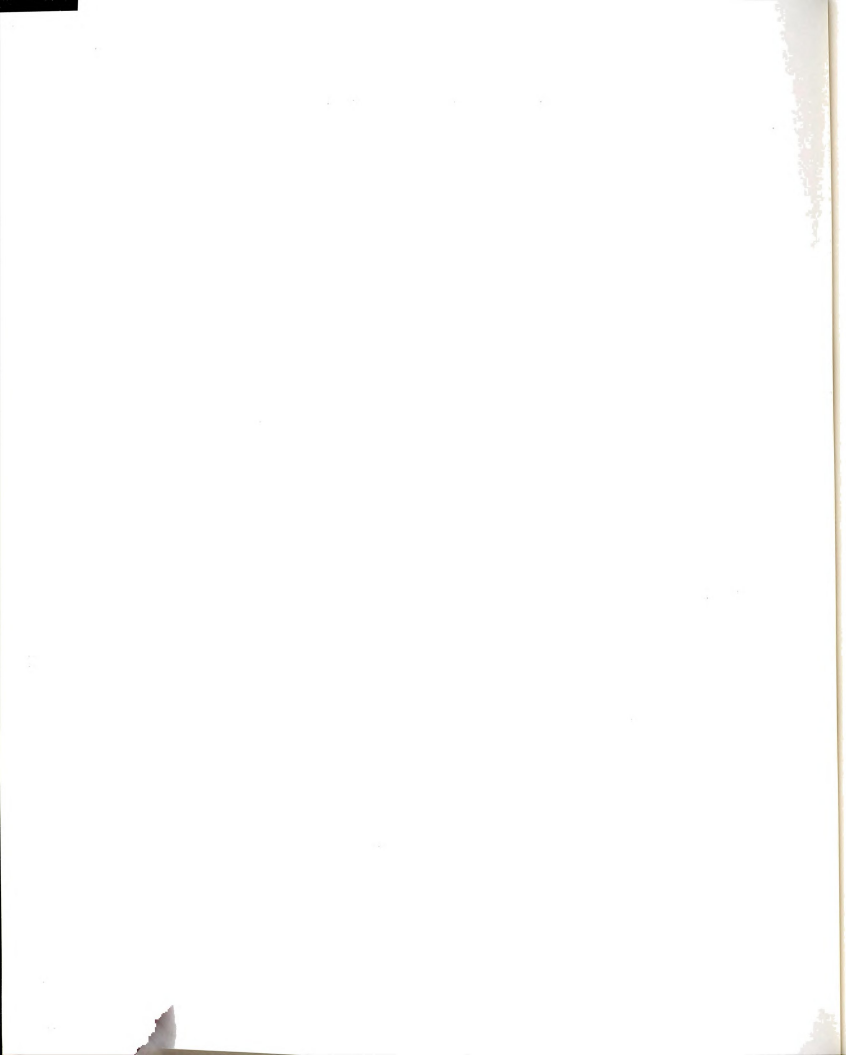
Cathy N. Davidson (1986) provides valuable insight into literacy and readership, in particular. The first half of her book Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America offers an in-depth study of the early nation's own perception of its literacy--its roots and its boundaries. Davidson explains that literacy took on a moral value in the United States' early years, that it was "a test of the moral fiber of [the] nation" (58). Davidson studies the readership of the national period, presenting a dual readership, the formally educated and the unprivileged--especially women (10). Davidson probes and delineates the opposition to novel-reading prevalent in the traditional education system, establishing the then-contemporary preoccupation with a didactic orientation in America's reading expectations.



Even during the nineteenth century, many researchers described, categorized and analyzed the school textbooks of the early national period in America. One notable researcher, Alice Morse Earle (1899; rpt. 1930), accounts for various aspects of childhood in colonial America, providing a familiarly expressive overview of the state of primary schooling and popular textbooks (Child Life in Colonial Days). Without establishing documentation, Earle portrays the social milieu of the students that the colonial primers and readers address, as well as dealing with the hornbook and religious thought and training. For example, New England law required families to learn from the catechism, which was included in the New England Primer; Earle points out that the Primer fulfilled the requirements that local "school trustees called 'scholastical, theological, and moral discipline'" (132).

Soon after the turn of the century, Clifton Johnson (1917), in an amiable study of American schooling, supplies historical background to education in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Old-Time Schools and School-Books). Johnson maintains that reading texts--beyond the primer stage--that were geared for children were scarce prior to 1825 (233) and that spellers had to fill in the gap:

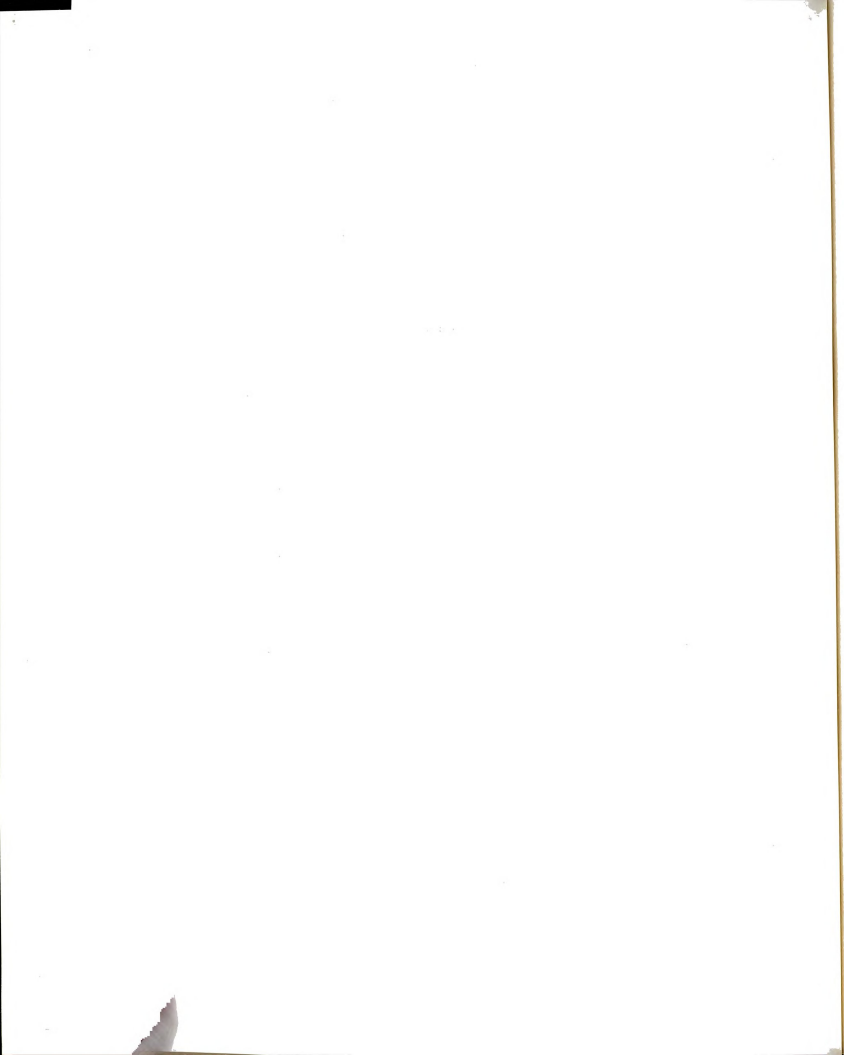
Advanced readers were in the market in the early years of the republic, but readers for the beginners seem to have been thought unnecessary. Thus the spellers of the fore-fathers did double duty as spelling-books and primers (185)



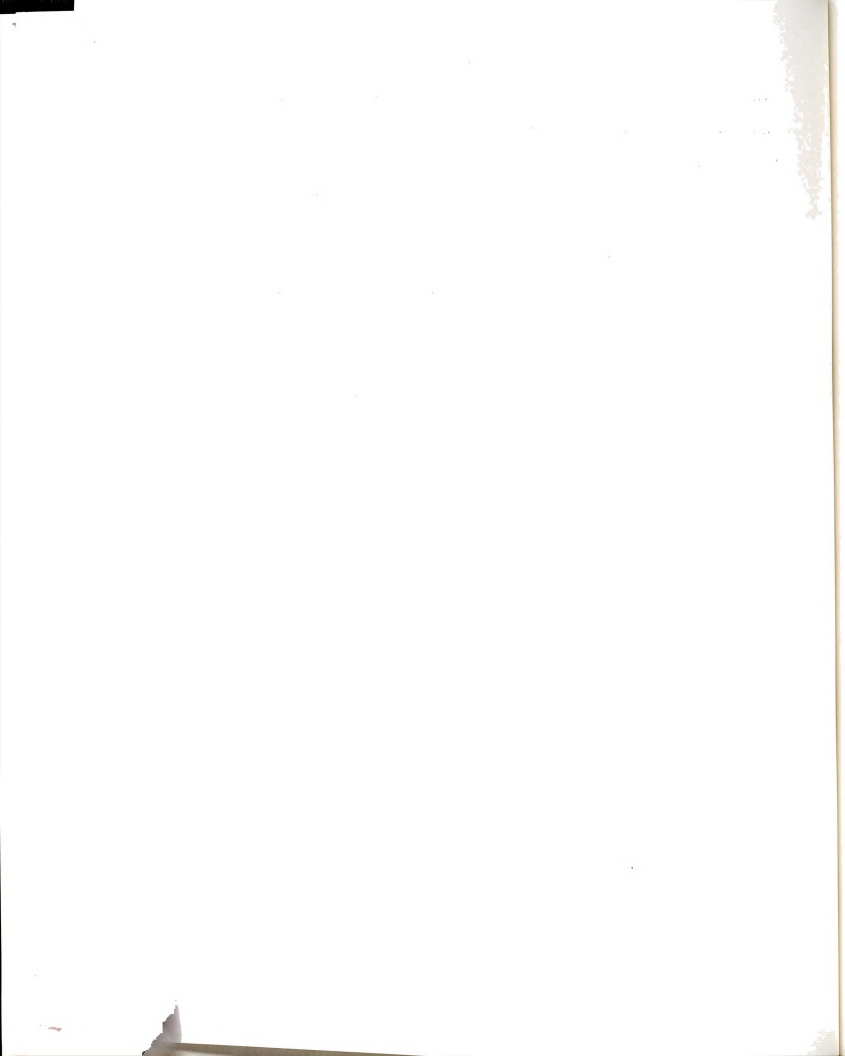
Johnson further deals with the New England Primer and its profound influence on colonial readership; he also addresses the problem of scriptural interpretation within the New England community,¹ before discussing Noah Webster's spelling book in light of its moral readings.

In another wide-ranging study of old American textbooks, John A. Nietz (1961) explains that from colonial times religious sectarian didacticism was present in America's school books, but that this religious emphasis was eventually questioned and that it subsequently waned by 1850 due to Constitutional encouragement to separate church and state (Old Textbooks: Spelling, Grammar, Reading, Arithmetic, Geography, American History, Civil Government, Physiology, Penmanship, Art, Music--As Taught in the Common Schools from Colonial Days to 1900 53-55). Nietz also includes *spellers* in his discussion of reading texts, maintaining that the earliest spellers often included simple reading selections that students could use before reading primers were generally available (67). Nietz discusses the popular series approach in nineteenth-century reading textbooks and offers general coverage of best-known text authors.

Rudolph R. Reeder (1900) offers in-depth discussion of the landmark textbooks throughout the history of American education (The Historical Development of School Readers and of Method in Teaching Reading). He describes three forerunners of the primers and readers: the hornbook, a



single page (made up of the alphabet, vowel and consonant couplings, and a prayer) that was protected by a thin, transparent sheet of horn tacked to a wooden paddle; the battledore in England, a paddle alphabet similar to the hornbook, but which doubled as game equipment for shuttlecock; and the colonial sampler, an embroidery cloth on which young women practiced their needlework by stitching the alphabet, along with various designs and moralistic aphorisms. Reeder also discusses the New England Primer, and he goes on to describe and analyze most notably the textbooks by Webster, Bingham, and Murray, as well as textbooks written later--after 1830--by John Pierpont and Lyman Cobb. Reeder explains the pedagogical shift from individual reading texts to the serialized, or graded, readers that dominated the nineteenth century (and later) instruction. At the turn of the nineteenth century, Reeder explains, textbook publishers began to adapt the reading lessons in the readers and primers to the reading and interest levels of children (43). This action led to a gradation of lessons based on the students' capabilities to learn. Reeder spells out the evolution of serialized reading textbooks. At the turn of the nineteenth century, series made up of two or three reading textbooks were published--without any numbering designation (such as First Reader, Second Reader, etc.). Instead, the books were named, with the second book standing as the designated title. The first book in the series was titled the

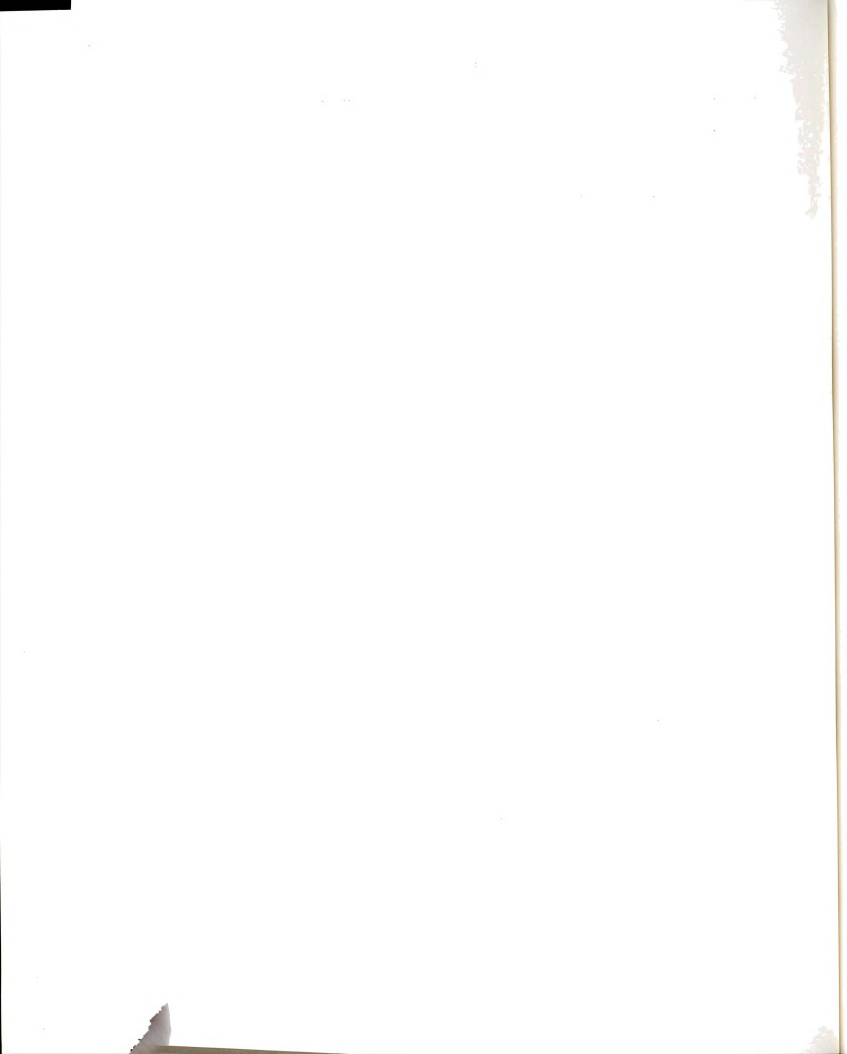


"Introduction," and the third book the "Sequel."³ Reeder indicates that primers and spellers often completed such a "series":

Two and three-book series began with the [nineteenth] century. These were not numbered, but named--the middle book of a three-book series [received] the characteristic name . . . as now designated; the first book was called the "Introduction," and the third the "Sequel," as with the Murray readers. . . . A primer and the spelling-book usually filled out the series (44).

Charles Carpenter (1963) also provides a study of textbooks and their development (History of American Schoolbooks). He discusses the history and development of English language skills textbooks, with an extensive treatment of primers and the evolution of readers, ranging from the New England Primer to the McGuffey Reader series of the mid-nineteenth century. Of particular interest in Carpenter's general study of textbooks is his indication that later editions of the New England Primer included "story" lessons for young students (29), indicating a developing sensitivity to pedagogical needs on the part of the publishers. And Carpenter asserts that the first American reader per se was Noah Webster's Grammatical Institute of the English Language, Part 3, published in 1785: "Although the word 'reader' was not in the title of the first edition, the book was specifically a reader, a manual intended basically as a text from which to learn to read" (58).

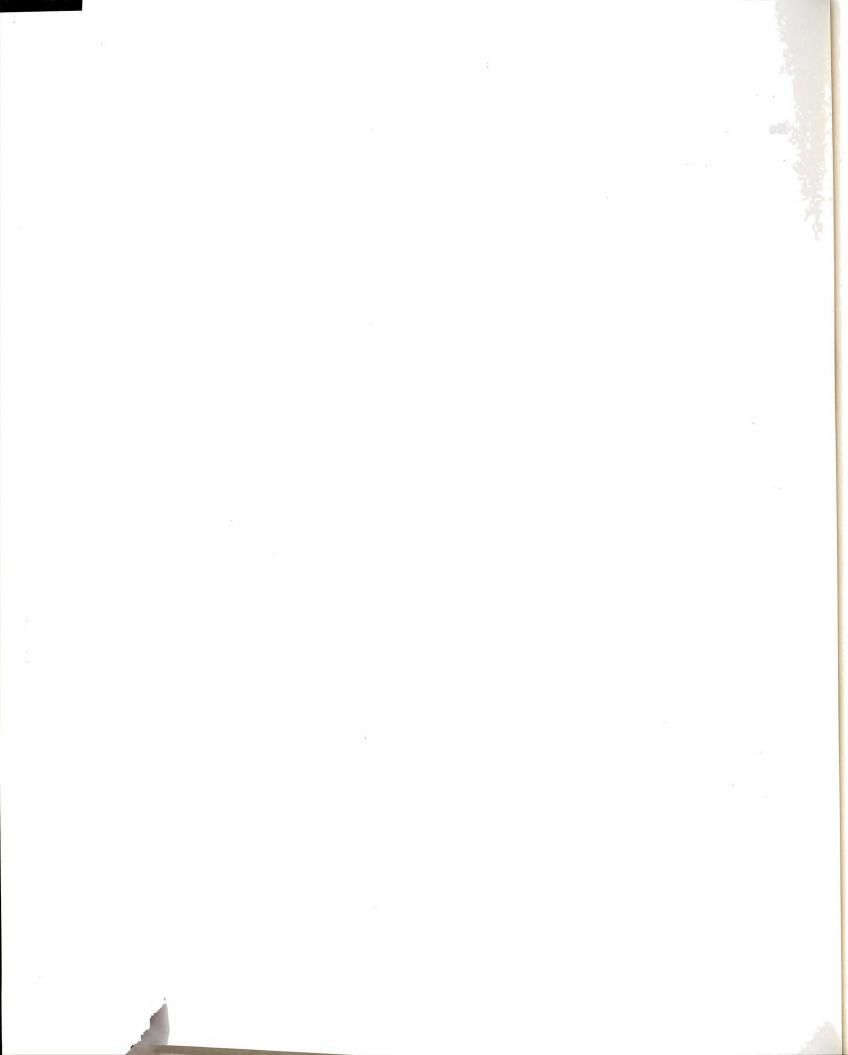
R. R. Robinson (1930) illustrates the changes in reader content throughout the early periods of American history



(Two Centuries of Change in the Content of School Readers).

He indicates the strong influence of the clergy in the make-up of the reading selections for reading classes during the colonial period⁴ and how that influence wanes with the rise of nationalism in the post-colonial period. Robinson delineates the conscious change from the religious to the secular in the nation's reading textbooks due to anti-sectarian legislation which brought about a secularization of the educational system. He argues that "the gradual decline of religious material in the readers tells of the losing fight of the church in its attempt to control the content of school readers" (17). Along with charts and graphs to substantiate his study, Robinson offers an exhaustive bibliography of primary texts, with the earliest dating 1557 and the latest dated just prior to his own study's publication date of 1930.

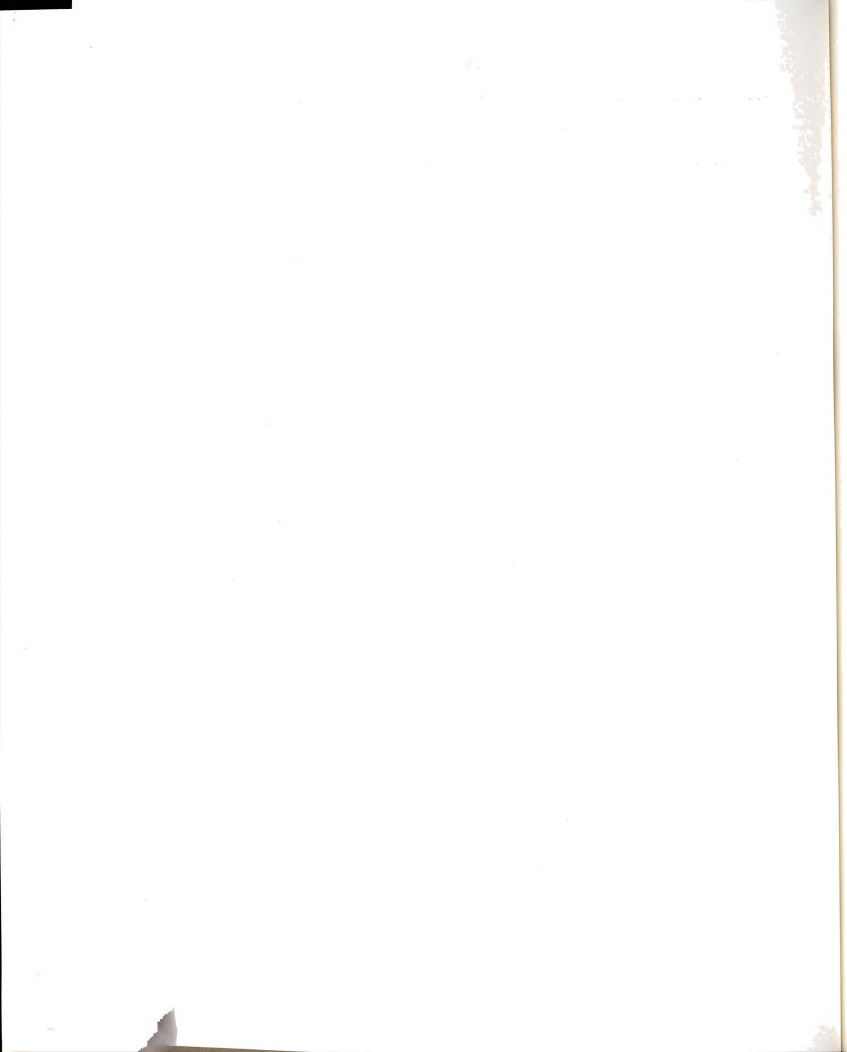
Richard L. Venezky (1987) also addresses the changes that can be traced in American reading texts over 300 years of publication ("A History of the American Reading Textbook." The Elementary School Journal). He explains that reading instruction in America has traditionally centered around lessons made up of reading selections and that these readings tender a "conservative, narrow representation of society and the child's role in it" (247). Changes in the reading passages' content, he says, came about primarily due to society's evolving attitude about young students as well as society's expectations of schools as vehicles to



impart specific skills and competencies (247). Venezky maintains that throughout the development of American reading instruction "skill in reading, as a general competency, has always been comingled with inculcation of *what to read . . .*" (253).

Using data from spellers, primers, and readers, Ruth Miller Elson (1964) sheds further light on the changes in reading textbook content in Guardians of Tradition: American Schoolbooks of the Nineteenth Century. Although the study encompasses school texts from various academic disciplines, Elson relies extensively on reading texts to illustrate the didacticism that prevailed throughout the nineteenth century. She states that the textbook authors and compilers were overtly concerned with morals and that their textbooks' didacticism was drawn to produce a religious, nationalistic, and virtuous attitude in their readers' minds: "Most textbook writers had an exalted idea of their function. . . . They were much more concerned with the child's moral development than with the development of his mind" (1). Elson's thesis maintains that this "moral development" is the divinely appointed tradition that American school books set out to foster and guard:

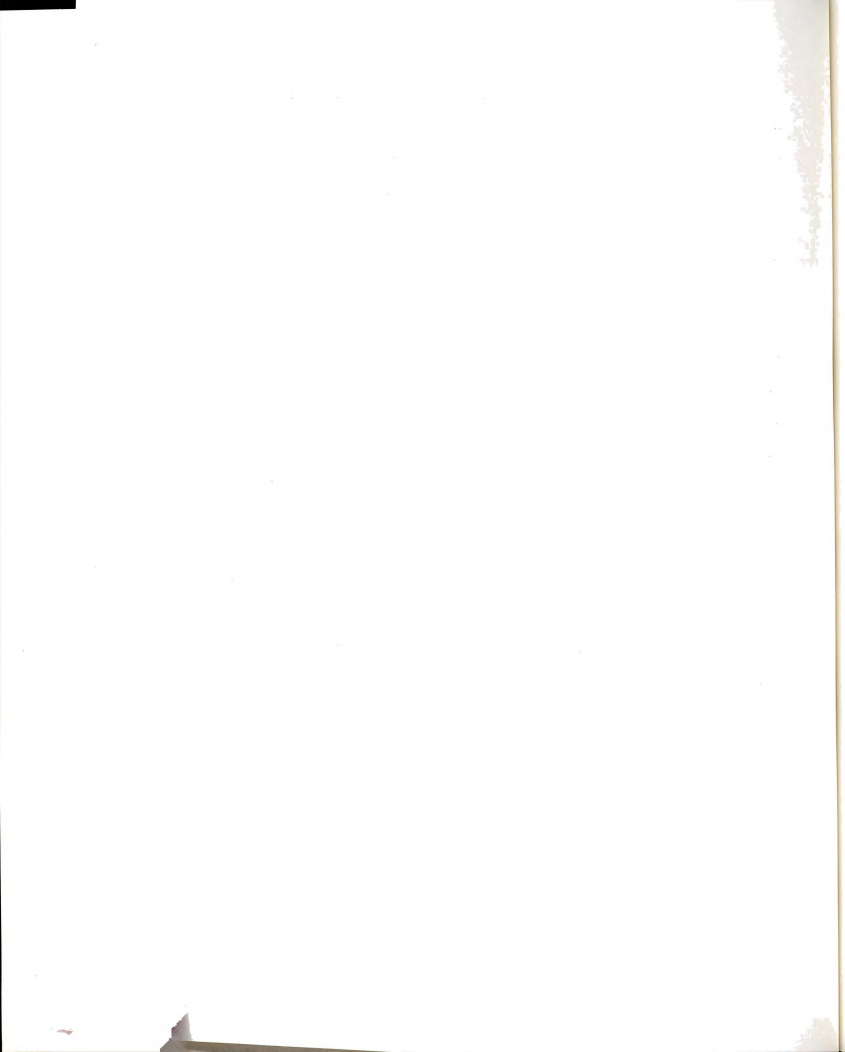
Throughout the [nineteenth] century values and actions approved by the textbook writers are assumed to be blessed by God; conversely, disapproved values and actions are cursed by God. Unethical behavior is not only socially undesirable but sinful. God is a firm and inexorable judge who not only metes out punishment after death, but who gives earthly punishments for men's actions on earth. (42)



Elson outlines the dominance of religious didacticism in the early nineteenth century, explaining that virtually all of the reading texts "devote[d] the greater part of their space to the subject of God's relationship to the universe, to man, and to the child himself" and that by degrees more secular material found its way into the lessons, "but a religious tone is evident throughout the century" (41). She further delineates the assertion of nationalism in the textbooks' didactic tone, explaining that fostering nationalism⁵ was a major function of schooling in America (313-14) and that the nationalistic ideals were guarded by the textbooks:

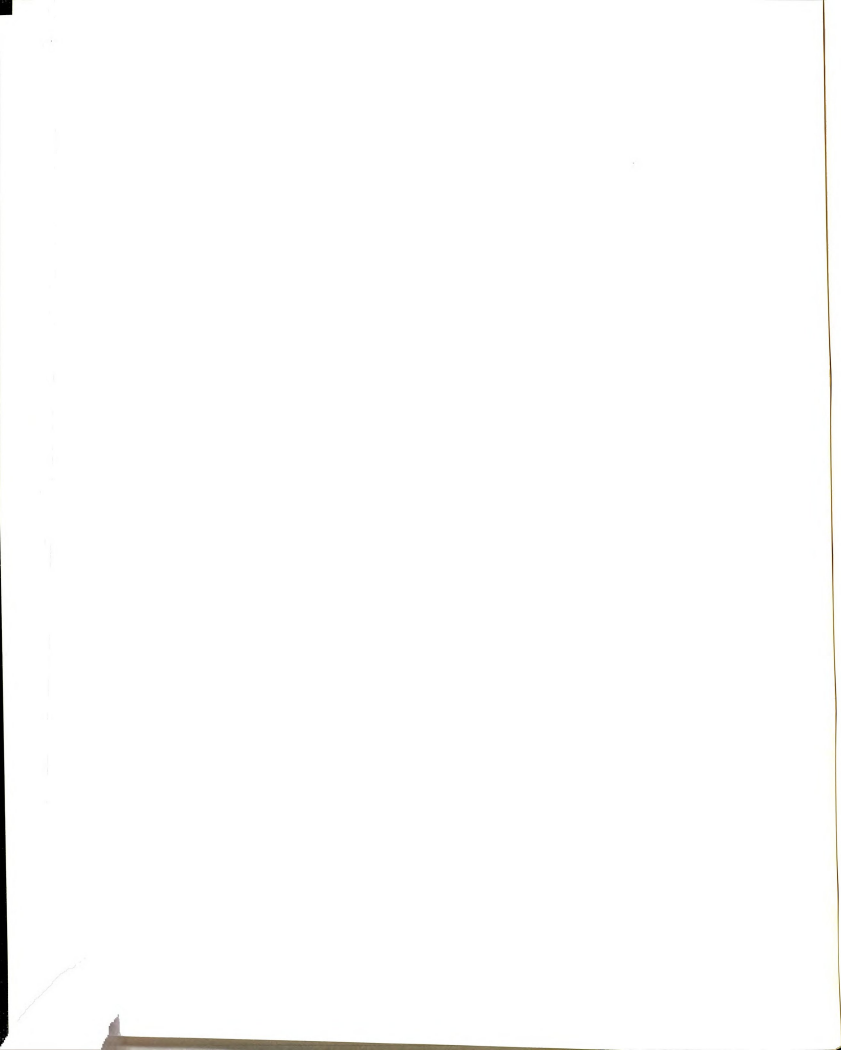
In a nation as diverse as the United States, loyalty to the ideals theoretically held in common by the nationality make up nationalism. In a sense the schoolbooks are guardians of what their authors consider those national ideals to be. In defining proper attitudes and behavior for American youth they spell out the ideals seen by their authors as those of the American nationality. By the quality and quantity of pieces on this subject, the authors of schoolbooks clearly saw nationalism . . . as a primary value to be developed in youth. (285)

To further the nationalistic aura, Elson explains, textbook authors used American heroes as models of positive behavior to inspire the country's youth (186). George Washington, in particular, was designated to foster a patriotic and moral citizenry: "The virtues assigned specifically to him are usually filial obedience, prudence, modesty, courtesy, charitableness. He is always described as profoundly religious" (Elson 202).



Of course, the New England Primer set the early standard of "what to read" in early America. Numerous studies have been done of the Primer, but none so outstandingly succinct as that by Paul Leicester Ford in 1897 (The New-England Primer: A History of Its Origin and Development; reprinted in 1962). In the introduction to a facsimile of a 1727 edition of the Primer, he traces the background and variations of the text, providing comment on the textbook's evolution over more than a century. Ford documents the primer's eventual secularization and imitation, from which it never quite rallied: "The New England Primer made a brave fight, but it was a hopeless battle. Slowly printer after printer abandoned the printing of editions of the little work, in favor of some more popular compilation" (51-52). Ford says that "it is impossible to measure the work the Primer accomplished" (52) in its overwhelming popularity as a text of literacy and moral virtue; he also compares it to the popular school books by Noah Webster which helped to supplant the New England Primer, by stating that the two could share the same epitaph--the one eventually written of the Spelling Book: "It taught millions to read, and not one to sin" (53).

Of the several notable reading textbook writers of the period following that of the New England Primer, Noah Webster has received the most attention from researchers. In his nineteenth-century biography Noah Webster, Horace E. Scudder (1885) documents Webster's textbook publishing



record, quoting Webster as to the origins of his Grammatical Institute spelling books:

"In the year 1782, while the American army was lying on the bank of the Hudson, I kept a classical school in Goshen, Orange County, State of New York. I there compiled two small elementary books for teaching the English language. The country was then impoverished, intercourse with Great Britain was interrupted, school-books were scarce and hardly attainable, and there was no certain prospect of peace." (33)

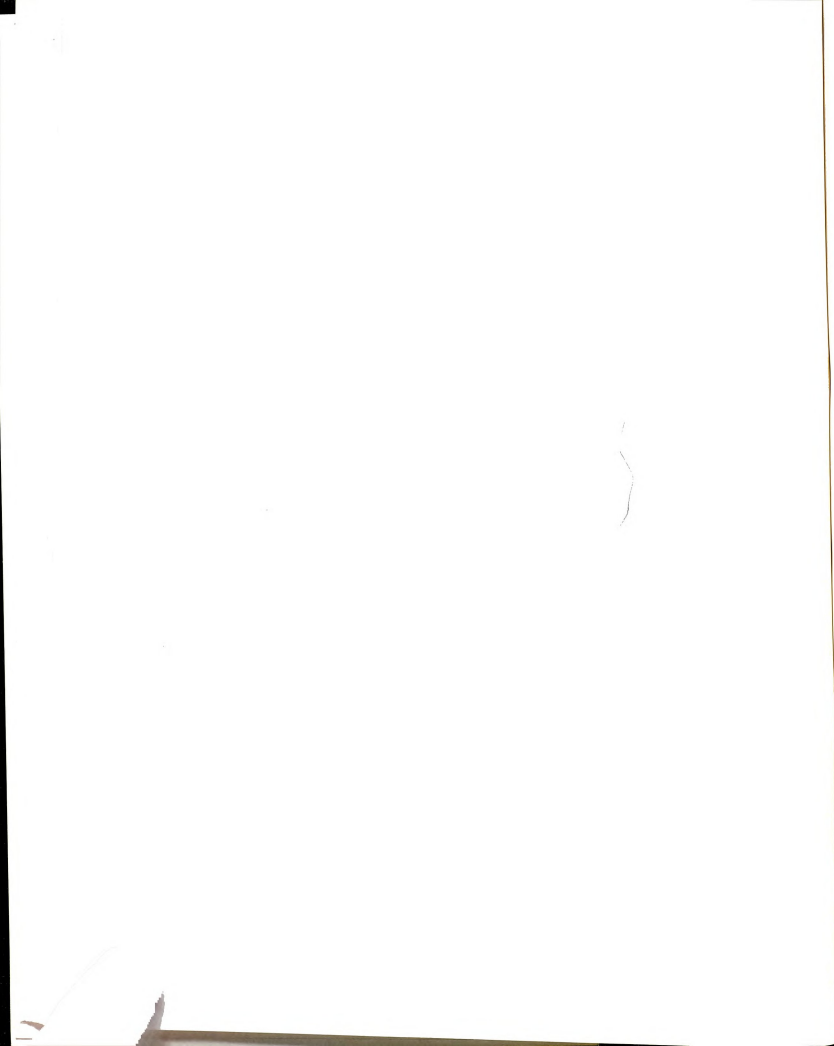
Scudder explains that Webster chose to write his texts because he did not necessarily like the spelling text by Dilworth that was commonly in use at the time and, perhaps more significantly, because of the political rift with England, he thought the new nation was ripe for its own separate literature and language (34-35).

Among contemporary Webster scholars, Edith Jennifer Monaghan (1980) focuses on Noah Webster's spelling books as principal reading texts from the late 1700's to the mid-1800's and explores the Webster spelling books' success. She explains that the spellers taught beginning students "letter-sound correspondences" and that it is in this aspect that the books were most influential in initial reading instruction. She documents Webster's spellers' popularity and durability, claiming that ten million copies had been published by 1829. Monaghan portrays the spellers' success as a result of several variables (in relationship to competitive spellers), not the least of which were Webster's marketing skills, his national reputation and his

in
1
C
e
ti
"
W
t
p
s
C
a
p
W
s
e
W
h
i
p
B
c
e
A
w

innovations in reading methodology ("Noah Webster's Speller, 1783-1843: Causes of Its Success as Reading Text").

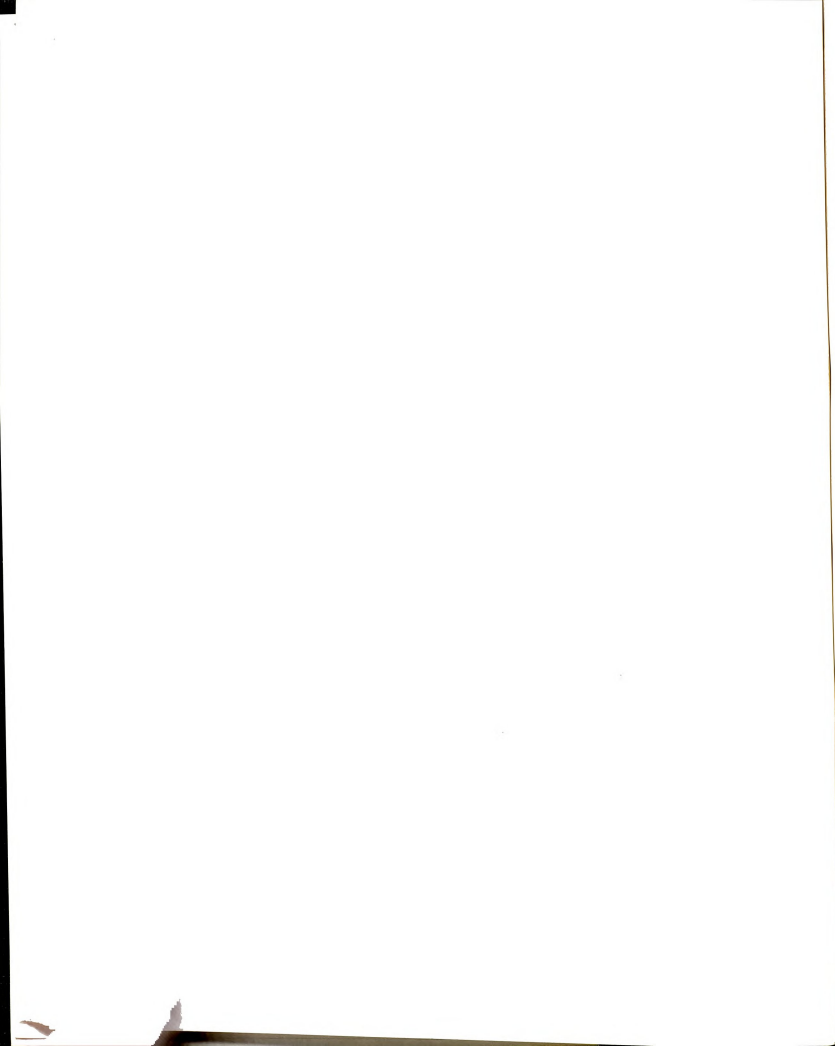
Abraham Blinderman (1976) further establishes the commercial success of Webster's Blue-Back Speller, explaining that approximately one hundred million copies of the Blue-Back Speller were sold.⁶ He calls the speller "America's most widely read school book" and argues that Webster carefully cultivated a didactic tone in his textbook: "Webster filled the little book with patriotic passages designed to instill an intense nationalistic sentiment in the minds of his young readers" (Three Early Champions of Education: Benjamin Franklin, Benjamin Rush, and Noah Webster 25). Blinderman also offers an interesting portrayal of Webster as a man of paradox, stating that Webster believed that religious training should be a part of schooling and that the clergy should be included in the education of children (29). Yet, according to Blinderman, Webster was opposed to Bible reading in the schools because he thought that too frequent use of the Bible would lessen its meaningfulness to the students; he considered it "'a prostitution of divine truth for secular purposes'" (28). Blinderman also notes that Webster reduced the religious content in his textbooks and that teachers and parents eventually objected to Webster's text The Little Reader's Assistant, which was first published in 1790, because of its waning religious emphasis in subsequent editions (31).



Lynne Alvine (1987) portrays Webster as a "staunch patriot whose single-minded vision that American political unity and the preservation of American liberty depended upon the development of a uniform American language" ("Noah Webster: The Legacy of 'The Prompter,'" 52). Alvine contends further that Webster "worked . . . to shape a unity of national culture with the influence of his pen" (57) and that he saw school readers and spellers as an ideal channel to foster nationalistic sentiment in a controlled educational setting:

Webster's somewhat simplistic theory of learning can be seen in one of his 1783 observations found in the reprint of his "Letters to a Young Gentleman": "The rudiments of knowledge we receive by tradition, and our first actions are, in a good degree, modeled by imitation. Nor ought it to be otherwise" (Webster, 1783, as reprinted in Babbidge, 156). If people learned by imitation of whatever was set before them, then Webster was determined that what was set before young Americans in their school textbooks should be solid moral teachings and patriotic ideals. . . . (54-55)

The strong early American tradition of religious instruction that was infused into academics and, specifically, into the textbooks is the province of William Bean Kennedy's The Shaping of Protestant Education (1966). Kennedy addresses the pervasive religious didacticism in so many school books when he explains that during the larger National Period--from 1789 to 1860--"American Protestants adopted a general strategy of education that depended heavily upon the public school and alongside it utilized the



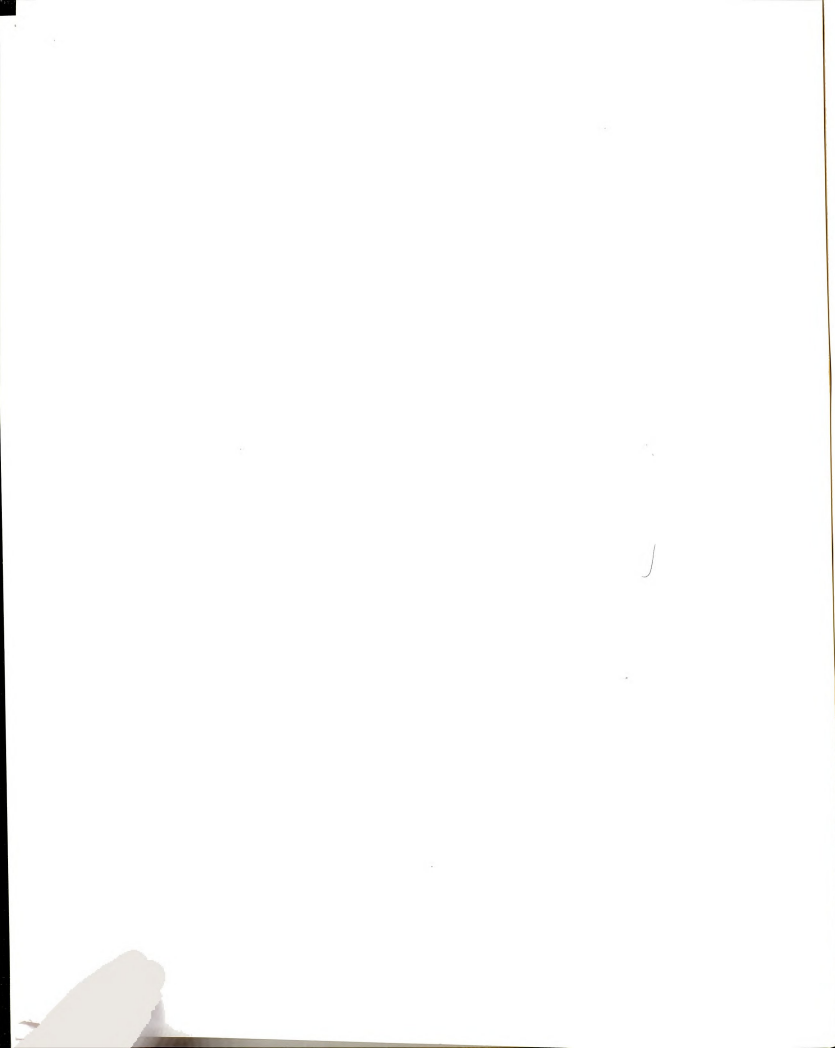
Sunday School as the major church-related instrument for Christian education" (11).

Similarly, Douglas Sloan's comprehensive history (1973) of the age of revival in America offers background to American education's didactic tradition and its effect on contemporary educational institutions (The Great Awakening and American Education: A Documentary History). Sloan contends that religious and moral didacticism in American education was further entrenched as revivalists set up their own academies and schools for the fostering of revivalism and conversion (24-25). Sloan illustrates the far-reaching trend that had begun even before the mid-eighteenth century:

Jonathan Edwards, who extended the plea for revivalist-oriented education even to the elementary level[,] . . . also proposed "establishing and supporting schools in poor towns and villages," not only "to bring children up in common learning," but also to prepare them for conversion. (25)

Although Sloan does not deal directly with didacticism in reading textbooks, he does offer a collection of primary sources pertinent to religious and moral instruction and its effect on American education.

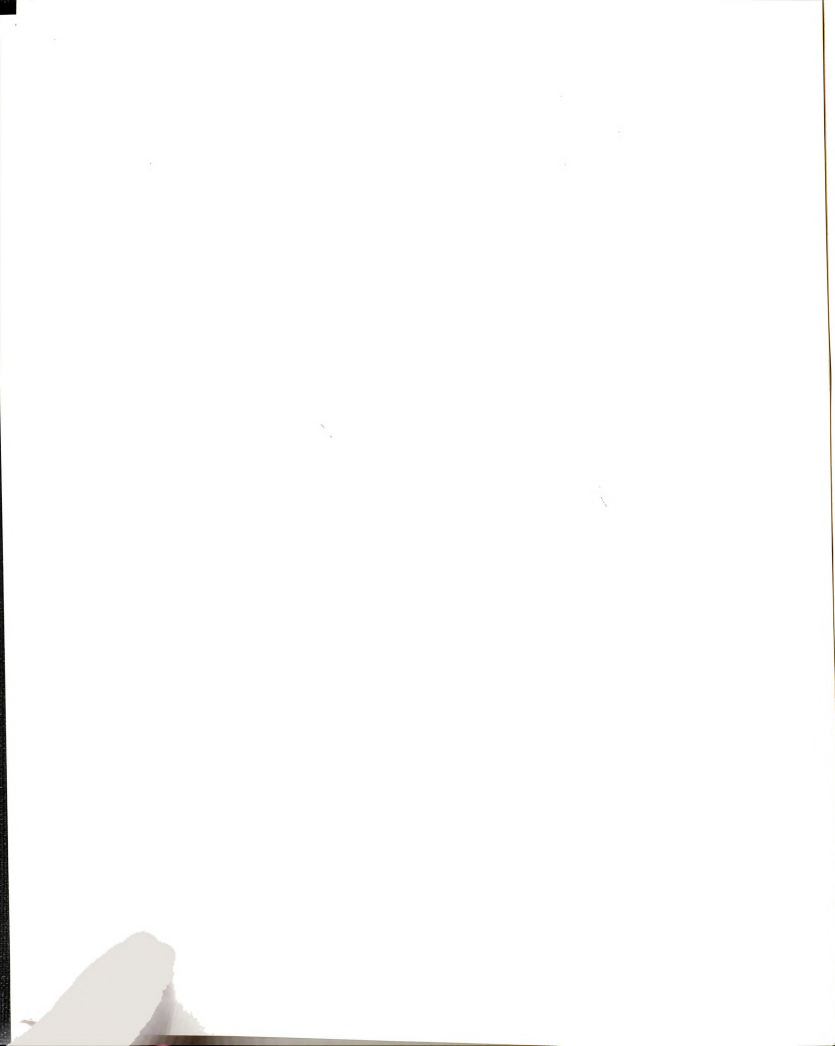
Claiming that children's literature reflects the mores of society, Kathleen Connery Fitzgibbons (1987) outlines the role of didactic literature written for Puritan children. She examines the changes in the moralism found in the early children's literature in America. Of particular significance to this dissertation is her examination of the New England Primer, for which she offers the span of 1669-



1885 as the years the Primer was published. Not focusing on other textbooks, Fitzgibbons does discuss A Token for Children (1700) and various Peter Parley selections (1827-1856), both works published in the commercial press that complemented the early reading textbooks ("A History of the Evolution of the Didactic Literature for Puritan Children in America from 1656-1856"). Edgar Osborne (1958; rpt. 1975) explains that the moral tone of reading material for children in the early nineteenth century appeared in both prose and in verse, and he comments on the textbooks' didactic forerunners: "It is all too true that the discouraging wave of eighteenth-century piety produced a flood of painfully didactic stories and heavily moral tales. Sometimes these tales taught religion, sometimes they informed and educated" ("Introduction" in The Osborne Collection of Early Children's Books, 1566-1910: A Catalogue. Ed. Judith St. John, xx).

Anne Scott McLeod's research (1975) into the moral tone found in early- to mid-nineteenth-century children's fiction provides a valuable base for this dissertation's focus on the tradition of didacticism. She explains that overt moralizing was an expected element in virtually all nineteenth-century media:

The relentless moralizing of this literature oppresses most twentieth-century adults who read it, and some have assumed that nineteenth-century children must have been equally oppressed by it. But such judgments are both unhistorical and out of keeping with what we know of children and their moral attitudes--unhistorical because the morality in children's books was not more omnipresent nor

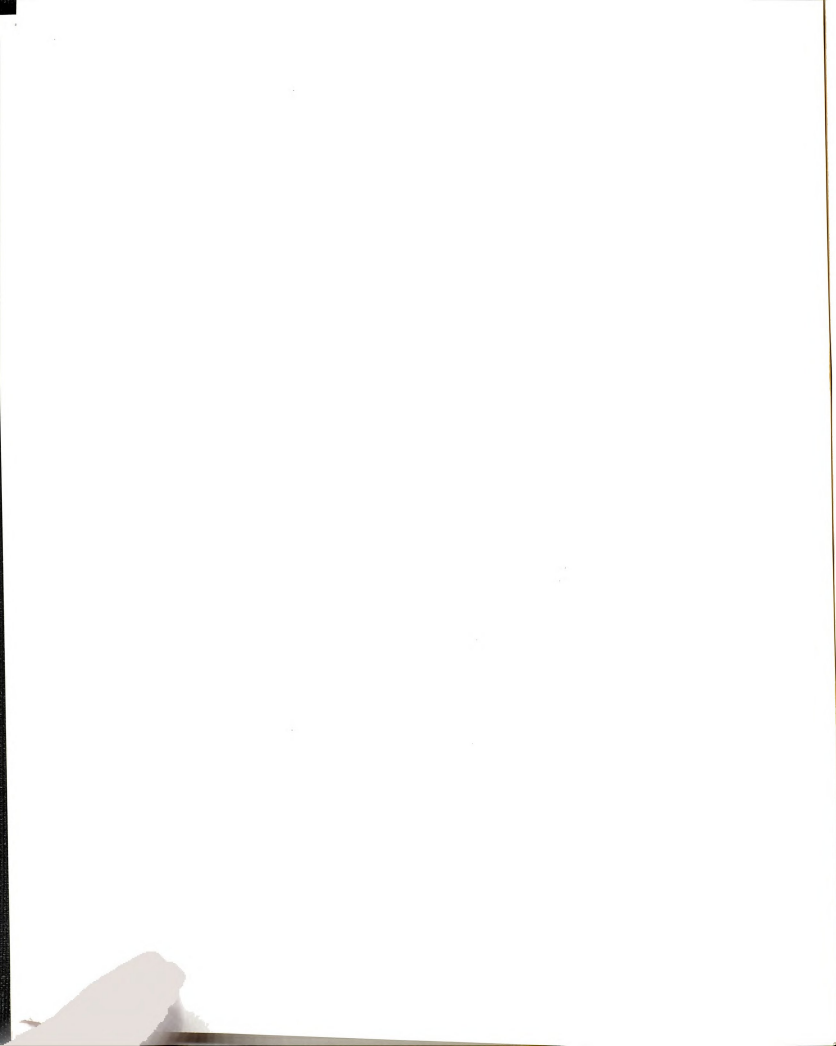


more insistent than that in most fiction, drama, and poetry for adults; a fervent concern with morality was simply part of the nineteenth-century outlook, and presumably nineteenth-century people found the emphasis unobjectionable. (A Moral Tale 15)

McLeod (1978) says in another study that developing the moral character of American children was of vital concern because Americans believed "that the permanent support of democratic institutions lay in public virtue and . . . that public virtue depended upon the character of private citizens" ("Children's Literature and American Culture" in Society and Children's Literature, edited by James H. Fraser 15). McLeod explains:

The whole point of childhood training as children's authors saw it . . . was to develop in children that sensitive conscience, that internalized set of principles that would make them morally self-sufficient. Then, and only then, could American society live with its freedom without descending into social anarchy. ("Children's Literature" 23)

As to the matter of the authors' unflinchingly sober attitude toward their young audience, McLeod defends the writers' attitudes, explaining that "however much they may have overestimated children's interest in ethical questions, the authors took them seriously as moral beings" and that they were "more willing to acknowledge a child's human dignity than, say, the sentimental vision that dwelt upon children's charm and innocence, or the condescending view of them as 'cute' and amusing to adults" ("Children's Literature" 23).

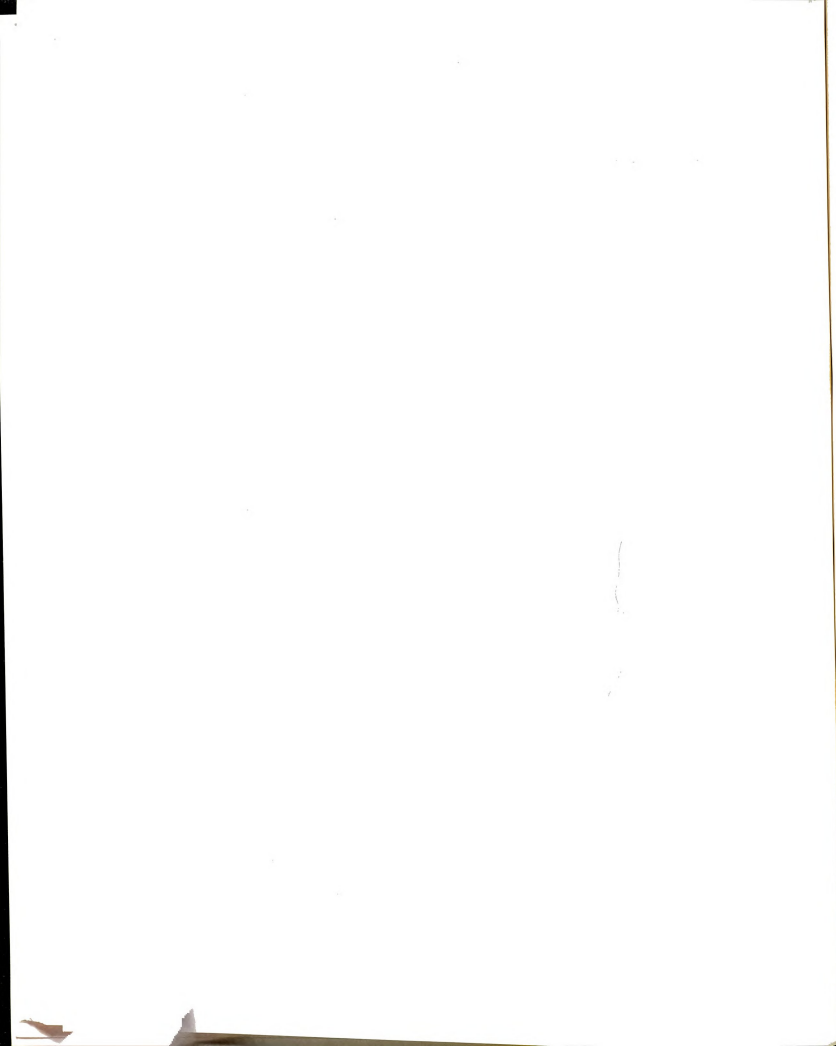


Monica Kiefer (1948) examines various aspects of child life as revealed in the contemporary juvenile literature of early America (American Children Through Their Books, 1700-1835). While she does not limit her study to reading textbooks, she does indicate the changing status of the American child during the colonial and early national periods; for example, Kiefer says that the child's rights "as a distinct personality" were not truly recognized until around 1835 (1). This perception of the child's "submerged" position in society is, of course, significant to a study of early American reading instruction. Kiefer also provides a clear picture of the decline of Puritanism and the secularization of education and early textbooks:

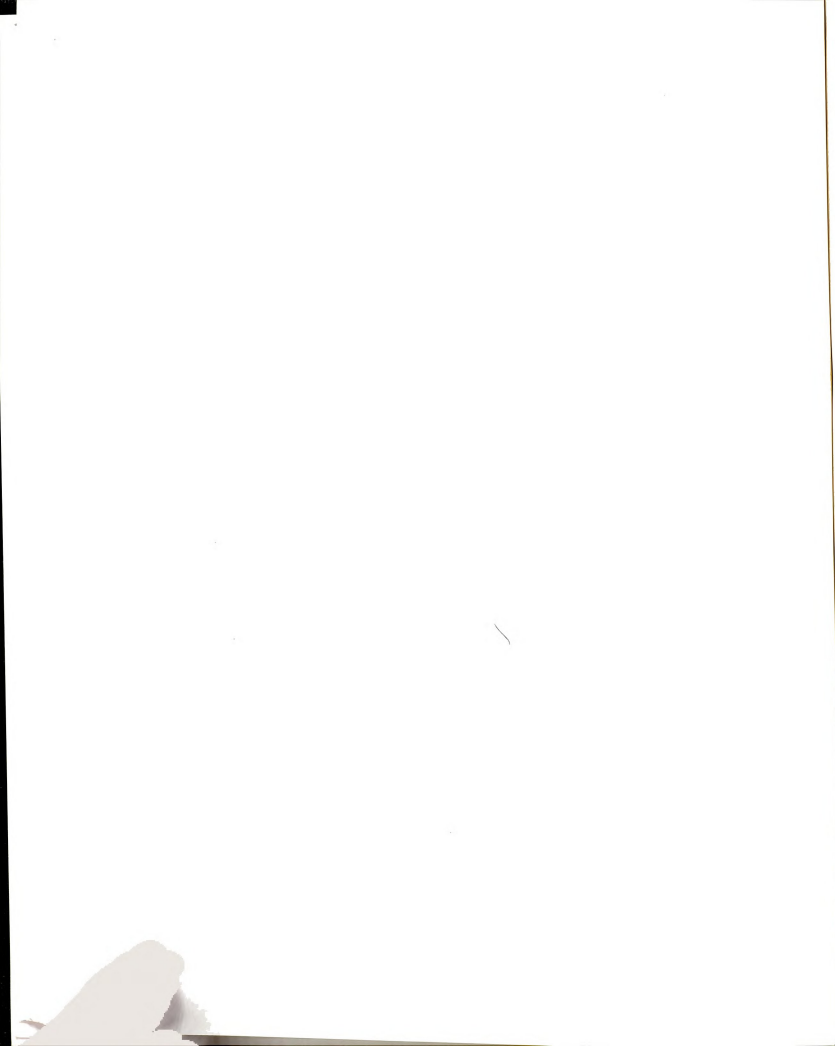
The waning of Puritan fervor and the ferment of skepticism about the middle of the eighteenth century caused the emphasis in juvenile literature to shift from works of a purely theological character to more practical books of moral instruction in which stern dogma was supplanted by humorous examples of right living. (11-12)

Kiefer outlines the use of didacticism in children's reading, commenting on its variations, but most significant is her outlining the transformation of doctrinal content in the juvenile works to a content that stressed primarily good conduct and moralizing.

Like Kiefer, Rosalie V. Halsey (1911) traces the occurrence of didactic sentiment in children's literature in Forgotten Books of the American Nursery, dividing the books into various classes of amusement and instruction. She discusses "toy-books," small, inexpensively published



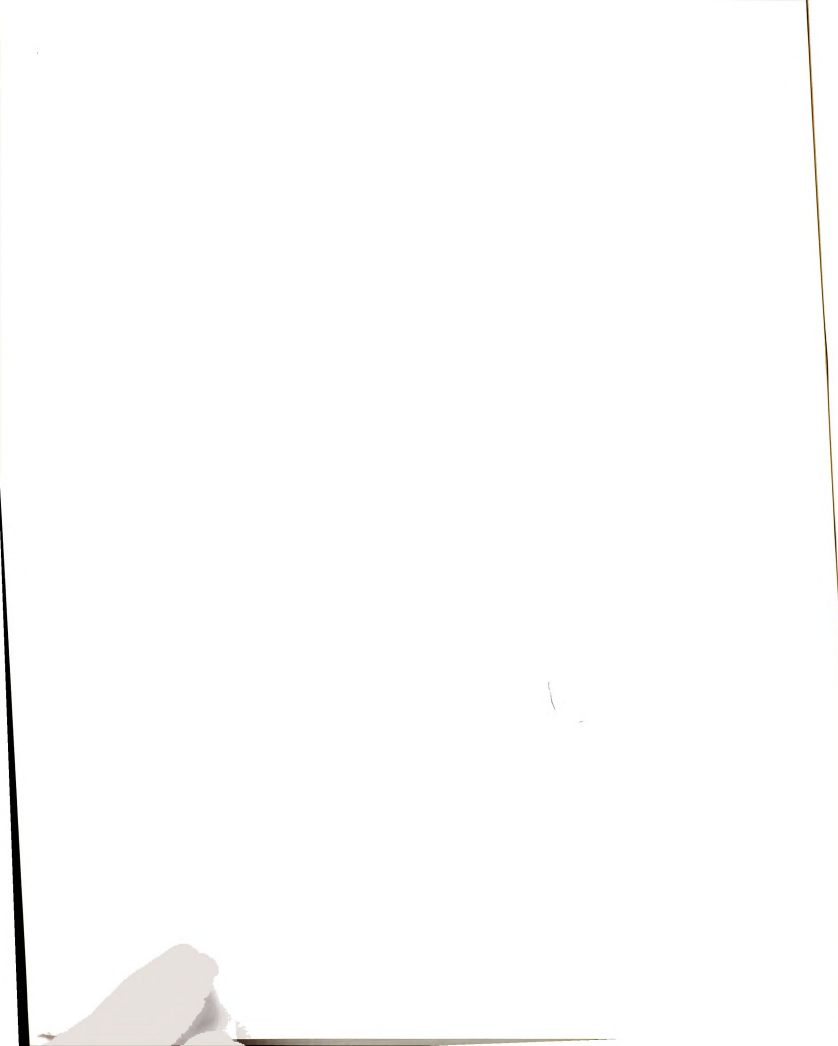
works--laced with didacticism--intended to amuse as well as to teach the basic rudiments of reading, which may have been used in schoolrooms, but which were most typically read at home (147-50). Many of these works have been difficult to classify solely as textbooks or as books for entertainment, but Halsey explains that "while it is often difficult to draw the line where amusement begins and instruction sinks to the background, the title-pages can usually be taken as evidence at least of the author's intention" (106). Halsey also discusses significant British women textbook writers who enjoyed immense popularity in America--especially Mrs. Anna Letitia Barbauld whose Easy Lessons for a young relative were reproduced in countless editions both in England and in America, and Maria Edgeworth, an eighteenth-century "literary star" who portrayed the triumph of good over evil in the everyday lives of youthful characters like Harry and Lucy in her collection of tales The Parent's Assistant (147-64). Because "school-books were scarce and dear during the Revolution," Halsey explains, "the tendency in the United States had been all this time . . . to reprint English books, either exactly, or with very slight modifications to suit republican taste" (125). Halsey also comments on the late-eighteenth-century tradition in reading textbooks and on America's eventual swell in domestic textbook production: "In England books were written; in America they were reprinted, until a religious revival left in its wake the series of morbid and educational tales which



the desire to write original stories for American children produced" (142-43).

Perhaps some of the most valid and disinterested viewpoints on didacticism in America's early reading texts come from book collectors who have a particular interest and expertise in antique children's works and textbooks. Several collectors' guides, catalogues, and bibliographies have surfaced in my research, and these works often provide a larger scope of the educational and publishing trends in the early American textbook trade. For example, Katherine H. Packer's catalogue (1954) shows that the New England Primer was still a popular publishing item in Boston at the turn of the nineteenth century but that it was competing against a spate of new primers and spellers geared for young, beginning readers (Early American School Books: A Bibliography Based on the Boston Booksellers' Catalogue of 1804). Collectors' guides also provide valuable insight into the publishing histories of the more notable textbooks that enjoyed widespread use and esteem. For example, Eric Quayle (1983) explains that Lindley Murray's English Grammar experienced "phenomenal" commercial success, becoming the schools' definitive grammar text: "Well over one hundred editions of the work appeared, and it was still in print as late as 1871. An abridgement of the text was issued in 1797" (Early Children's Books: A Collector's Guide 91).

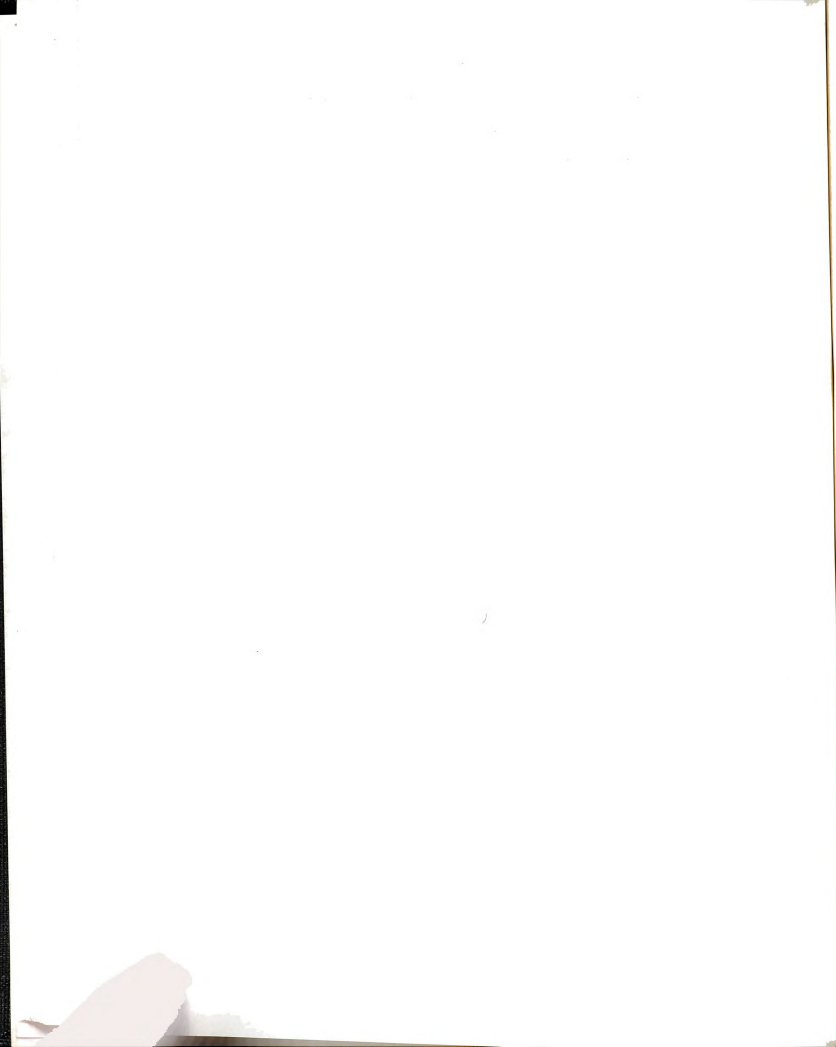
Abraham Simon Wolf Rosenbach (1933; rpt. 1966) is another book collector who stands out in my research--



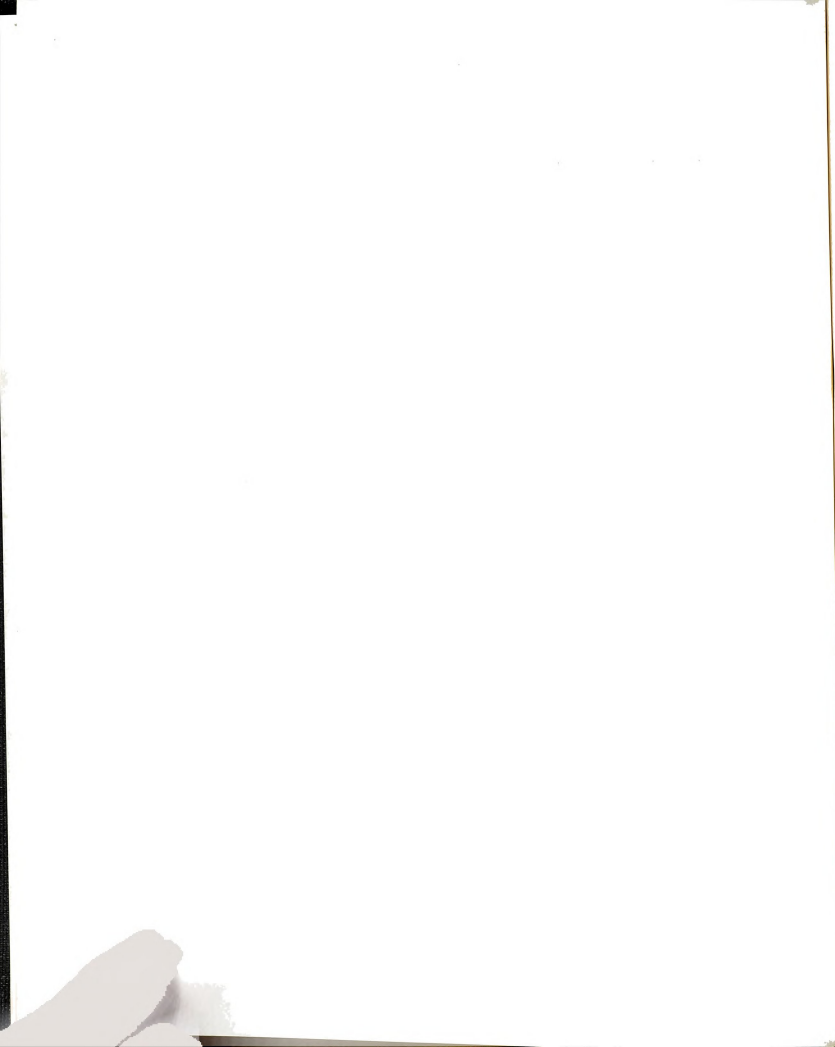
because he has put together an immense and invaluable collection of children's books (which is now reproduced on microfiche for wider use). Rosenbach provides an expert's description of over 900 juvenile works in the catalogue to his collection--which contains many early reading textbooks (Early American Children's Books). In his introduction, Rosenbach illustrates the prime importance and validity of examining the often-long-forgotten artifacts that chronicle early America's early literacy:

Not only do [children's books] have as much scholarly and bibliographical interest as books in other fields, but more than any class of literature they reflect the minds of the generation that produced them. Hence no better guide to the history and development of any country can be found than its juvenile literature. (xxvi-xxvii)

The collected impact of the literature devoted to textbooks and early reading instruction in American history is significant. The literature--as presented in this critical summary--easily spans a century. It represents a variety of scholarly perspectives and agendas. But, in general, the body of literature on early America's beginning reading texts only slightly substantiates claims and theories by offering in-depth documentation and analysis of the primary texts. Gilmore, writing in 1989, contends that research into the "contents of popular texts used as agents of literacy in homes and schools" in early America is now needed (418). A close examination of the didactic lessons and exercises of representative textbooks published in the 50 years following the Revolutionary War period will



undoubtedly document the forces that have shaped--and continue to shape--Americans' expectations of reading instruction and literacy.



Notes

¹As to the problem of scriptural interpretation within the New England community, Johnson explains that reading and religious instruction continued in tandem through the use of primers:

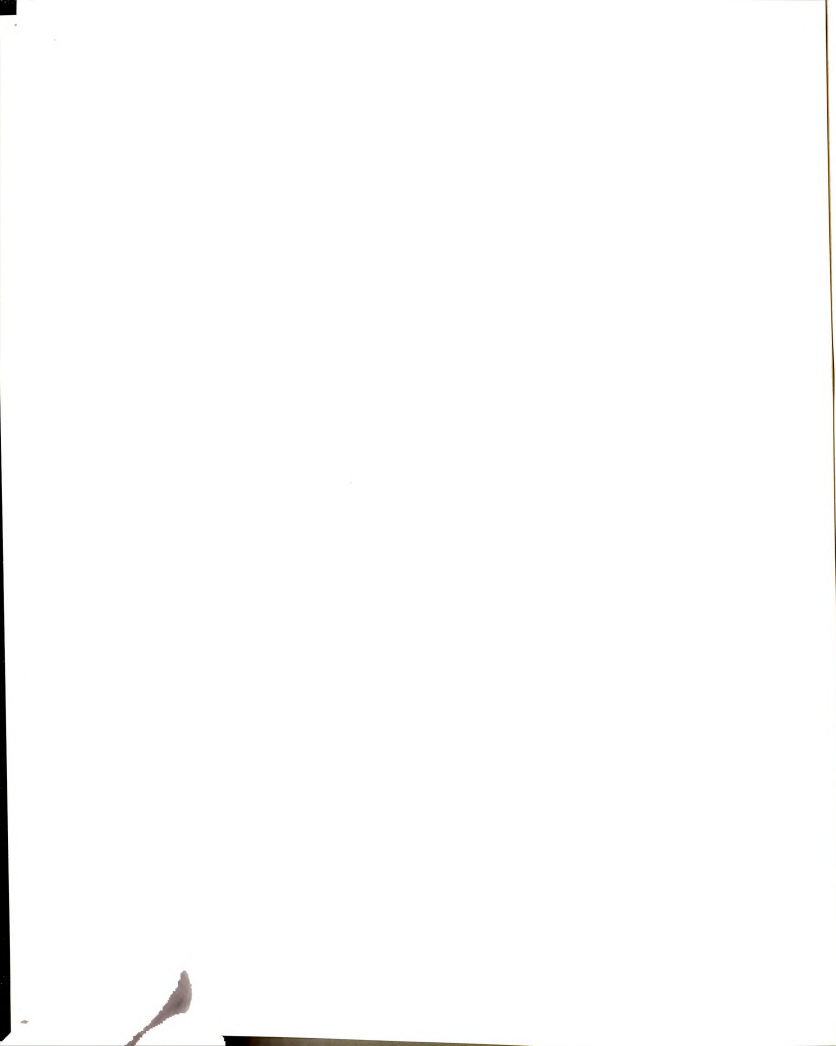
No other way could have been devised to mould the religious thought of the people so effectively. The need of guiding public sentiment on this subject was plainly apparent; for those who studied the Bible did not understand its teachings alike, and printing no sooner gave the Scriptures a wide distribution than divergent opinions multiplied. . . . The primers were an especially valuable medium. . . . Their precepts were instilled in minds as yet unformed, and the children were drilled to believe what they were to think out for themselves when they were more mature (69-70).

²Monaghan and Saul also trace technical problems as a reason for emphasizing reading instruction over writing instruction in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries:

The quill pen, virtually the only writing tool in use . . . , was a difficult instrument to manage. The feather's tip had to be repeatedly sharpened. Schoolmasters, no doubt reluctant to entrust a knife to inexperienced fingers, usually performed this task for their students. . . . Ink, too, was a messy business" (87).

Monaghan and Saul also point out that widespread U.S. production of lead pencils did not begin until about 1827 (87).

³In his discussion of the *named* series of readers, Reeder refers to the texts compiled by Lindley Murray. For example, Murray's text The English Reader was preceded by his Introduction to the English Reader and followed by Sequel to the English Reader. This named series was published with a variety of printing dates over two or three decades, but Carpenter establishes the following initial publication dates for the Murray set: The English Reader, 1799; Sequel to the English Reader, 1801; and Introduction to the English Reader, 1805. Carpenter adds that Murray's The English Reader went on to become the most popular of the various readers on the market "throughout most of the first half of the nineteenth century, until about the time the McGuffey texts appeared" (62-63).

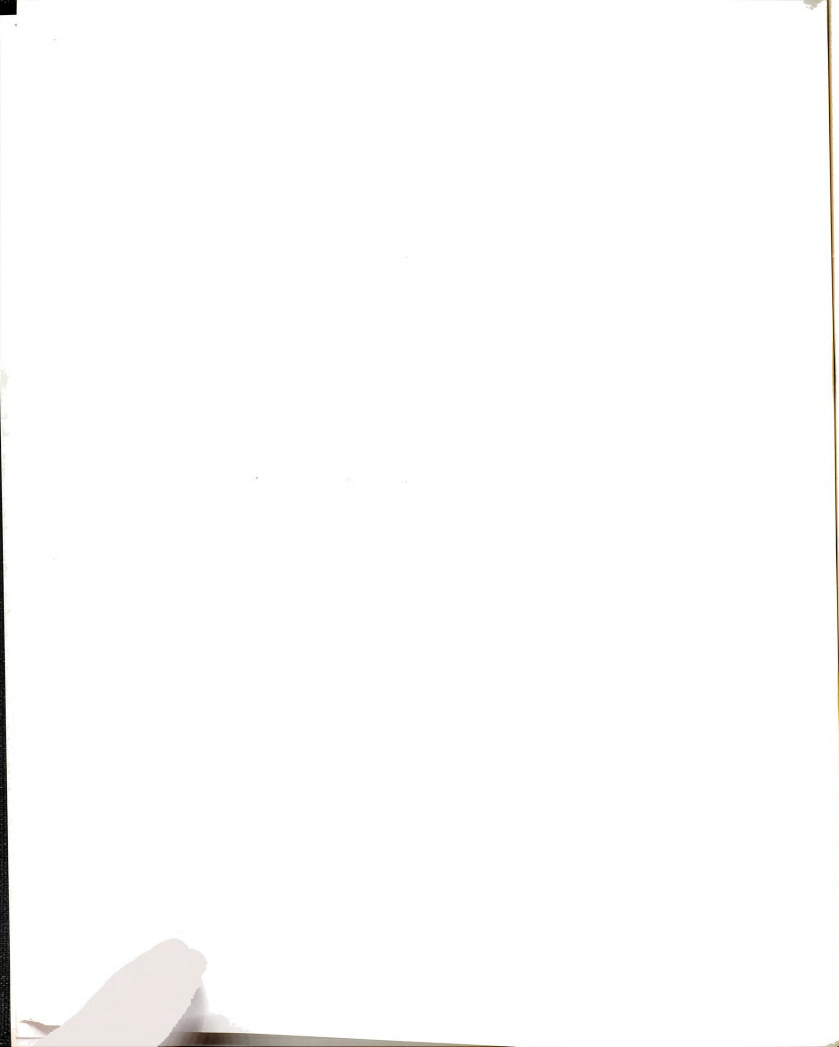


⁴Robinson explains that nearly all the readers available during this time were religious and brought to the colonies from Europe. He offers data that indicates 85% of the material included in readers was of a religious type (14).

⁵Elson documents the first use of the word *nationality*. Elson quotes from Sequel to the Analytical Reader (an 1828 reader by Samuel Putnam) and then goes on to explain the burgeoning concept: "'Nationality is used by some writers in America, but is a new word and not to be found in the dictionaries.'" But the idea had long preceded the word; it was represented before by the word 'nationa,' commonly defined as 'a distinct people'" (101).

⁶Lynne Alvine documents Webster's publishing success with his spelling text:

Five million copies of the volume had been sold by 1803. In the year 1807, 200,000 copies were sold, and by 1837, the total had reached 15 million. By 1880, when the William H. Appleton Company took over publication, Webster's "Blue-backed Speller" was selling a million copies a year, and was second only to the Bible in annual sales. Eventually, the text had gone through six editions as A Grammatical Institute, 254 editions as The American Spelling Book, and 128 editions as The Elementary Spelling Book. (57)



CHAPTER 2

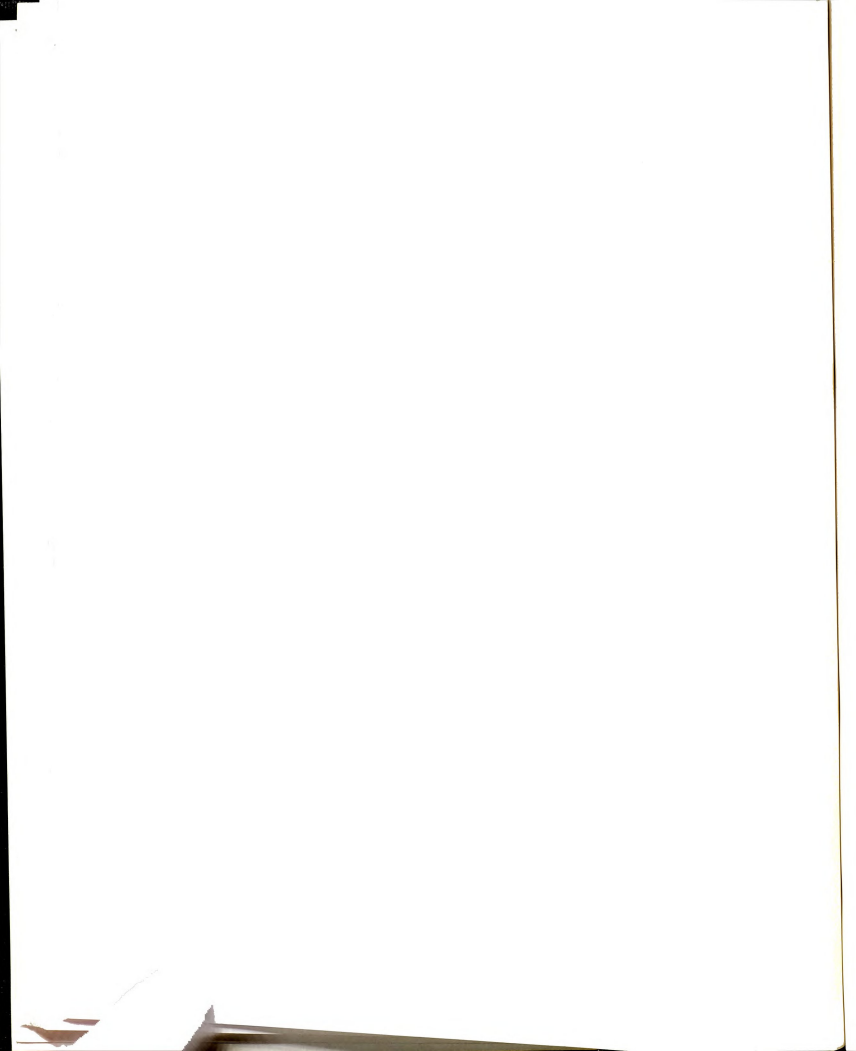
METHODOLOGY

It is while the inclinations are yet flexible,
that the most lasting impressions are likely to
be made. . . .

--Anthony Benezet. The
Pennsylvania Spelling-Book,
or Youth's friendly
Instructor and Monitor (1779)

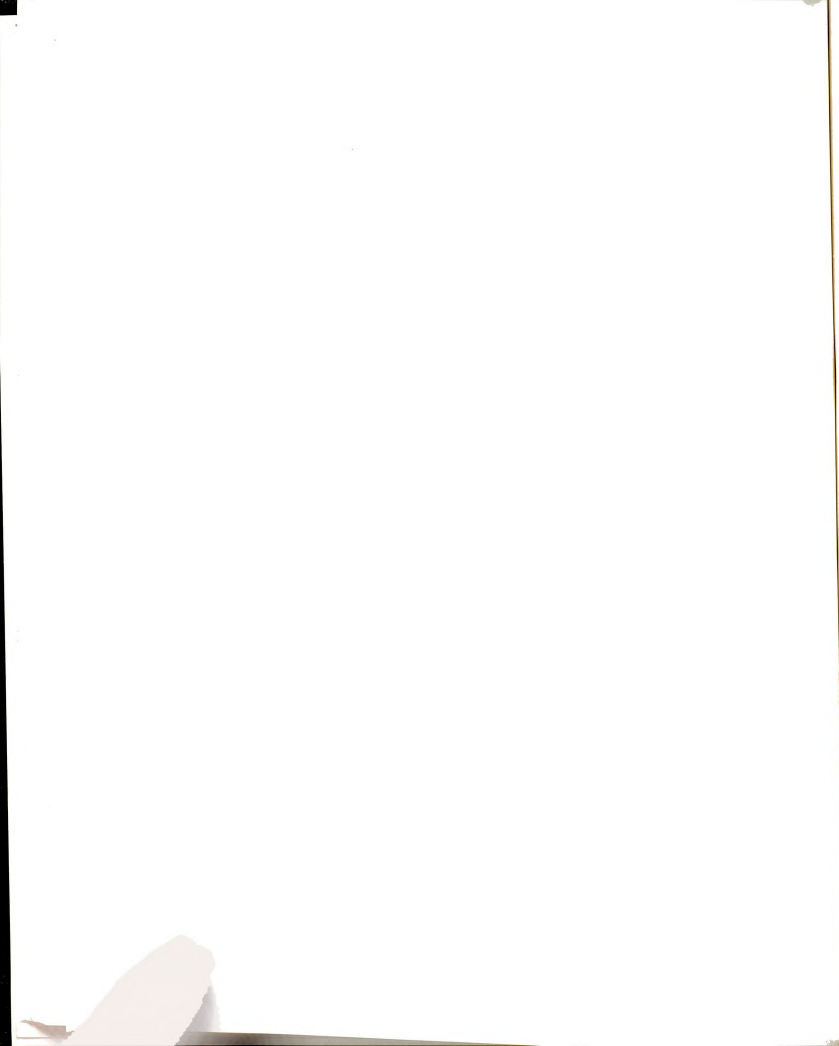
The area of methodology becomes a significant issue in a dissertation such as this. An awareness of both the specific process of inquiry and of the methods used in the study offers a more complete understanding of the context and limitations of the research. In this chapter I outline the procedure I used in examining the textbooks used by American pupils for beginning reading instruction from 1780 to 1830. I thus also delineate and justify the boundaries of my research.

Methodology, however, takes on greater dimensions as one studies the textbook writers' intentions in regard to reading instruction and didacticism. Specifically, how the writers viewed their subject made an obvious impact on their work. In many of the reading textbooks, the authors included a preface or an introduction; these editorial sections establish the authors' methodological biases and



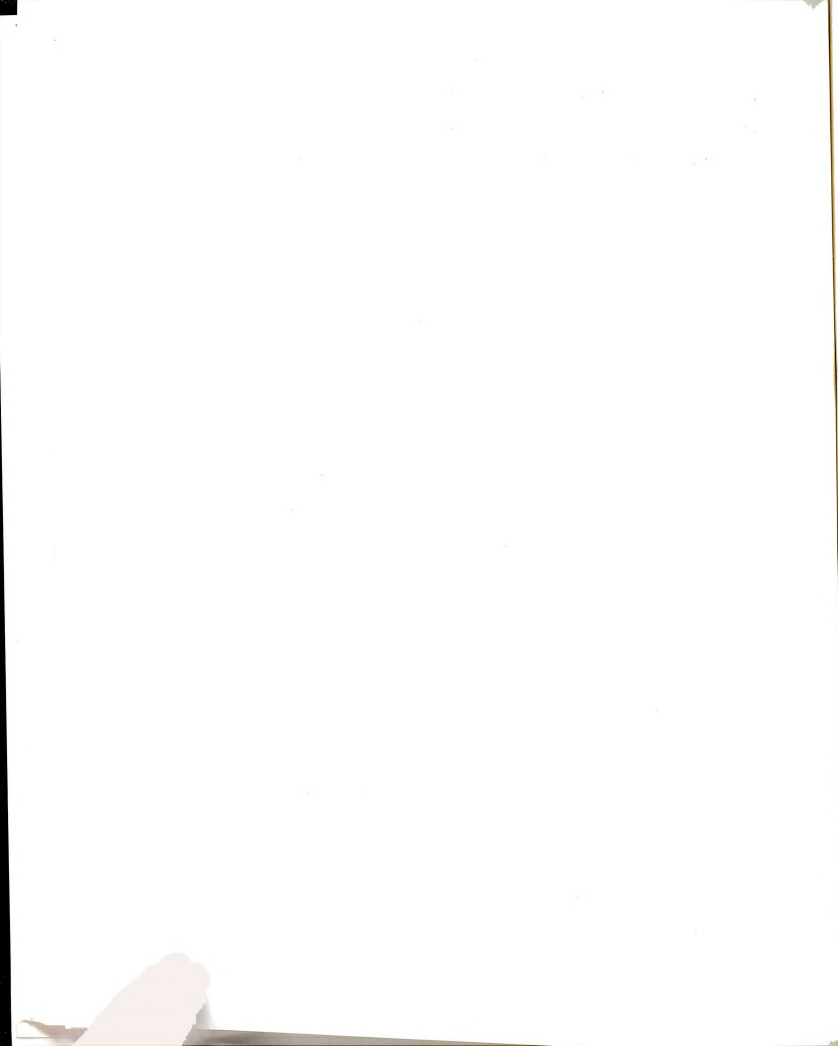
pedagogical practices, but more importantly, they establish an acceptance and, in fact, an overt endorsement of the tradition of didacticism in the early reading textbooks. The second half of this chapter is, therefore, devoted to an examination of the textbooks' methodological orientation as it encompassed didacticism, illustrated by the writers' and publishers' own editorial comments.

Throughout my reading of secondary sources that discuss didacticism in early American textbooks--and specifically reading textbooks--all the authorities agree that didacticism pervades the school books (Kiefer; Reeder; Venezky). After examining a wide variety of secondary sources, I began my search for the actual textbooks. Originally, I thought my dissertation would cover reading textbooks from the entire nineteenth century; however, I was soon drawn to the fifty years following the Revolutionary War period as an era of transition in publishing reading textbooks¹. This period has as its boundaries the waning popularity of the New England Primer in 1780 and the rise of the successful McGuffey readers around 1830--both landmark publications of literacy texts that have greatly influenced American education. These fifty years are notable for the rise of several significant reading texts by Murray, Webster, Bingham, and scores of reading texts by lesser known writers. These fifty years, however, are transitional in terms of textbook publication because the reading texts began to break from the set



pattern of the New England Primer to experiment with methodology and content, in recognition of various educational theories that established the child's educational "rights as a distinct personality" (Kiefer 1) and in recognition of challenges to sectarian teaching (Nietz 53). Yet, the content of the textbooks in most cases is presented in keeping with the tradition of didacticism established early on in religious primers and, of course, in the New England Primer.

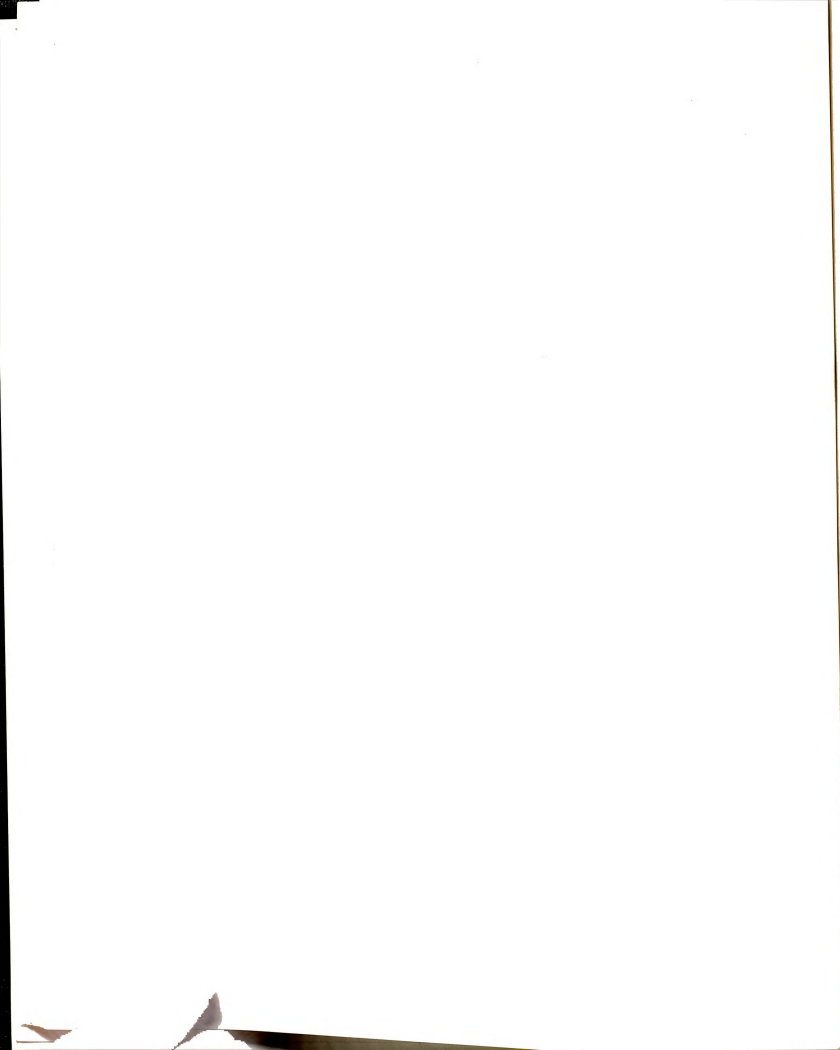
With significant scholarship available on the New England Primer and with an equivalent amount of research devoted to the McGuffey readers, I decided to focus my research on the school texts that represented the tradition of didacticism in reading instruction between the two publications. Narrowing my primary research dates to the fifty years between 1780 and 1830 came after examining some 200 volumes from the mid-to-late eighteenth century to the late nineteenth century found in three university library special collections--Notre Dame University, Andrews University, and Michigan State University. It was the extensive textbook holdings in the Special Collection at the Michigan State University Library upon which I relied most heavily in my examination of primary texts. In addition, I depended heavily on the Rosenbach Collection of Early American Children's Books which is on microfiche. This microfiche collection, which represents the extensive collection of children's works held at the Free Library of



Philadelphia, is available at the library at Michigan State University. It provided me with a wider variety of beginning reader texts than did the special collection holdings. The many primary works I analyze in this dissertation in no way encompass the entire range of reading textbooks published between 1780 and 1830; however, they are representative of the reading textbooks available throughout the nation for use in beginning reading instruction--both in the common school and within the home.

In determining what types of textbooks I would include in my study, I first decided that they must have been prepared for beginning readers and published in the United States between 1780 and 1830, the time when textbooks by American writers began to appear on the textbook market (Reeder 5). American authorship was not a limiting criterion, however, as many of the textbooks were American editions of texts published earlier in England. I include them as well in my research because of the place of publication and subsequent availability to beginning pupils in American schools.²

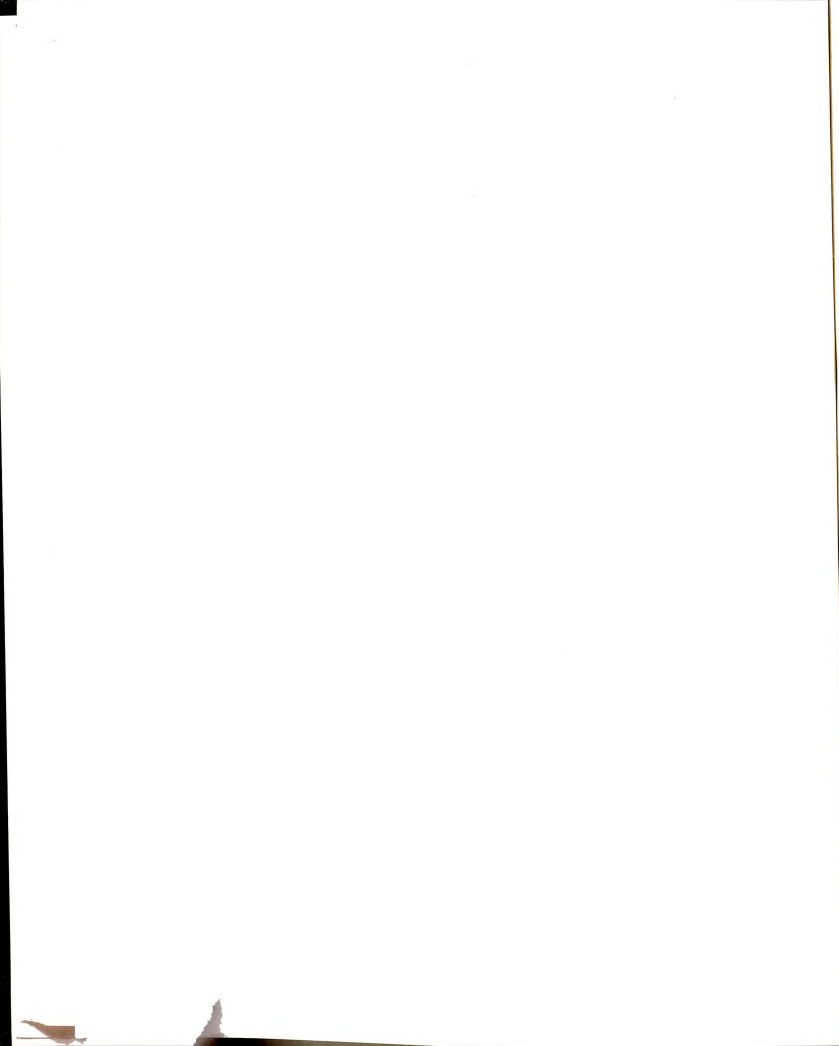
Originally, I intended to look only at primers; however, I soon learned that spellers were often used in many schools in place of primers (Venezky 250) and, therefore, took on the function of the primer³. I also found that early readers--textbooks devoted to longer reading passages--were intended to be used by beginning readers. For the sake of uniformity, I decided to look for



a distinguishing similarity in the reading texts that I included in my research, and I found that similarity in the various texts' inclusion of an alphabet. If the primer, speller, or reader included an alphabet--often called an *abecedarian*--at the beginning or at the end of the book, I considered that textbook to have been designed for pupils learning to read and therefore included it in my study. However, many of the alphabet books do not include any reading lessons as such. For example, there are textbooks--such as The Young Child's A, B, C (1820)--that are designed for beginning reading students, but which have no lessons to read along with their abecedarians and individual words in lists. Because these books do not offer any format for didactic content, I did not include such textbooks in this study of the tradition of didacticism.

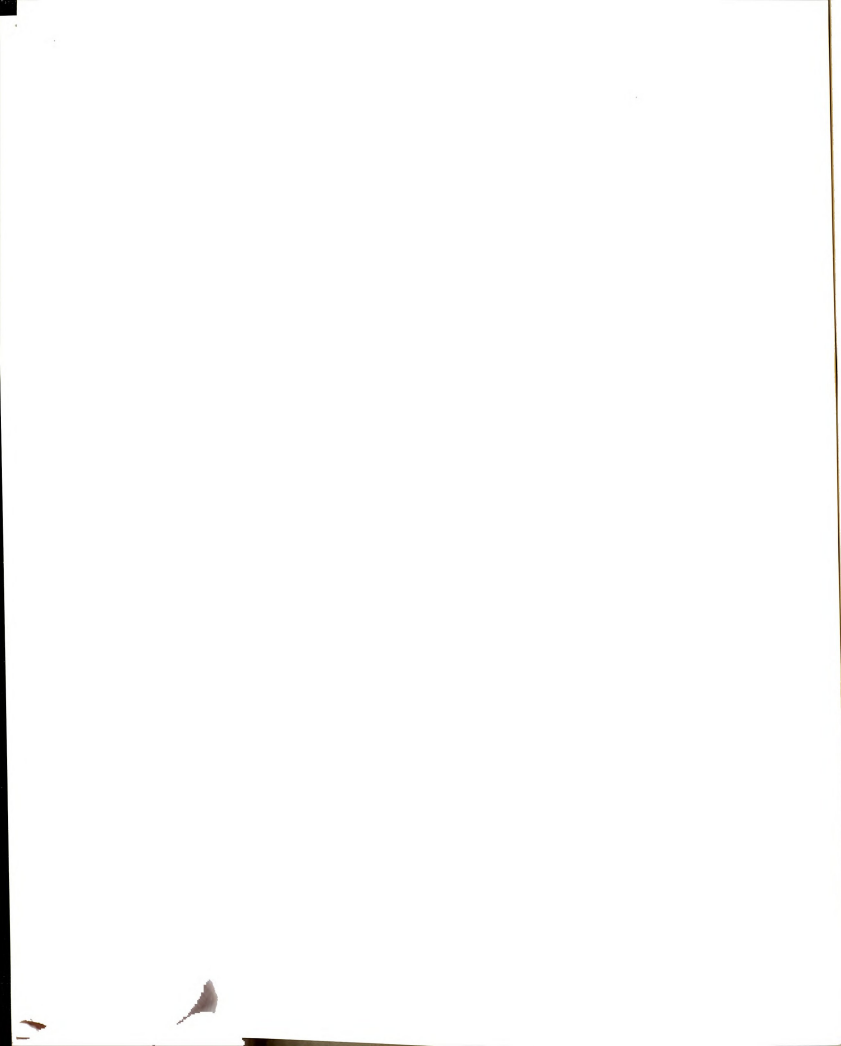
Early in my examination of the primary texts, I included grammar texts as beginning literacy schoolbooks. But I eventually excluded them from my group of primary works because their emphasis was not so much on decoding and making meaning as it was on explaining form⁴.

The procedure I used to examine each of the reading textbooks began with an inspection of the title page and verso to determine authorship, date and place of publication, and any other points of interest. I then looked over the table of contents and read the preface of each book, if these were included. I scanned the book's



contents, noting alphabet, short reading drills, illustrations, chapter titles (if any), and longer reading lessons. I also noted the presence of a catechism if the text were an early one. Then I selected and carefully read examples of lessons, drills, and exercises that were notably didactic to use in my chapters that document and analyze the didacticism in relation to religious, social, and nationalistic attitudes. It is important to note that not every lesson or exercise in the reading textbooks that I examined was didactic--many were not. But because my purpose is to examine the didactic content of the early reading texts, I primarily note those selections that promoted the tradition of didacticism in school books. And, it is also important to note that I have not included all the didactic passages in the textbooks I examined, but that I have provided a balanced representation of the didactic lessons I found in the primary works.

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 of the dissertation document and analyze the three main classifications of early reading textbook didacticism--religious, social, and nationalistic. Within each of the chapters I then categorize the varieties of the particular strain of didacticism. For example, under the main classification of religious didacticism in Chapter 3, I discuss its subcategories--didacticism dealing with God, doctrine, Scripture, and death. I explore these subcategories in chronological order, beginning with lessons from the textbooks published earlier and working my

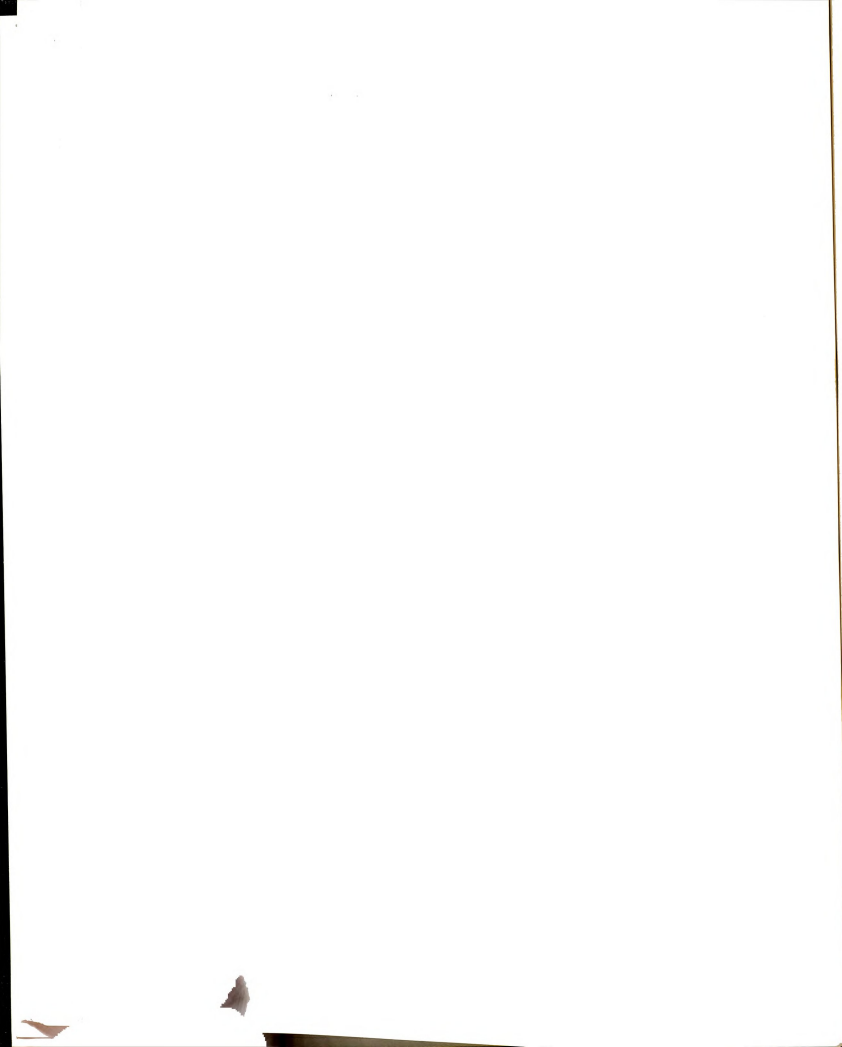


way through to the more recently printed works within the period of time from 1780 to 1830.

In a few cases, I have examined multiple editions of the same text. In some instances, subsequent publication of a text provides quite a bit of revision while other subsequent editions reveal relatively little editorial change. In many cases, the progression, or evolution, of a particular didactic attitude can be easily charted through the subsequent editions and revisions of one particular text or of one particular textbook author.

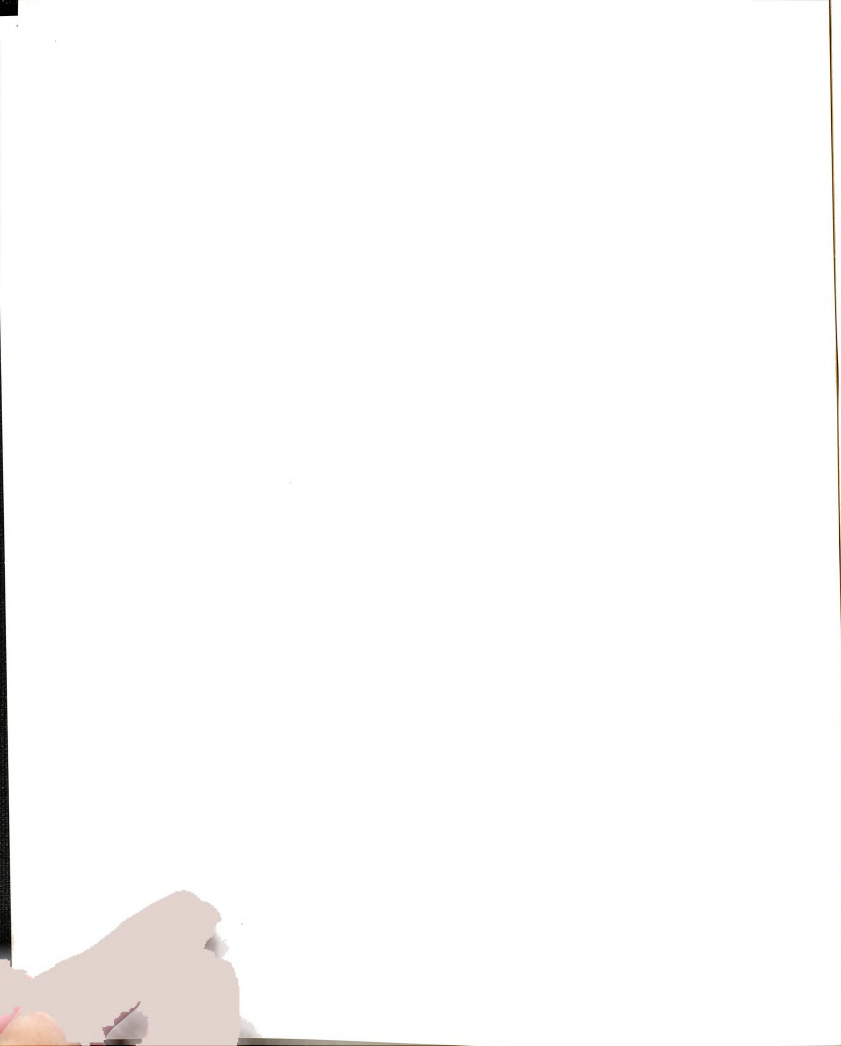
Throughout the dissertation I have also remained faithful to the spellings and capitalization schemes of the textbook titles as they appear on the title pages in order to preserve the "typographical flavor" of the period. In addition, very often spellings of words within the reading lessons and selections vary from current form. Whenever this occurs, I stay consistent with the original text; however, in some cases to avoid typographical confusion, I have indicated spelling irregularities through the use of brackets. Along this line of typography, the majority of primary texts I examine in this dissertation employ what may appear to be a random italicization of words; again, to preserve the original typography of the texts, I have remained faithful to the original italicization schemes.

Just as I have felt compelled to offer a rationale for my method in this research project, so did many of the textbook writers feel that an explanation of their



intentions and theories was in order. So, in many cases the reading textbooks begin with an introduction, a preface. Occasionally this section was called "A Note to Teachers," in which the author explains his or her methodology.

While a study of the textbook authors' attitudes about didacticism as they are revealed in their prefatory remarks is particularly significant, an examination of their specific theories about reading instruction also offers a greater understanding of the period's educational milieu. According to Susan Walton, an "alphabetic" or "spelling" approach to reading instruction prevailed throughout American education from the mid-seventeenth century to the early nineteenth century (L9). This prevailing theory of reading instruction dominates Maria Edgeworth's 1805 reader Harry and Lucy, Part I. Her preface typifies the alphabetic or spelling method: "Little children, who know the sounds of all letters, can read words, and can understand what is told in this book" (5). Closely related to the alphabetic theory, says Walton, "rote memorization of texts was also assumed to help children gain understanding, because once children memorized something, they would have time to think out the meaning later" (L9). Walton maintains that textbook authors had little concern with their students' comprehension: "Whether children really understood what they read or not was of minimal concern" (L9). These attitudes and theories are crucial to

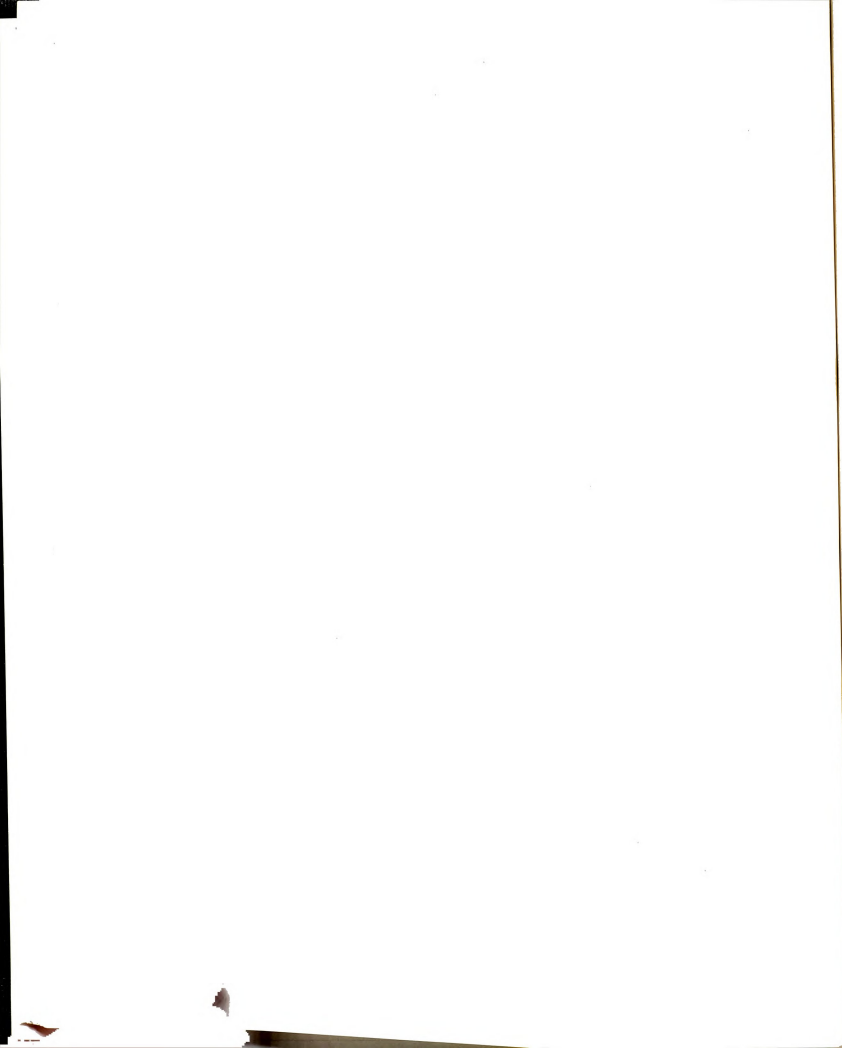


the reading instruction that pervaded American common schools of the time, and they explain the approach taken in virtually all the beginning reading textbooks from 1780 to 1830. These concepts explain why so many pages of the textbooks were devoted to mastering the alphabet, consonant blends, and syllables.

The textbook prefaces and introductions offer a glimpse of the methodological concerns the authors felt were important. In some of the prefaces, the textbook writers focused on the physical qualities of their books. Their methodology of including engravings in the textbooks to pictorially illustrate the lessons apparently required some justification. The author of Johnson's New Philadelphia Spelling-Book (1809) explains his pedagogical rationale for using illustrations in the text:

. . . the attention, even of dull children, is sometimes excited by well engraved cuts, representing objects familiar to them; and, not unfrequently, those of small capacity might be induced to take the first steps on the threshold of literature by this pleasant route, when otherwise, perhaps, the rod or the dunce cap would be necessarily employed to urge them forward. (ii)

However, unbelievable as it may sound today, some critics of the textbooks published around the turn of the nineteenth century objected to illustrations in the textbooks for children. Detractors claimed that illustrations would divert the young readers' attention. In response to this sort of criticism, the anonymous author of the The New-York Preceptor (1812) uses the preface as an

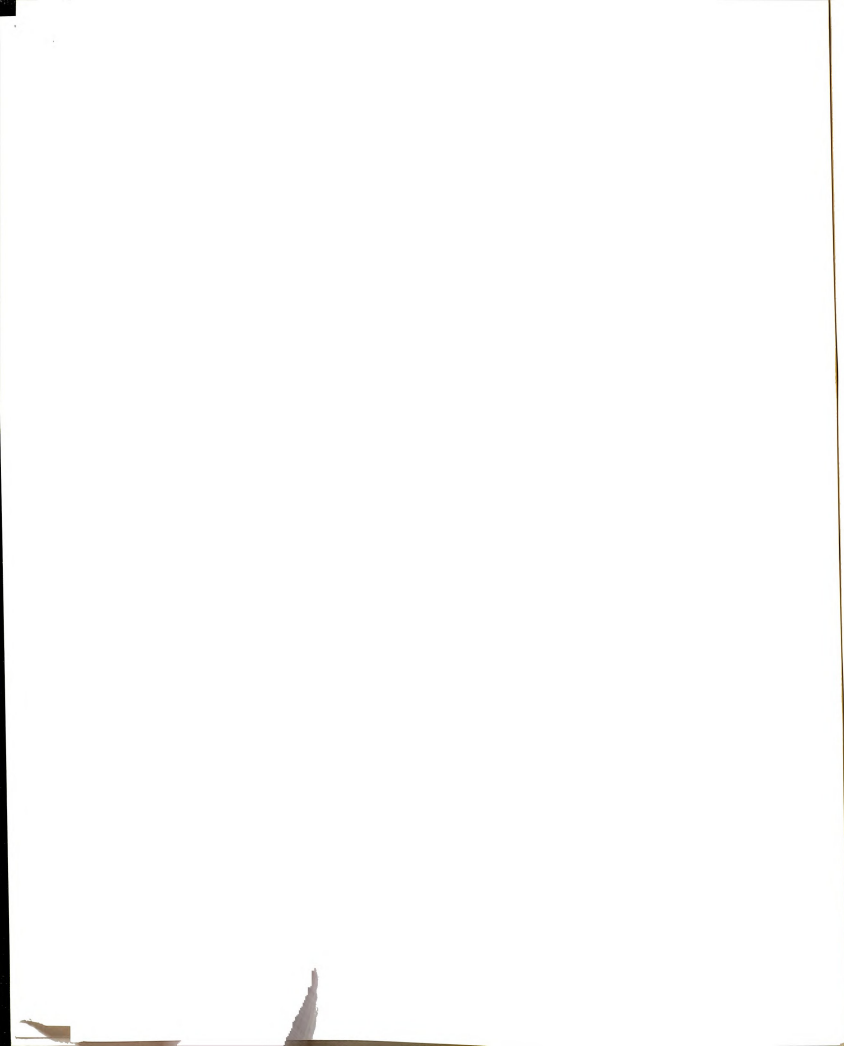


opportunity to defend his or her theory of illustration and counteract the negative criticism:

The natural propensity of children, is the love of amusement; and is it not better that this should be gratified by the examination of pictures which furnish a resemblance of some real object, than by an indulgence in their usual activity in idle play? . . . Those who have had experience in "rearing the tender thought," will acknowledge the importance of using every suitable method to allure the mind to application, by carefully combining *entertainment* with *labour*. (3-4)

The editor of Beauties of the New-England Primer, an 1814 reprint of passages from the New England Primer, uses the preface to explain the object of his edition, underscoring pedagogical theory while charging the earlier Primer's out-dated educational status: "The New-England Primer of latter time, having become almost useless, unless on account of the Catechism, which is likewise printed in a separate pamphlet [sic], it appears to likely to become nearly if not quite obsolete" (ii). The editor explains further that children should become acquainted with "and afford an opportunity to gather some good hints from a work that for generations has been a first book for their forefathers" (ii).

Methodological intention is the focus for the preface, or "Advertisement," that opens Anna Letitia Barbauld's Lessons for Children of 1818. She explains that "this little publication was made for a particular child, but [that] the public is welcome to the use of it" (iii). On the following page Barbauld justifies the work of the

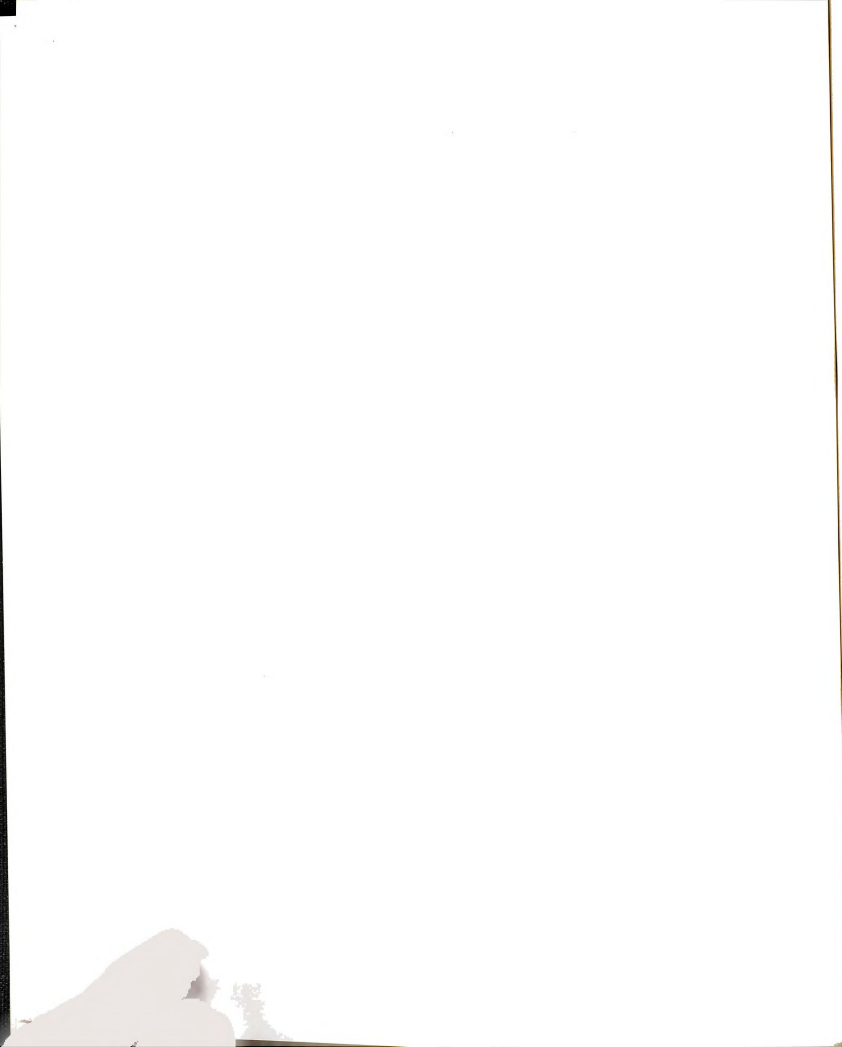


textbook writer, claiming: "The task [of educating youngsters] is humble, but not mean; for to lay the first stone of a noble building, and to plant the first idea in a human mind, can be no dishonour to any hand" (iv).

Often the preface gives the textbook author a chance to account for where in a sequence of texts the particular work fits, as Lindley Murray explains the correct placement of his 1818 primer A First Book for Children in his textbook sequence: "This little volume, in its enlarged and improved form, is intended to prepare the learner for the author's English Spelling-Book, and is particularly calculated to assist mothers in the instruction of their young children" (v). The preface also permits Murray to promote other titles in his textbook sequence.

I include a passage from the preface of The Columbian Reader (1818) by Rodolphus Dickinson to illustrate a predominant concept of reading instruction in the early nineteenth century. The textbook's subtitle--Comprising a New and Various Selection of Elegant Extracts in Prose and Poetry, For the Use of Schools in the United States. To Which Is Prefixed and Introduction on the Arts of Reading and Speaking--indicates that the textbook is not intended for an audience of beginning pupils. However, Dickinson's "Introduction" is an apt illustration of the predominant methodology that equated reading with oral presentation:

By the art of reading, I mean the art of correct and articulate pronunciation; or, of intelligibly, emphatically, and impressively repeating what is written in any language: or, in

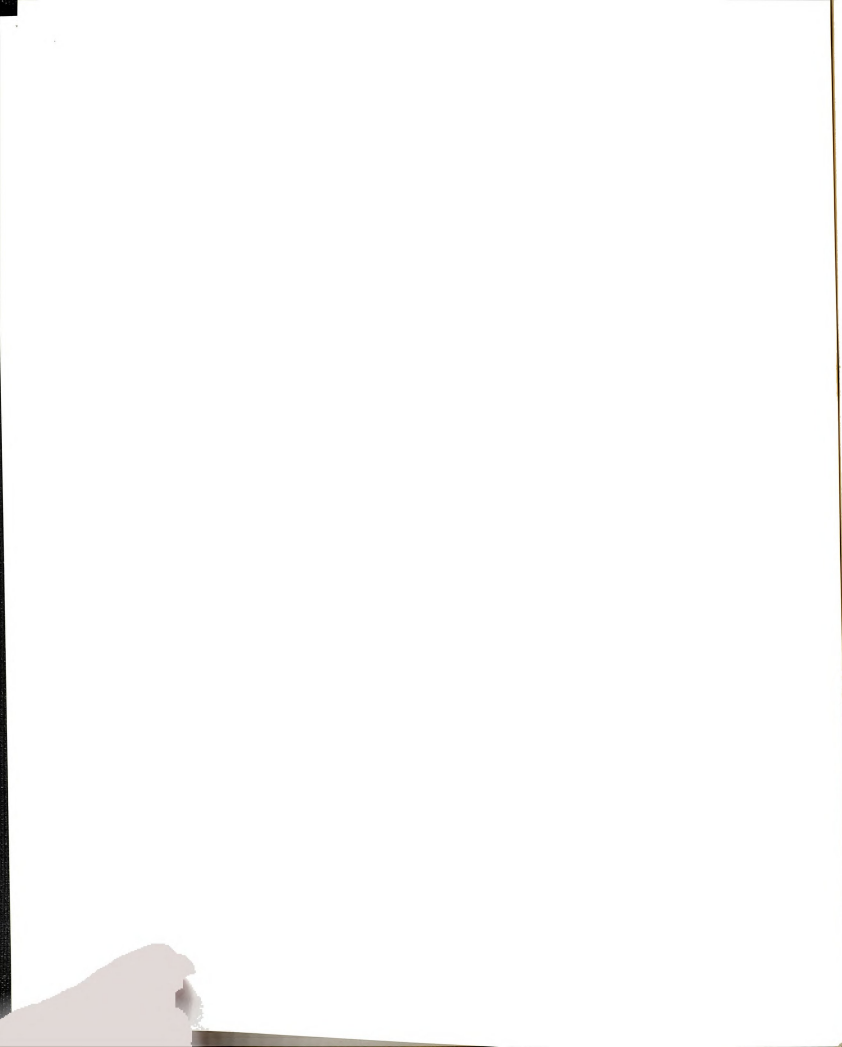


other words, the art of reading well, consists in pronouncing the thoughts of others, or our own, exhibited in visible characters, as if the same had their full and proper operation, on our minds, and were the result of our own immediate conception. (ix)

This preoccupation of equating reading with oral production explains why so many of the reading textbooks mark the reading lessons with hyphens to emphasize syllables and even incorporate diacritical markings to indicate correct pronunciation.

The idea of correct pronunciation gives rise to the larger notion of proper behavior--a goal of the didacticism at the heart of many of the reading textbooks from 1780 to 1830. Correct methodology and proper educational goals in the texts dictate the theme of Caleb Bingham's "Preface"⁵ to The American Preceptor of 1811. Bingham refers to himself in the third person as he explains, how as the compiler of the textbook, he was careful to guard and encourage moral conduct and attitudes in his selections: Convinced of the impropriety of instilling false notions into the minds of children, he [Bingham, the compiler] has not given place to romantic fiction. Although moral essays have not been neglected; yet pleasing and interesting stories, exemplifying moral virtues, were judged best calculated to engage the attention and improve the heart. Tales of love have not gained admission. (ii)

Bingham's concerns are typical of the didactic intentions at work throughout all the textbooks examined in this dissertation. While his concerns about moralism find ample implementation in the texts' lessons and exercises, the

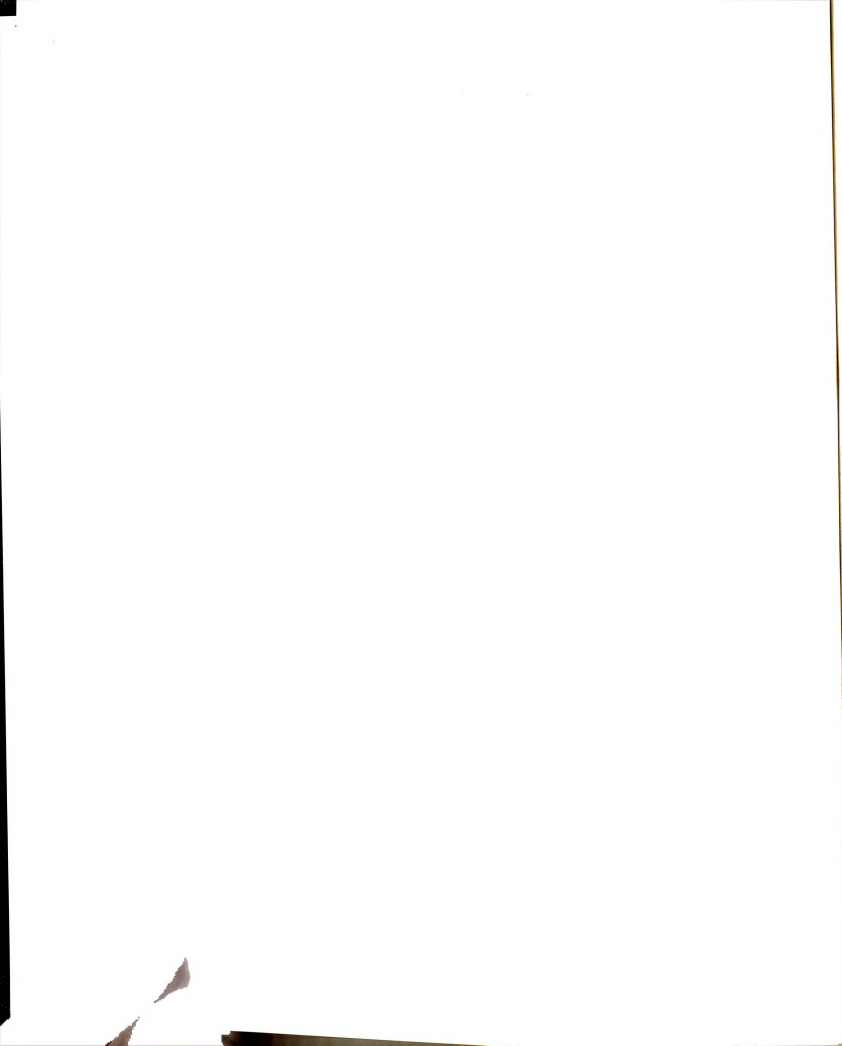


various authors' intended use of didacticism is clearly delineated in their prefaces and introductions.

John Ely's preface to The Child's Instructor (1793) defends the writing of children's textbooks and equates the task--along the same lines as Barbauld's earlier thought and wording--to laying "the foundation of a noble building" (iii). He explains that "the first impressions on the mind, are those which last longest; *they grow with our growth, and strengthen with our strength*" (iv). Ely's preface concludes with an endorsement of the didactic approach to teaching reading: "Of how much importance is it then, that the first impressions be good!" (iv).

In most cases, the authors were devoted to supplying "fit" reading material to instill virtuous attitudes in the young readers. Venezky claims that reading instruction during this time was concerned with more than just literacy: "Skill in reading, as a general competency, has always been comingled with inculcation of *what* to read, that is, attitude toward or preference for particular types of printed materials" (253). Reading pedagogy typically paired decoding instruction with a desire to reform thought and behavior⁶. The preface from Wisdom in Miniature (1796) explains the volume's selections, revealing the author's perceptions of children and morality. The preface also defends the author's dependence on the tradition of didacticism:

There is no kind of writing better calculated to form the minds of youth--to give them a just



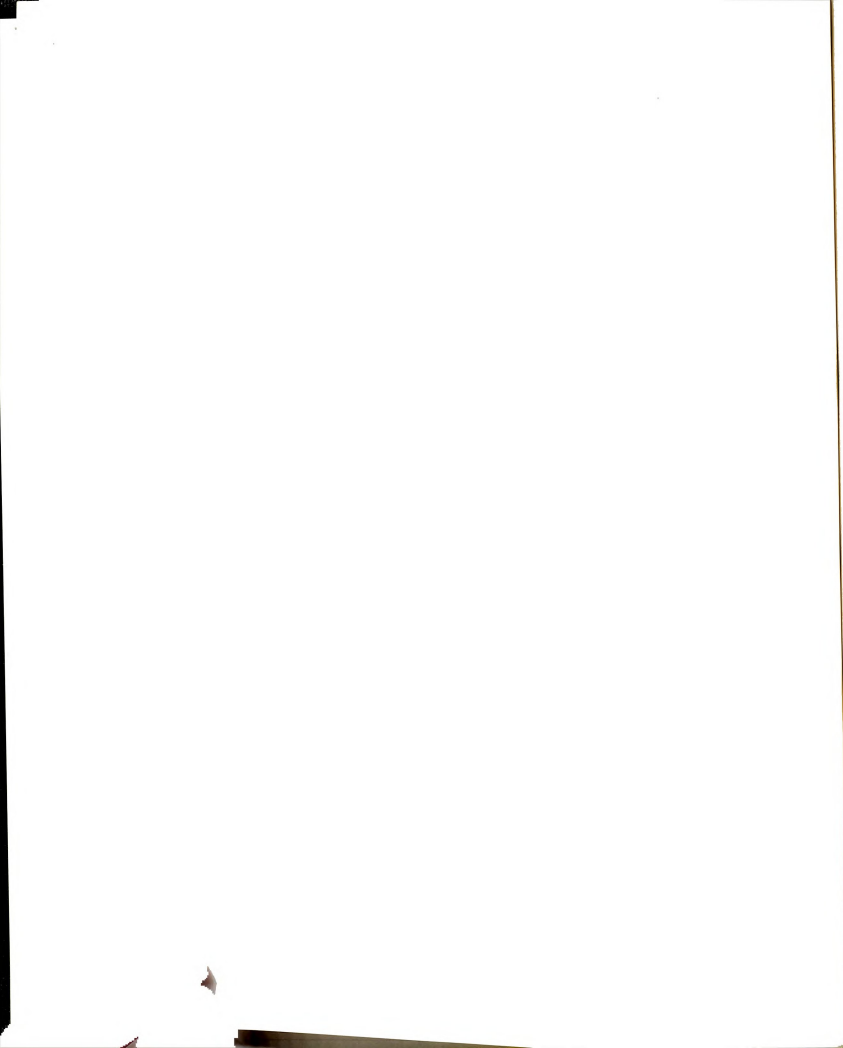
conception of things--to reform their loose and vicious habits--to improve their morals, and set vice and virtue in their proper colors, tha[n] what is contained in the following pages. . . .
(iv)

Samuel Willard, too, explains his primer's reading selections. The "Introduction" to The Franklin Primer (1802) provides the author's recognition of his high calling as a textbook writer as well as an enumeration of the didactic concerns his reading selections address:

Considering it an object of the highest importance in the instruction of little children, to endeavor to inculcate in their tender minds a sense of morality and piety--a due observance of the injunctions imposed on them by their teachers--to honor and respect the commands of their parents--a love of their play-mates; and above all, the duty they owe to their Creator, has induced the compiler to issue this publication. . . . (vii)

The author-compiler explains that he has interspersed "such moral lessons and sentences as . . . conceived to be adapted to the capacity of children" (viii). Also in his preface of the textbook Willard indicates the nationalistic inclination in the book, offering the life of Benjamin Franklin as a model of American virtue.

That overt inclusion of nationalistic sentiment is the thrust of Noah Webster's preface in An American Selection of Lessons in Reading and Speaking (1804). Referring to the selections he uses in this reader didactically designed for late primary readers, he explains that the lessons "contain general ideas of morality" and then demonstrates more specifically his nationalistic agenda: "A love of our



country, and an acquaintance with its true state, are indispensable: They should be acquired early in life" (3).

Throughout virtually all of the prefatory sections included in the reading textbooks, the writers' discussion of methodology centers on their selection of morally virtuous lessons for study. The anonymous author-compiler of The Columbian Reader of 1815 upholds the practice:

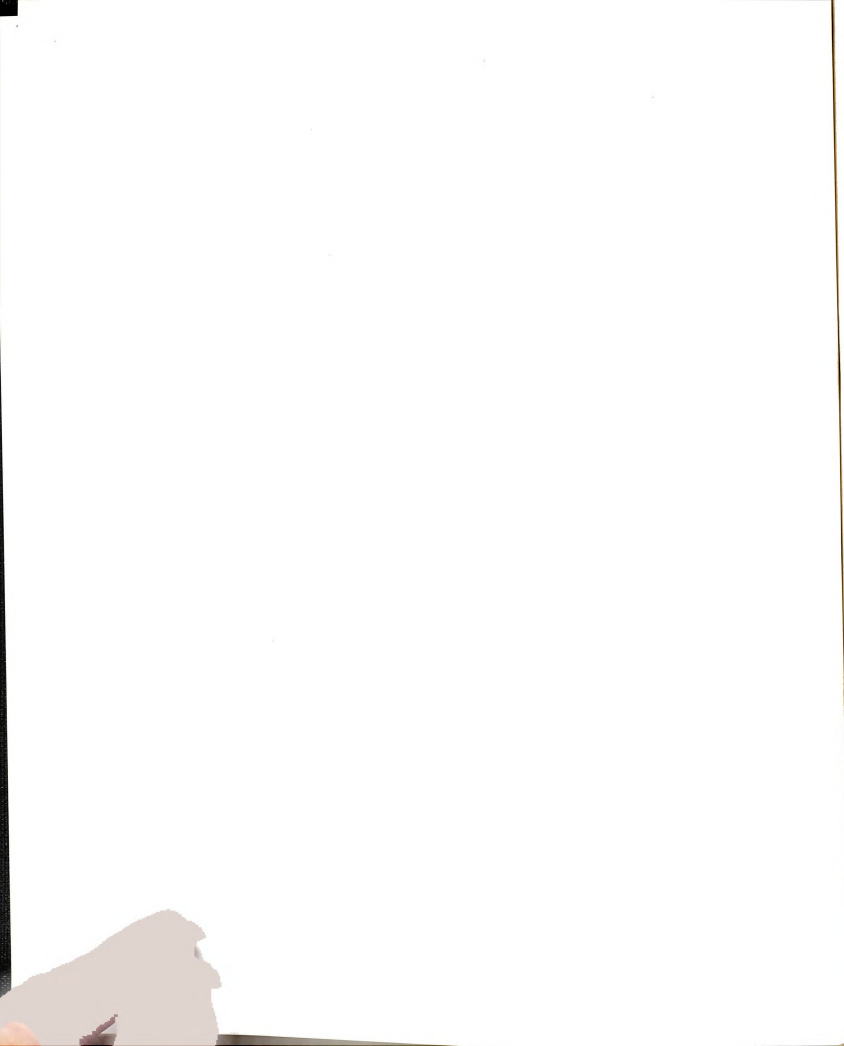
In making selections for the following pages, an uniform preference has been given to such pieces as were calculated to instil [sic] into the minds of youth the principles of virtue and morality. . . .

An excellent writer has very truly remarked, that "a virtuous education is a better inheritance for children than a great estate."
(3)

In Lindley Murray's 1823 edition of Introduction to the English Reader, an early reader intended (according to its title page) to "properly conduct the young learner from the Spelling Book to 'The English Reader,'" the author indicates the period's overriding emphasis in the reading textbooks. According to Murray, the goal of his texts is "to season the minds of children with piety and virtue . . . to improve them in reading, language, and sentiment" (5). His basic methodology corresponds to that of his contemporaries:

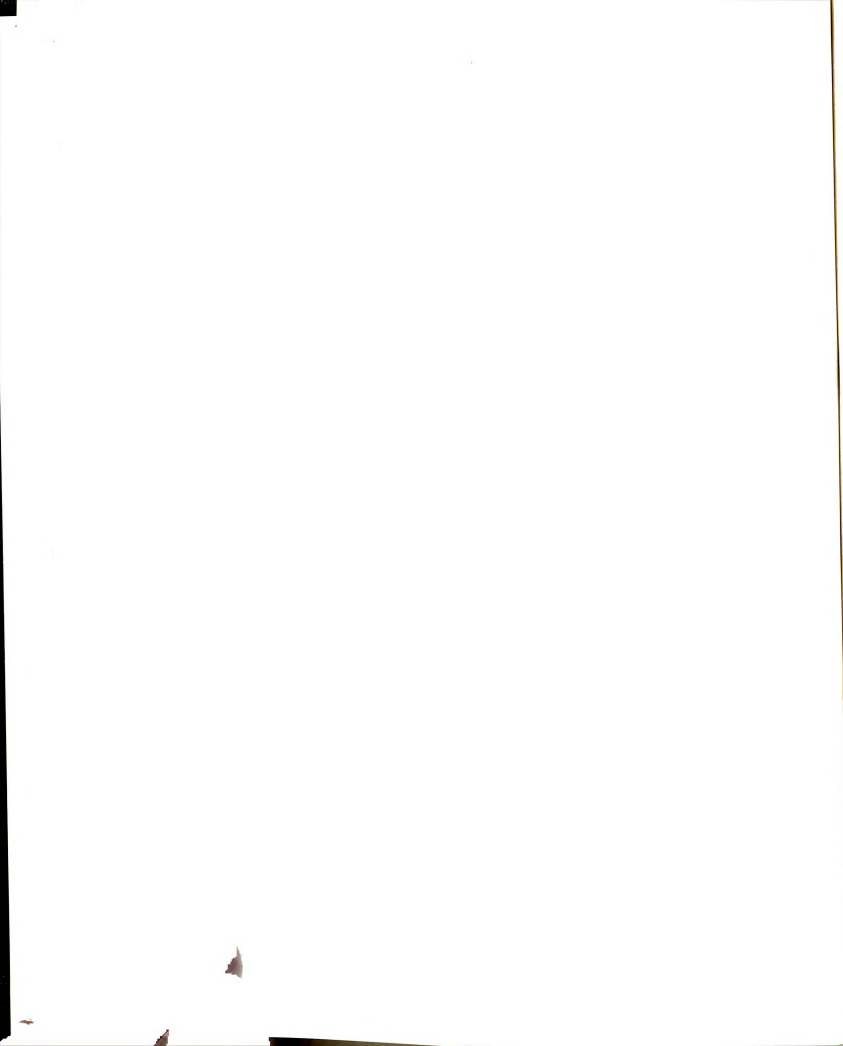
To imbue the tender mind with the love of virtue and goodness, is an especial object of the present work: and with this view the pieces have been scrupulously selected; and, where necessary, purified from every word and sentiment that could offend the most delicate mind. (5)

In his preface to Easy Lessons in Reading (1825), Joshua Leavitt discusses the period's expected pedagogy for



teaching reading from his textbook. His method relies on word recognition and oral reading drill. He addresses the common practice of using the Bible as a reading text, saying that using the New Testament was admirable but that it should come after students had developed the "habit" of reading. Leavitt explains that his reading textbook was better suited to the vocabulary of the child, and he maintains the tradition of expecting appropriate content in the reading lessons: "The selections will be found to contain many salutary precepts and instructive examples, for a life of piety and morality, or activity and usefulness . . ." (5).

Whether or not the prefaces and introductions of the various textbooks were read by beginning readers is undeniably not an issue. The early reading textbook authors and compilers included these prefatory sections for a variety of reasons, the least of which was a child's attention. Rather, the prefaces offer teachers and parents an overview of the pedagogical concerns in the textbooks; they provide a witness to the educational expectations of the post-Revolutionary War period. Clearly, the prefaces and introductions serve as an articulation and endorsement of the pervading tradition of didacticism found in the reading textbooks from 1780 to 1830--allowing for a diversity of emphases that would include religious, social, and nationalistic didacticism.



Notes

¹Reeder maintains that "this first period of American school-book authorship is characterized by erratic efforts and random shots in many directions" (41). He explains that the publishers of reading textbooks were more concerned with "public demand" and "commercial success" than with pedagogical theories:

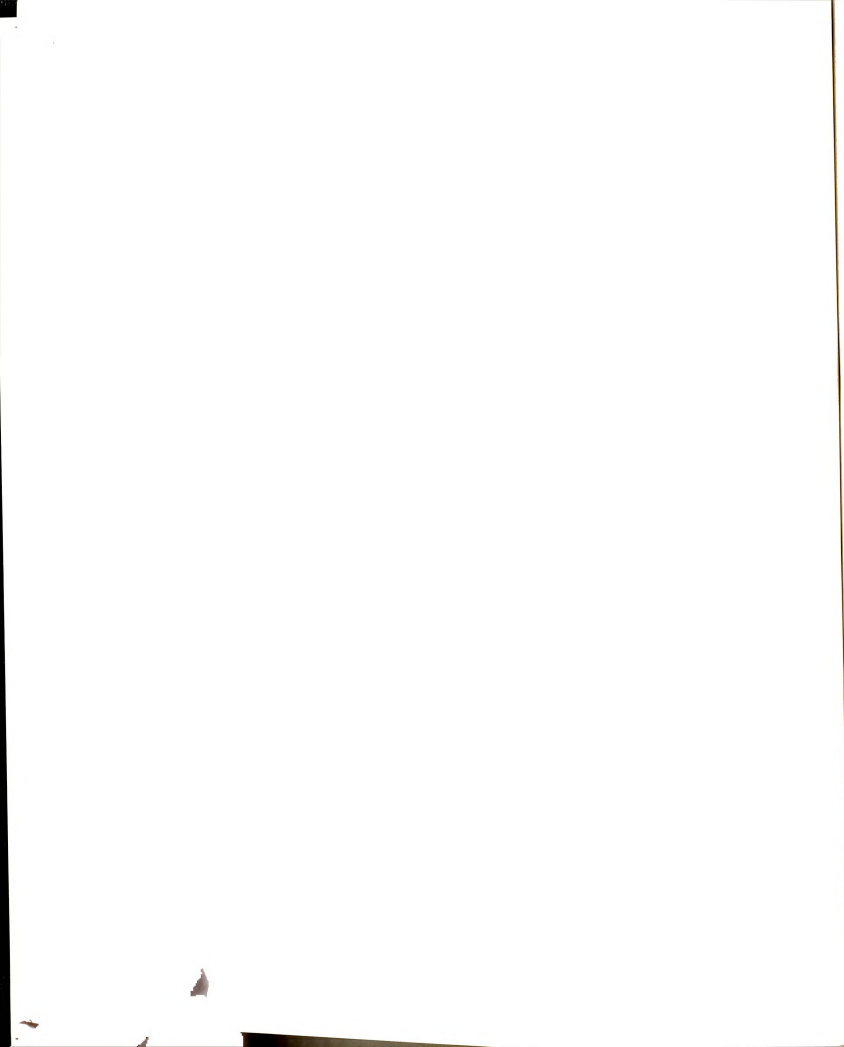
The result was that many single and isolated primers, spellers and readers were published and used for a brief period within a limited area. Many of these primers were trifling little books in paper covers, three or four inches square, containing the alphabet rudely illustrated, a syllabarium, a few pages of spelling, and sometimes, but not always, a few exercises in reading. (41)

²Elson explains that many of the textbooks provided for American students were merely unrevised British books used for "physical and economic reasons . . . well into the nineteenth century, even though they embodied British nationalism" (6).

³Venezky establishes the use of spelling books as early reading textbooks:

After the middle of the eighteenth century, most students in the grammar schools might have begun reading instruction in a spelling book that, in spite of its name, was used until almost the middle of the nineteenth century to teach both reading and spelling. . . . Thomas Dilworth's A New Guide to the English Tongue (1771), which was first published in England in 1740 . . . was first printed in American in 1747 and went through at least 76 editions. . . . (250)

⁴The grammar books offer many examples of didacticism in their exercises and drills. For example, in Caleb Alexander's 1814 Grammatical System of the English Language a subtle didacticism surfaces in a section titled "False Grammar," in which errors in possession occur: "Content is the poor *man* riches, and desire the rich *man* poverty; Money is the *misers* god, which he salutes at an humble distance, but dares not approach.--*Woman* chastity is *woman* glory" (67-68). While these sentences do not readily illustrate the tradition of didactic method in early reading instruction, a closer study will reveal a very subtle use



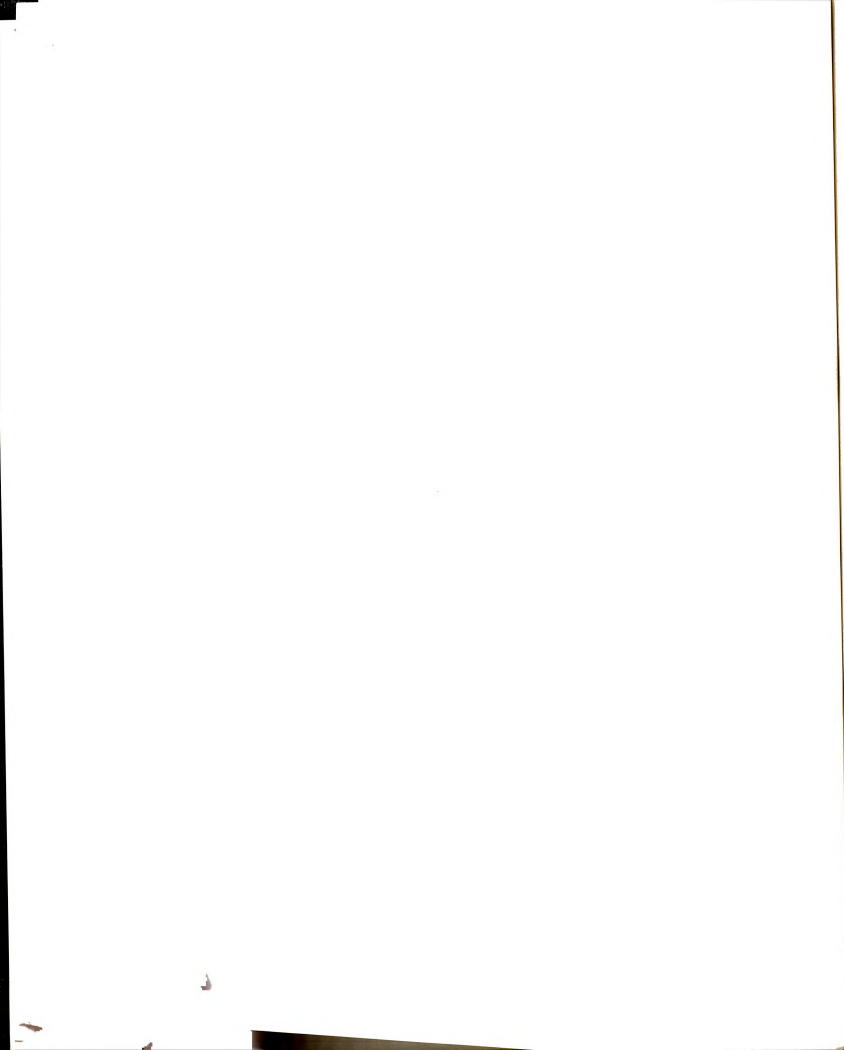
of didacticism embedded in the sentences to correct. Whether or not this inclusion of didacticism was a conscious act on the part of the textbook author could be debated; nevertheless, it underscores the period's reliance on moral tone and model in its pedagogy.

⁵This preface is dated "Boston, May, 1794."

⁶Venezky explains the didactic goals of reading instruction in early American history:

For the early colonist, reading was taught for theological ends: to read and interpret Scriptures as required by Calvinist doctrine. In the post-Revolutionary period, reading was the route to good character, particularly as defined by the prevailing Protestant morality. (253)

Kiefer parallels Venezky's claims. She elaborates on what she labels the "theological age" in American education: "An era of stern pietism--during which the child was constantly impressed with the fact that he 'was born not to live but to dy,' and that his time and talents were to be focused on the proper fulfillment of this eternal end" (1). Kiefer ascribes "the influence of a utilitarian philosophy" to the post-Revolutionary War period: "This trend, stressing the value of industry and wisdom, fostered a more benign and worldly view of life--one which humanely permitted the child a certain amount of legitimate pleasure en route to his heavenly home" (2).



CHAPTER 3
RELIGIOUS DIDACTICISM

Awake, awake, you graceless children all.
And hear the Lord in time, while he does call.

--The Reprobate's Reward, or,
a Looking-Glass for
Disobedient Children (1798)

Happy the child, whose tender years
Receive instruction well;
Who hates the sinner's path, and fears
The road that leads to hell.

--Lindley Murray. Intro-
duction to the English Reader
(1823)

From their earliest introduction in America, children's textbooks were characterized by a religious didacticism calculated to uphold the religious doctrine of adult society, with little evident concern about children's interests (Venezky 248). Historical studies of the textbooks of the colonial period indicate that the educational milieu was indeed a progeny of the church and that reading textbooks were made up almost entirely of religious and moral content¹ (Robinson 13-14).

The forerunner of American textbooks--the New England Primer--was the embodiment of religious epigrams and doctrinal lessons. Earle says it was "so religious in all



its teachings and suggestions that it has been fitly called the 'Little Bible of New England'" (128). In like manner, the reading texts, which were used by primary students during the years following the Primer's strong hold in American schools, are steeped in the tradition of religious didacticism.² For example, in 1779 Anthony Benezet's The Pennsylvania Spelling-Book, or Youth's friendly Instructor and Monitor relies on religious themes for instruction in "short word lessons":

The eye of God is on us, all the day;
My son, do no ill, pay to God his due:
We do no act but he can see it.
If we go in or out, his eye is on us.
God can see us in all we do.
Go not in the way of bad men.
Do not lie, nor do ill to any.
Bad men go in the way of sin. (12)

The tradition of presenting religious attitudes and values is thus firmly established in American education by the post-Revolutionary period. Yet, Robinson indicates that by the end of the Revolution the strength of religious didacticism in the early reading textbooks "begins to give way to the secular" (14) due to changing religious, social, and political attitudes in the country. This decline of religious didacticism, however, is at first hardly perceptible; the religious emphasis is definitely still a significant force in the early reading textbooks during the years 1780 to 1830.

Although the inclusion of religious themes in the textbooks was generally held to be "blessed by God" during



the period (Elson 42), my intention in this chapter is not to describe the religious didacticism as monolithic. Rather, I document the didactic sentiment and show that the lessons offer a range of religious themes.

A Belief in God's Divinity and Sovereignty

A belief in God--in God's divinity and sovereignty--is the first major element of the religious didacticism apparent throughout the reading textbooks. Benezet's 1779 text illustrates that this element of religious instructiveness was established--and expected--in the early textbooks:

God is kind to all those who seek him;
It is in and by him I live and move;
He knows what is best for me,
To him let us look for help in need. (16)

God's sovereignty and the individual's submission to it were subjects suitable for young readers' attention. In a 1793 text, The Child's Instructor, on the same page that asks, "How many vowels are there?" students found questions posed in (nearly all) single-syllable words that demand an attention to God's dominance in early American thought: "George! do you know who made you? / Yes Sir: God made me, and takes care of me. He loves good boys and good girls, and we must love him. God is very good to take care of us" (Ely 10). The Child's Spelling Book, published in 1802, also offers short, numbered lessons early in the book that emphasize a strong traditional belief in God:

5. God will judge us at the last day: as our
deeds have been in this life, so our lot will be



in the next: And woe to those who die in their sin. . . .

6. Great is the peace of those who love God, and walk in his truth. (21)

Another text published in 1802, The Franklin Primer--which Rosenbach says was written by Samuel Willard and "became very popular and ran into many editions" (113)--further establishes a religious didacticism that emphasizes God. In a section titled "Moral Sentences, consisting of words of one syllable," Willard provides a list of religious directives and aphorisms:

Love God, for he is good. Fear God, for he is just. Pray to God, for all things come from him.

Fools make a mock of sin, but he that is wise will be good. . . .

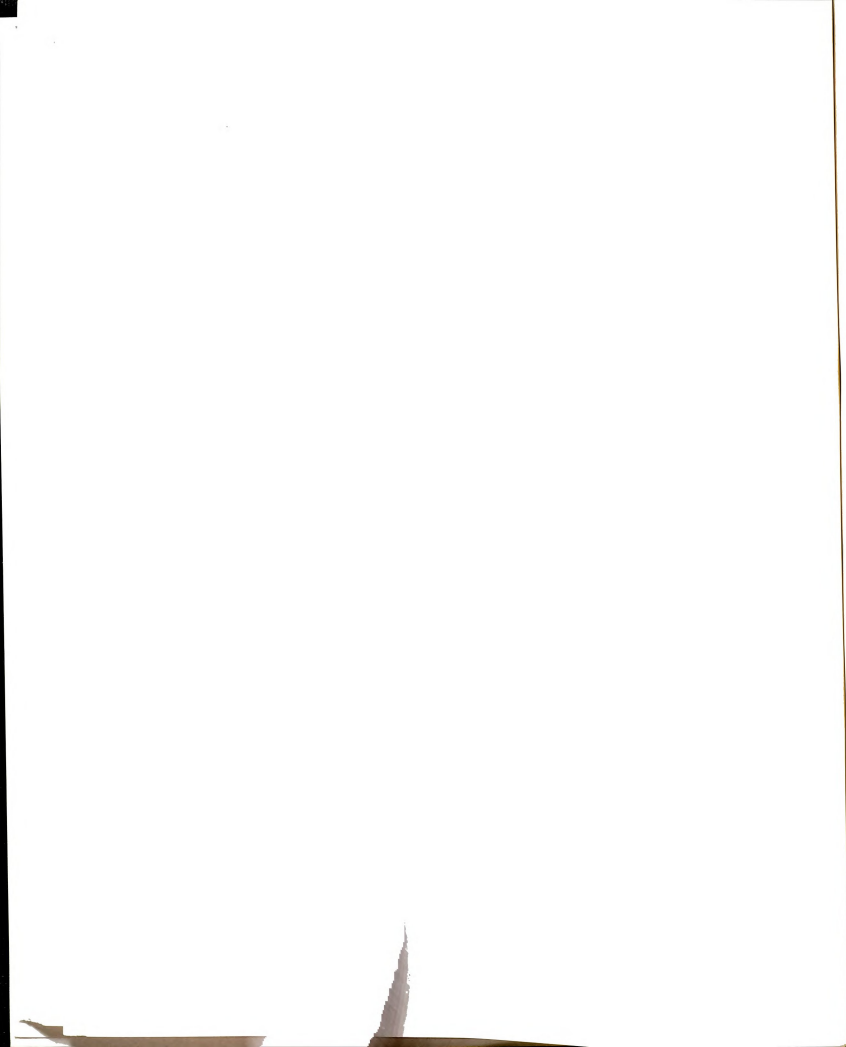
The child that does the best he can, Shall gain the love of God and man. . . .

We can hide no work from God; for it is the Lord God that hath made us, and he knows all that we do. (19)

Four years later (1806), Willard published his revised textbook The Franklin Family Primer, and in it he included the above "Moral Sentences," but altering the words to more greatly emphasize the concept of God and his sovereignty: "Fools make a mock at *him*, but he that is wise will be good" [italics mine]; Willard follows that line with an added line to a newly italicized stanza:

*God loves the child, whose words are mild.
The child that does the best he can,
Shall gain the love of God and Man.* (23)

One little book published in Philadelphia around 1810, Kimber and Conrad's ABC Book, includes the apparently obligatory lines that are God-oriented, but somehow the book does not seem as completely devoted to instructing



young readers in God's ways as it is to selling copies of subsequent textbooks. The line "The eye of God sees us all the day" is followed by "Now go to Kimber and Conrad's Store, No. 93, Market-Street, and buy the Universal Primer" (n. pag.).

A more fully developed portrayal of God appears in an 1818 edition³ of Lindley Murray's A First Book for Children. In a section of the textbook titled "The care and goodness of God," Murray provides a brief description of a shepherd, of a mother, and of a king. Following each of the descriptions, he draws a short comparison between the subject and God:

But who is the shepherd's shepherd? who takes care of him? . . . God is the shepherd's shepherd. (67)

But who is the parent of the mother? who . . . watches over her with tender love, and thinks of her always? . . . God is the parent of the mother. . . . (68)

But who is the king of the king? who commands him what he must do? . . . God is the king of the king. . . . He is King of kings, and Lord of lords. (69)

The following passages from an 1821 text for beginning readers, Johnson's Philadelphia Primer, offer two common characterizations of God. The first underscores the belief in a divine omniscience: "The eye of God is on us all the day. We do no act but he can see it" (19). The second attributes to God the power of creation: "Let us call on the name of the Lord, for it is he who made the world" (21).



Belief in God and obedience to him--as doctrinal concepts--seem to further dominate the view of God in the textbooks of the 1820's. Midway in his Introduction to the English Reader (1823), Murray addresses the "younger classes of learners in reading" and includes a lesson in "Didactick Pieces" that explains "ingratitude to our Supreme Benefactor is highly culpable" (47). The three-paragraph lesson (which must have been intended for intermediate readers) relates how Artabanus, a young man "distinguished with peculiar favour by a wise, powerful, and good prince" (47) is insensitive to the bounty and privilege accorded him. Murray draws a comparison of humans' ingratitude for God's beneficence:

You have rioted in the profusion of nature, without suitable emotions of gratitude to the sovereign Dispenser of all good: and you have too often slighted the glorious converse, and forgotten the presence of the Omnipotent Being, who fills all spaces, and exists through all eternity. (47-48)

The omnipotence and omniscience of God--along with a mandate for humans' recognition of them--are seen again in William Bolles's A spelling book (1827):

All that we have comes from God;
He takes care of us by day, and by night;
And without him we could not live;
We must love him with all our soul. (23)

A Knowledge of Doctrine, A Respect for the Church

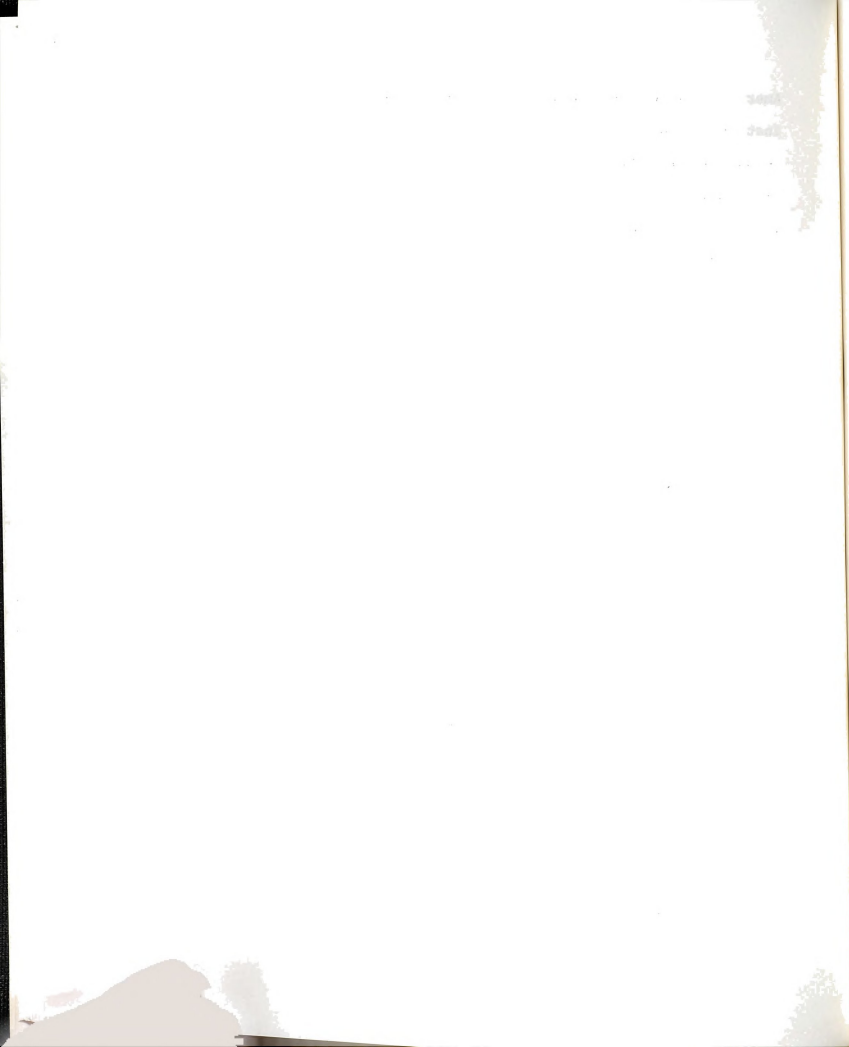
Doctrine, in general, and reference to the church, in particular, make up a second theme in the religious didacticism found in the beginning reading texts of early

America. Of course, religious instruction and literacy instruction have long been entwined--with the Bible often being used solely as a primary-level reading text. But various clergy and teachers were not convinced that a facility with rudimentary reading would guarantee the young readers' "preservation of . . . religious beliefs and practices," explains Kiefer, so "they prepared numerous catechisms containing interpretations of important biblical passages as well as points of dogma and rules of conduct" (110). Reeder explains that in early American schools, three classes of instruction dominated:

The first class, or beginners, read from the Psalter which contained the Psalms, the Proverbs and the Nicene Creed. The second class was known as the Testament class; the third as the Bible class. Near the close of the seventeenth century the Catechism was incorporated into the New England Primer. (28)

In fact, study in the New England Primer with its Shorter Catechism⁴ was required by law, and "deacons and ministers visited and examined families to see that the law was obeyed" (Earle 132).

The catechism format, made up of questions and supplied answers, was used quite widely in various reading textbooks. Isaac Watts, whose works were included in scores of reading texts in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, employs the catechism technique in his 1791 text. Dr. Watts' Plain and Easy Catechisms for Children, according to Rosenbach, was "one of the most popular catechisms for children, and a standard work in



both America and England until past the middle of the nineteenth century" (65). It is a good example of a catechism without an abecedarian, but nevertheless intended as a literacy text (Rosenbach 65). Watts's catechism conveys doctrinal instruction through a series of numbered (and italicized) question/answer sequences:

14. *Q. And what must you do to be saved from the anger of God which your sins have deserved?*
A. I must be sorry for my sins, I must pray to God to forgive me what is past, and serve him better for time to come.
15. *Q. Will God forgive you if you pray for it?*
A. I hope he will forgive me if I trust in his mercy for the sake of what Jesus Christ has done, and what he has suffered.
16. *Q. Do you know who JESUS CHRIST is?*
A. He is God's own Son, who came from Heaven to save us from our sins, and from God's anger. (8-9)

Matters of doctrine and the established church appear throughout the reading texts. John Ely's 1793 The Child's Instructor presents proper attitudes for the young readers to emulate:

Good boys and good girls go to church. Did you go to church? Billy went to church, and so did Betsy. The church is the house of God; and God loves littlechildren when they go to church.

When you go to church you must sit still, and hear what the preacher tells you; he tells you to be good children, and love your parents, and then God will bless you. (17)

The "Billy" lessons were a popular method of incorporating didacticism into the reading lesson books. A late-eighteenth-century edition of the New England Primer (The New-England Primer; much improved 1796) included the typical material found in the Primer (epigrams,

2000

2000

2000

2000

2000

syllabarium, catechism, the John Rogers martyrdom narrative) as well as a series of reading lessons about a five-year-old boy named Billy, "a very good boy"--saintly, in fact--as a model for young readers. The usefulness of these lessons for promoting acceptable attitudes concerning religion was not overlooked: Billy could be counted on to say his prayers, his catechism, and the Lord's prayer, in addition to keeping in mind his Creator. After a break from the unnumbered Billy pages, readers studied lessons on Arabic and Roman numerals. But in a later lesson they encountered Billy again, this time as the five-year-old instructed Harry, another little boy, on the sovereignty and goodness of God and Jesus (The New-England Primer; much improved n. pag.).

The complete title of an 1802 speller--The Child's Spelling Book: Calculated to render Reading Completely Easy to Little Children; To Impress upon their minds the importance of Religion, and the advantages of Good Manners--indicates that the tradition of religious didacticism flourished at the turn of the nineteenth century. The element of doctrine is taken up in various lessons:

1. Man was at first made in a state of bliss; but by sin he fell from that good state into a state of woe and misery.
2. Christ, our blessed Lord, came down from heaven, to save man from sin, and to give life to the soul; a life that will never end. (37)

As the lessons in the textbooks progress, the overt doctrinal didacticism seems to find a story line of sorts:

1875

1876

If Charles will learn to be good, then God will take care of Charles; for God loves all good children; and when they are sick, and put into the pit hole, he will not let them forever die; but will take them up to Heaven, and make them happy. (54)

Further into the text, the religious didacticism dealing with doctrine, its tone and intention still quite pronounced, is incorporated into a conversation: "A Dialogue on Theving [sic]." A Mr. Ferguson and his son, working together outdoors, are thirsty. The son says that he could sneak into the nearby fenced orchard and get some pears to eat. But Mr. Ferguson firmly declines his son's offer on the grounds that the pears do not belong to them. Meanwhile, another young boy does steal some apples in another orchard and is summarily attacked by a dog. An observer exclaims: "See how his leg bleeds. . . ." to which another observer counters: "It is a pity the dog did not tear his leg off, and that would have taught him to steal apples again" (82). If the narrative had stopped there, the didacticism would have been plain--simplistic as it is--but the textbook author pushes the illustration to embody certain doctrinal values as well. The son asks Mr. Ferguson: "Papa would the dog have bitten me, if I had taken the pears?" Mr. Ferguson's reply is telling:

"It is very likely that some mischief would have befallen you; for God, my dear child, orders everything that passes upon earth. . . . If God had not punished [the boy who stole the fruit], he probably would always have continued in sin. This lesson may bring him to repentance. . . . In this we may see the hand of Providence;--for our merciful Creator never chastises us, but to make us become better." (83)



The doctrinal view of an immediately judgemental and punishing god surfaces in many of the religious passages in the textbooks. According to Elson, within the lessons of the textbooks, "God does not wait for the after-life to distribute rewards and punishments; He metes them out inexorably, not simply in pangs of conscience and remorse, but in things of this world" (213).

In contrast, many of the textbooks exhibit a religious didacticism that serves to keep before the young reader an ongoing, but casual, attitude conducive to doctrinal instruction. These appear as religious "artifacts"--typically short stanzas that, I think, underscore the pervasive religious sentiment in every-day early American life. For example, Juvenal Poems, or the Alphabet in Verse, an 1808 primer, illustrates various nouns in alphabetical order with short stanzas that describe particular aspects of the nouns:

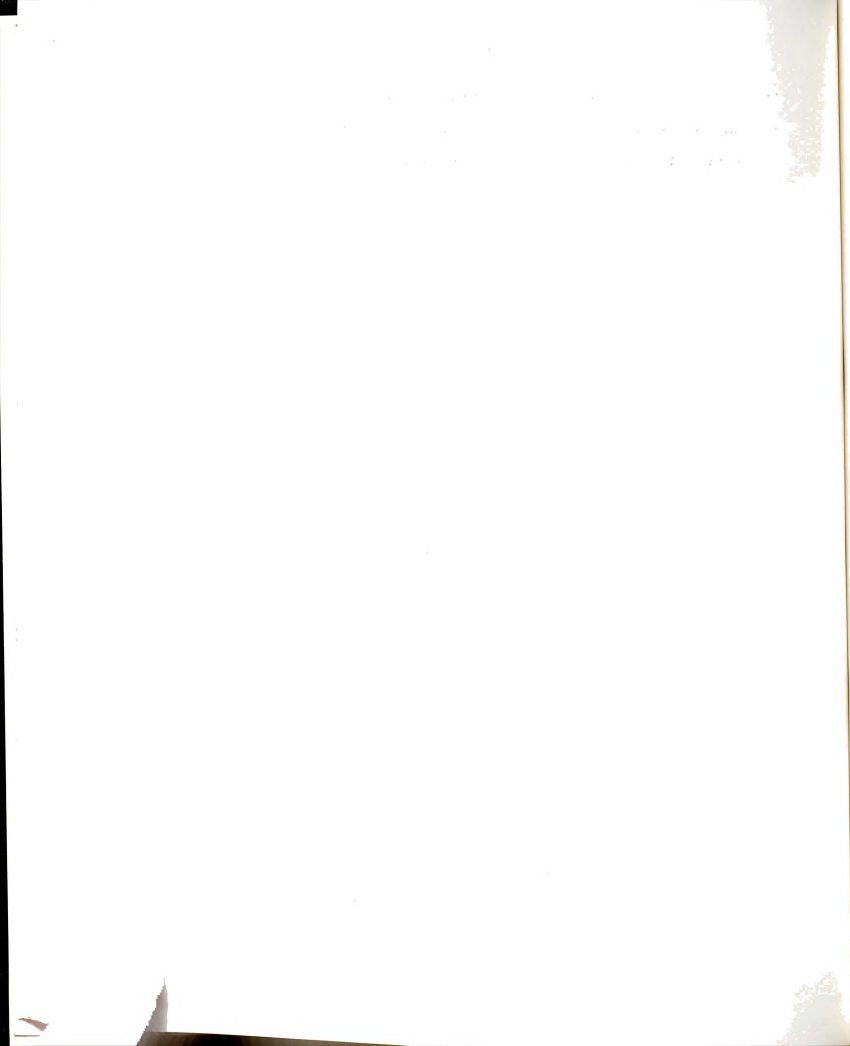
ANT

How wisely and frugal
The little Ant plies.
Come hither, ye sluggards,
And learn to be wise. (5)

This verse is followed by a stanza that illustrates the letter B:

BIBLE

Within this sacred book,
The words of life are given,
Wherein should all men look,
And learn the way to heaven. (6)



Not all of the stanzas in this verse alphabet are religiously didactic. For example, the verse illustrating the letter G offers a morally neutral sentiment:

GRAPES

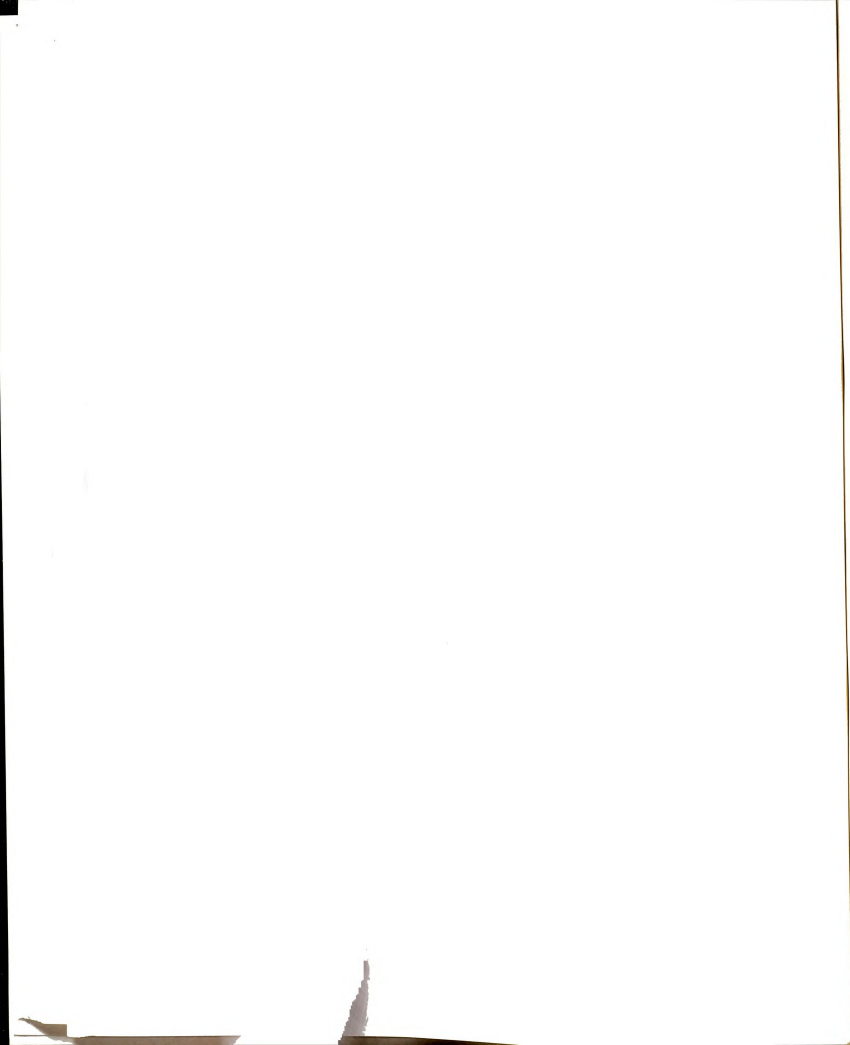
See here are the grapes,
Which Reynard did want;
Tho' nimbly he leaps,
Yet catch them he can't. (11)

The textbook author, however, does keep before the young reader the occasional short religious stanza in order to maintain an attitude conducive to religious instruction:

TEMPLE

Holy temples were design'd,
For each pure and humble mind,
To pray and praise the Lord most high,
Who all their wants can satisfy (23)

Whether or not the concept of gratitude to God for affliction is doctrinal could be argued; but I include an example of that sentiment because it is a religious sentiment that seems to surface occasionally in the textbooks. An American edition of the English reader Easy Lessons in Reading by Joshua Leavitt (1825) provides the story of "The Hedge of Thorns," in which a boy pushes his reluctant little sister through a hole in a thorny hedge so she can get to some apple trees. As a result of the thorns, the little girl is covered in blood. When their father discovers the children, he reprimands his son and tells him that on the other side of the hedge is a deep ditch of black water where the little sister could have drowned:



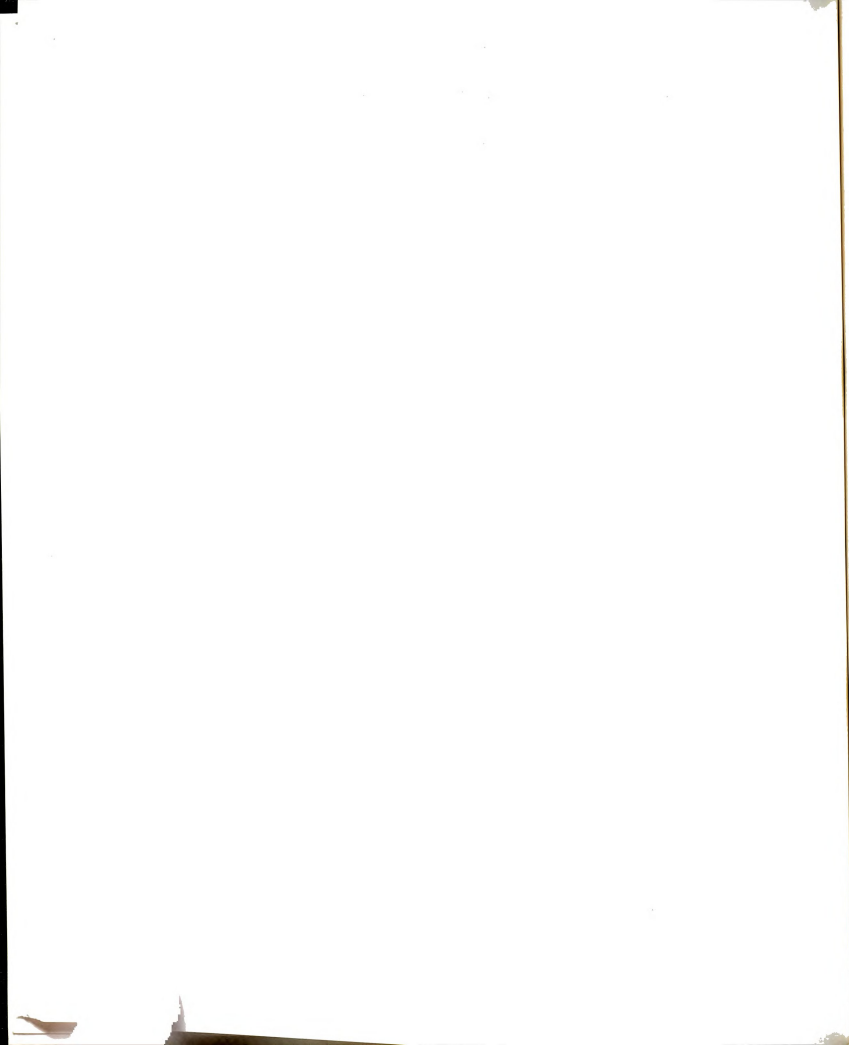
"Are they not *blessed* thorns then?" said my father. "Do you not now thank GOD for this *Hedge of Thorns*? I trust, my son, that the time will come, that you will thank GOD for every affliction, however bitter, which he makes use of to keep you from *sin*." (82-85)

The theme of gratitude for affliction is taught in this story through the boy's resentment of the thorns keeping him from a short-cut to the apple trees, yet preventing his sister's possible peril.

I do not attempt to trace the doctrinal concepts as they appear in the reading textbooks to any one specific religious group. While the doctrinal themes undoubtedly reflect the text-writers' own religious affiliations, the concepts illustrate generic doctrine acceptable to Protestant American society at large during the period.

Thus, biblical doctrine is featured quite often in the textbooks through short, simple paraphrases of Scripture. In The Elementary Spelling Book (1829), Noah Webster succinctly offers what seem to be doctrinal truths as a matter of course: "God created the heavens and the earth in six days, and all that was made was very good. / God will destroy the wicked" (29). A simple, rhymed paraphrase of the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament appears in The Little Primer (c. 1830):

1. Thou shalt have no more gods than me.
2. Before no idol bow thy knee.
3. Take not the name of God in vain.
4. Do not the Sabbath-day profane.
5. Give both thy parents honour due.
6. Take heed that thou no murder do.
7. Abstain from words and deeds unclean.
8. Steal not though thou art poor and mean.



9. Nor make a wilful lie nor love it.
 10. What is thy neighbour's do not covet. (7)

Although primers and spellers by the late 1820s and early 1830s relied less and less on doctrinally didactic lessons, a religious tone continues, according to Elson (41) and to my own observation, throughout the nineteenth century.

Bible Stories and Scriptural Lessons

Much of the religious didacticism--in fact, a third theme of the religious didacticism--apparent in the reading textbooks from 1780 to 1830 takes shape as retellings of Bible stories, undoubtedly already familiar to young Christian readers. For example, in The Franklin Primer (1802) and its revised version The Franklin Family Primer (1806), the author Samuel Willard includes, along with the customary catechism and songs by Watts, five standard Bible stories: Adam and Eve, Noah and the Flood, Moses in the Basket, the Nativity of Jesus, and the Crucifixion.

I believe the textbook writers assumed their young audience was acquainted with Bible stories and characters through an exposure to them at home and in church. The authors capitalized on this acquaintance, often relying on biblical stories in alphabet drill. Horner's The Silver Penny, published in 1806, is an example:

J JUDAS j

JUDAS was he that by a kiss,
 Did lose a more substantial bliss;
 First sold his Lord for paltry pelf,
 Then sneak'd away, and hang'd himself. (13)



The more obscure New Testament characters Ananias and Sapphira are the focus of a lesson, found amid pages of reading lessons on the seasons and domestic animals, in the 1809 Johnson's New Philadelphia Spelling-Book:

Have we not known, nor heard, nor read,
 How God abhors deceit and wrong?
 How Ananias was struck dead,
 Caught with a lie upon his tongue?
 So did his wife Sapphira die,
 When she came in and grew so bold,
 As to confirm that wicked lie,
 Which just before her husband told. (24)

By retelling the story from the Bible, the textbook reaffirms the Bible as a moral authority and it strikes a didactic tone in warning its readers against the dire consequences of telling falsehoods. This method of underscoring a moral/religious truth with a story from Scripture finds its way into many of the textbooks. A reader from 1812 portrays Christ and His disciples (following a short, descriptive paragraph about the wolf who "sallies out, by night, and destroys the sheep and lambs") using the not unexpected didactic approach and Biblical wording: "Christ said to his servants, 'Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye, therefore, wise as serpents, and harmless as doves'" (The New-York Preceptor 41).

Another textbook from around 1812 promotes the Bible itself as a source of truth--but with a commercial twist: "The bible is the best of all books. Children who can read in the bible, may go to Kimber and Conrad's Store and buy



one for themselves" (A Picture Book, for Little Children n. pag.).

As one might expect, many of the reading textbooks take their lessons directly from the Bible--often in paraphrase. A primer from 1814, The Instructive Alphabet, includes "Our Saviour's Golden Rule," a rhymed paraphrase from the book of Matthew: "Be you to others kind and true; / As you'd have others be to you; / And neither do nor say to men, / Whate'er you would not take again" (n. pag.).

Webster's The American Spelling Book of 1815 offers straight Scripture as suitable reading lessons--for example: "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these" (72).

This use of Bible stories and Bible texts as lessons in the primers, readers, and spellers is consistent in the religiously didactic works examined in this study. William Little's Reading made Easy (1818) includes the New Testament parables of the Prodigal Son, the Good Samaritan, and the Unjust Steward among various reading lessons. Ten years later (1828)--as religious didacticism seems to be on the wane--the Lord's Prayer is included among the lessons, word lists, and engravings of animals (M'Carty's American Primer). By 1830 much of the overt religious didacticism dealing with Scripture has faded away in the texts. However, it is occasionally apparent, as in A Pleasing Toy, for Girl or Boy (1830), a primer that illustrates



the alphabet with pictures and text. An opened volume (with the words *holy* and *Bible* written on the pages) is portrayed under the boldly capitalized word BIBLE, and a four-line stanza of didactic text under the illustration reads: "Within this sacred Book, / The words of life are given, / Wherein all men should look, / And learn the way to heaven" (5).

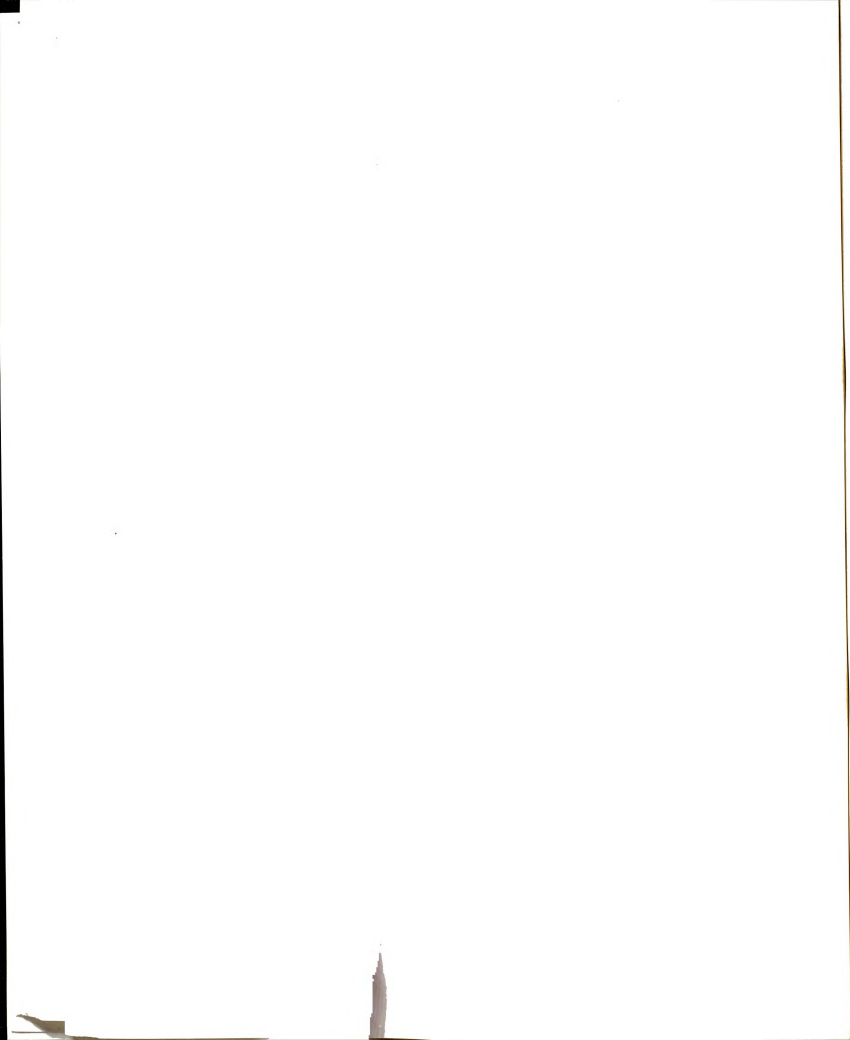
Death and the Transcience of Life

I have included concepts of death and the transcience of life as a fourth element of religious didacticism in the reading textbooks. I include these concepts in the section dealing with religious didacticism because, I believe, they imply a general religious attitude. The 1796 text Wisdom in Miniature, a short collection of "divine and moral" sentences for reading drill, concludes with an insistent sentiment on the subject of death:

The state of no human being can be determined till death closes the scene;--and the last end of the good only can be happy.--Emulate their virtues, and, doubtless, you shall share in their felicity.

For as the silk-worm in due time taketh wing, and mounts into the air; so the souls of the just, when called from hence, shall take the wings of the morn--and ascend into heaven. (30)

Ideas concerning the insistence of death and the fleeting span of life make up many of the lessons found within this aspect of religious didacticism. Short lessons in the 1812 reader The New-York Preceptor typify this pre-occupation: "Swift as the arrow from the bow, our time doth fly away. Make much of time" (30), as does the alphabet



couplet in an "easy-reader" the following year (1813): "Q is a queen, all bespangled with gold; / But she'll die like the rest; and be cover'd with mould" (The Wonderful History of an Enchanted Castle 22).

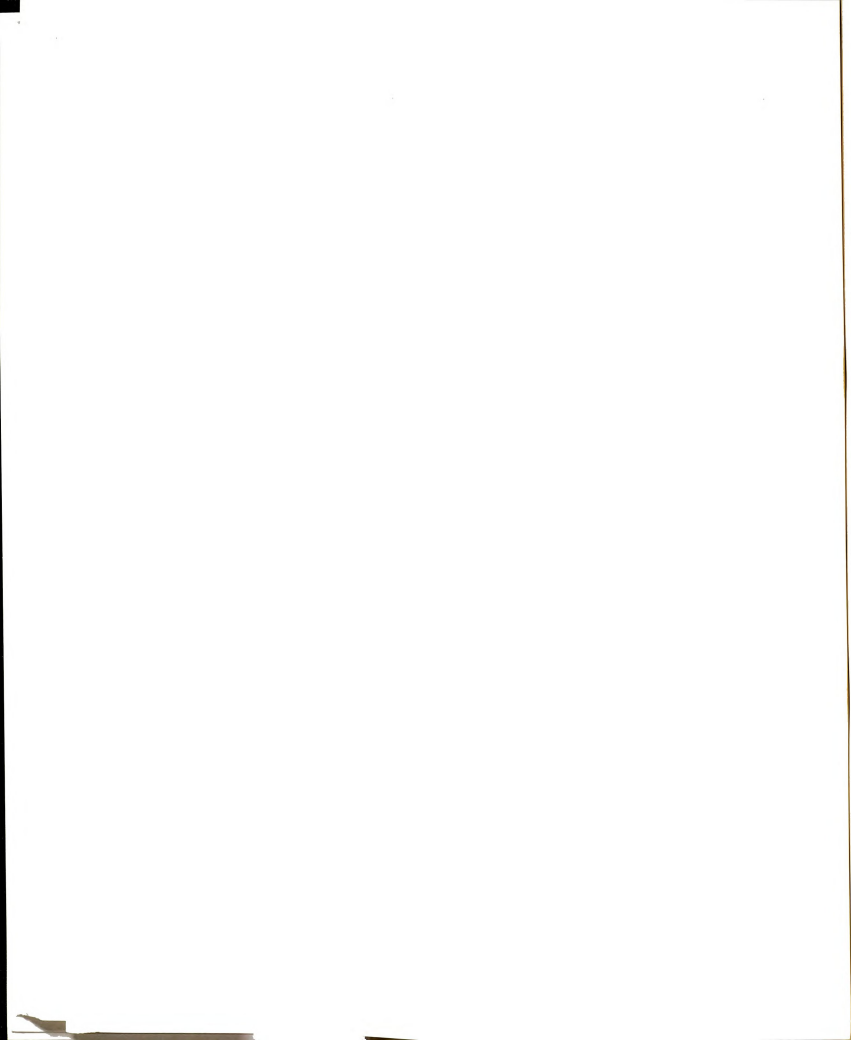
The sureness of death--and its untimely appearance--are dire attitudes found in the textbooks' didacticism. Beauties of the New-England Primer, an updated and edited selection of the Primer's more memorable passages (published in 1814), offers the following sobering lesson early in its pages:

I in the burying place may see
Graves shorter far than I;
From death's arrest no age is free,
Young children too may die.
My God, may such an awful sight,
Awakening be to me!
Oh! that by early grace I might
For death prepared be.
Our days begin with trouble here
Our life is but a span;
And cruel death is always near,
So frail a thing is man.
Then sow the seed of grace while young,
That when thou com'st to die,
Thou may'st sing forth that triumph song,
"Death, where's thy victory?" (8)

Another text of 1814, The Instructive Alphabet, emphasizes the passage of time, the sureness of death, and heaven as a final reward. The alphabetized stanzas devoted to everyday objects sound an insistent tone:

I The Inn

Inns are the weary travellers['] home,
While journeying on the road;
This world's too an inn for us,
While travelling to our God. (n. pag.)



This stanza is followed by prose information about inns, and within a couple pages the primer's didactic tone again takes up the theme of fleeting life and ultimate death:

M The Mower

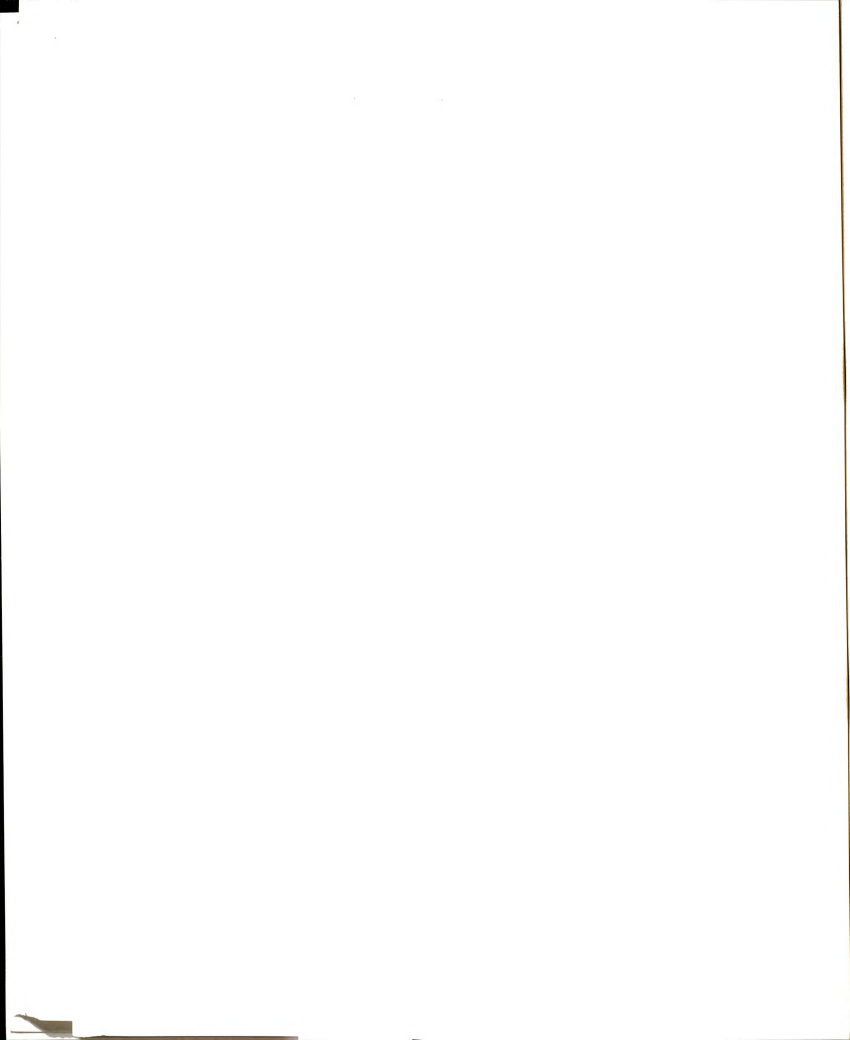
Time cuts us down as on we pass,
 As doeth the Mower cut the grass:
 Though now we're young, and in our bloom
 We're hast'ning daily to the tomb. (n. pag.)

The prose lesson that follows is especially direct in its instructiveness:

Time is the universal Mower! with his scythe he levels men and all their works, with the ground. Young man! thou art now full of vivacity; youth sparkling in thine eye, and health mantling on thy cheek. . . . This will not always be the case. (n. pag.)

Directness is again the tone of the religious sentiment about death found in The American Spelling Book (1815) by Noah Webster. The line "The time will come when we must all be laid in the dust" (49) seems somewhat startling as it is positioned just after lists of words for pronunciation (easy words like *arm*, *jar*, and *halt*, ranging to more advanced words like *cimetar*, *contemplative*, and *aggrandizement*).

Later textbooks maintain a certain preoccupation with didacticism dealing with the passage of time and death. William Bolles's speller of 1827 illustrates: "The days that are past, will return no more; / Those to come, may not come to us; / The present time alone, we can call ours; / We must improve it as well as we can" (25). And late in the decade, M'Carty's American Primer (c. 1828) presents



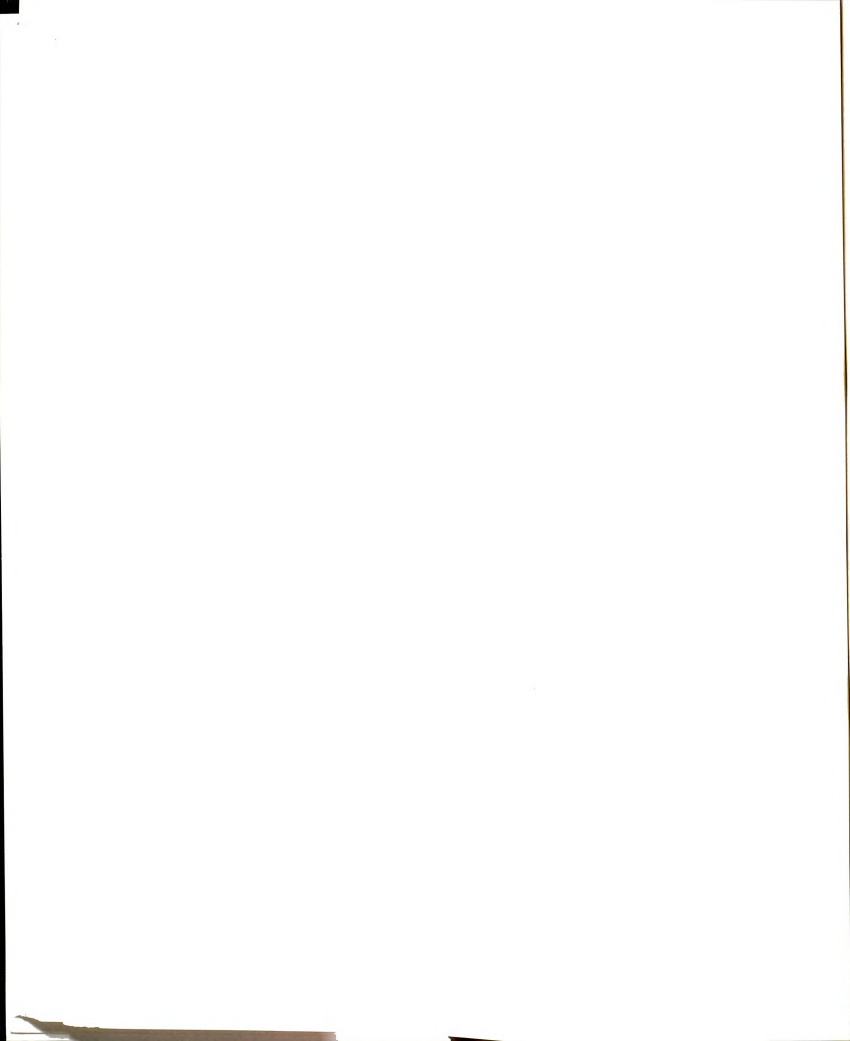
the concept of death as coming full-circle to be incorporated into the theme of God and His sovereignty:

All of us, my son, are to die.
If we do no ill, we go to joy.
Go not in the way of bad men.
The eye of God is on us all the day;
And he can see us in all we do. (14)

Although the erosion of the dominance of religious education in beginning reading textbooks was occurring during the years 1780 to 1830, the authors included scores of examples of didacticism that illustrate the period's overriding Protestant values and beliefs in their lessons and exercises.

By today's standards, the religious commentary in the textbooks appears parochial. In general, the sentences and lessons devoted to instilling reverence and homage to God seem stern and unbending; the inclusion of doctrinal and biblical passages seems calculated to serve a variety of Protestant purposes. The reading selections devoted to the inevitability of death and the passing of time often strike modern readers as quaintly intense.

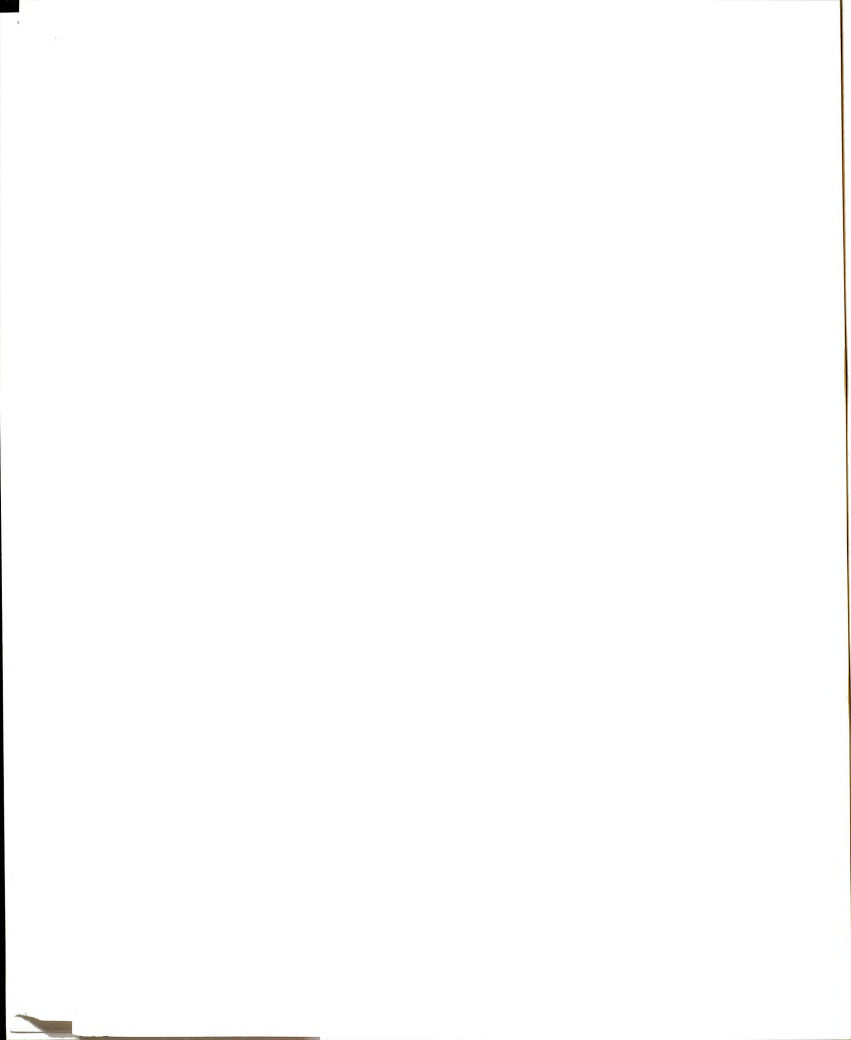
Yet, the religious sentiment found in the early reading textbooks evoked little of today's reactions when the books were being used because readers of the period expected that religious orientation. After all, reading the Bible, according to Gilmore, "was the most common reading experience in rural New England through 1835" (257).⁵ The New England Primer, too, with its overt religious orientation, was the standard for many years by



which reading instruction was compared. Virtually all the pupils using the various reading textbooks would have come from homes in which these practices and attitudes existed.

Thus, the lessons devoted to themes of God's sovereignty, doctrine and church, Bible stories, and death would not have seemed unusual in their overt religious stance. Certainly these textbooks met with the approval of parents and ministers because they promoted Christian principle. And undoubtedly beginning readers approached the reading lessons already conditioned to expect and accept spiritual admonition. The lessons provided young students an opportunity to learn to read while fortifying their minds with spiritual precepts.

But these lessons, for the most part, point to a more socialized religious attitude. Interestingly, the Great Awakening of religious fervor in eighteenth-century America brought around a more republican engagement with religion. Robinson says that "the great awakening under Whitfield and Edwards [brought] a more democratic spirit into church affairs" (13). The religiously didactic lessons in the early reading textbooks, thus, prepare the way for a more generalized social moralism that would eventually supplant the religious teachings in America's primers, spellers, and readers.



Notes

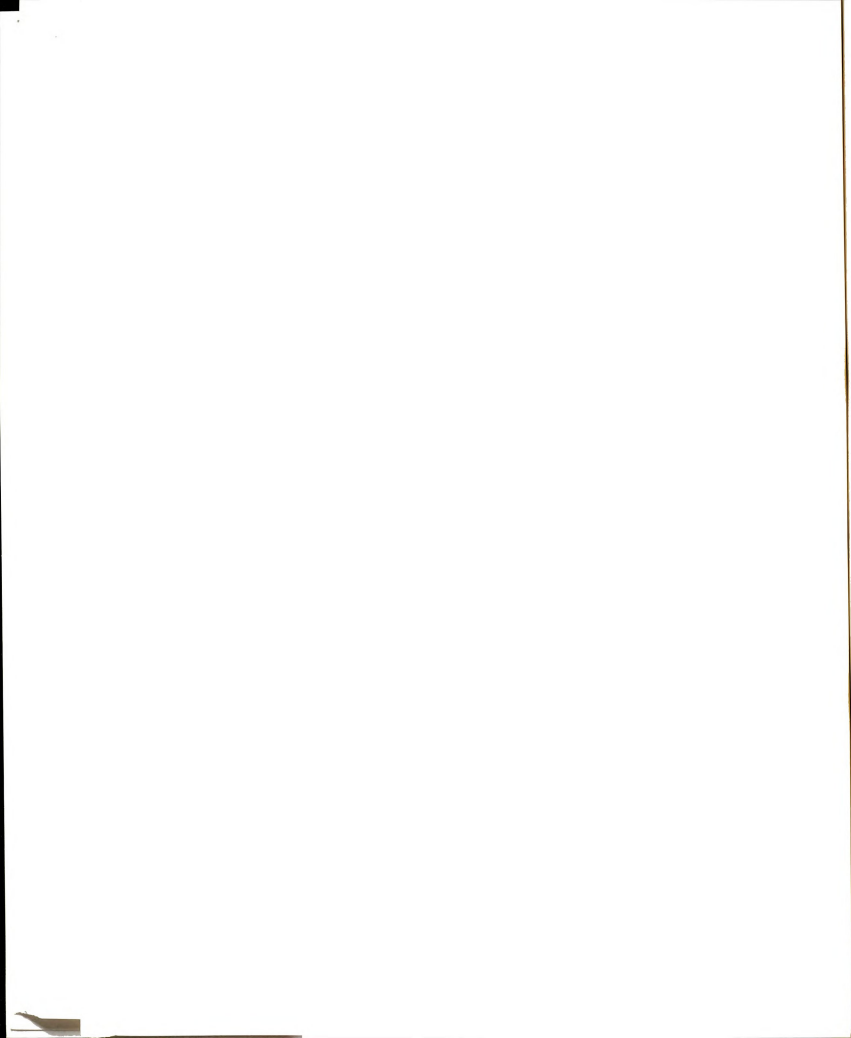
¹Robinson offers data to indicate that 85 per cent of the reading textbook content from the colonial period is religious material.

²This religious instructiveness pervading the textbooks' lessons can be classified under a variety of sub-headings. However, because many of the religious themes tend to overlap, it is often difficult to separate the sub-classes. Therefore, this chapter discusses four distinct types of religious didacticism as separate entities, but it is important to note that often these sub-classes of didacticism blend into one another, even within individual lessons and exercises.

³This text was apparently first published in 1815 as that date is found on the title page; however, publication data found within the actual text I examined indicates it to be an 1818 edition.

⁴Earle says Cotton Mather called the Shorter Catechism "a 'little watering pot' to shed good lessons" (131). She explains that Mather encouraged school teachers to use sentences from the catechism as examples in their handwriting drills and that he "advised mothers to 'continually drop something of the Catechism on their children, as Honey from the Rock'" (131-32).

⁵Gilmore explains that families in New England "shared a rich core of knowledge, based on the Bible. . . . At least three-quarters of all families with holdings of printed matter retained a Bible--often referred to as a sacred encyclopedia--as the centerpiece of their library" (258).



CHAPTER 4
SOCIAL DIDACTICISM

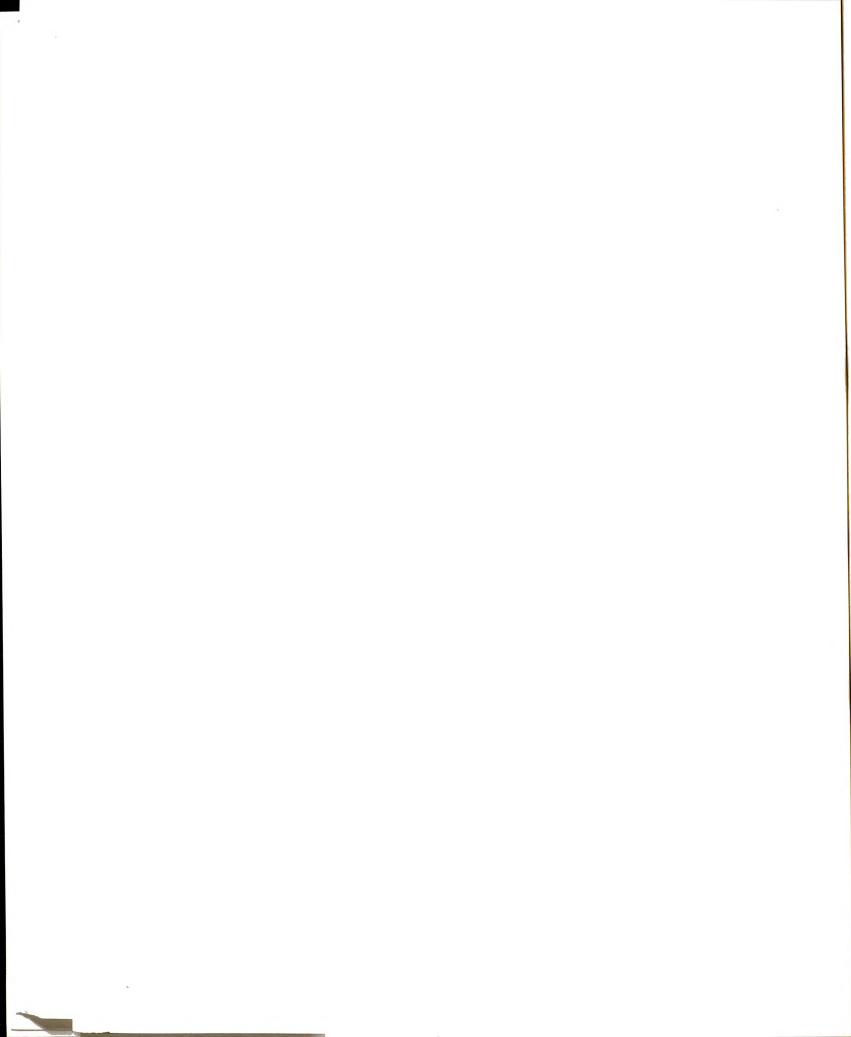
Good boys and good girls will do as they are bid.
They will love to read good books and to hear
good folks talk, but they must not talk too much
themselves.

--Johnson's Philadelphia
Primer (1821)

Spend your time well.
Live in peace.
Shun all strife.
Do good to all.

--A Spelling Book (1827)

Social didacticism is by far the most pervasive form to be found in the early reading texts of America. In a society that believed "childhood was wholly preparation, entirely a moral training ground for adult life" (MacLeod, "Children's Literature" 20), reading lessons devoted to social virtue found fertile ground in the early textbooks and undoubtedly spring from the pervasive religious didacticism explored in the previous chapter. In fact, social didacticism typically grew up alongside the textbooks' religious didacticism. Even before 1780, this element of tandem content in didacticism was expected in reading textbooks. A speller by Anthony Benezet, published



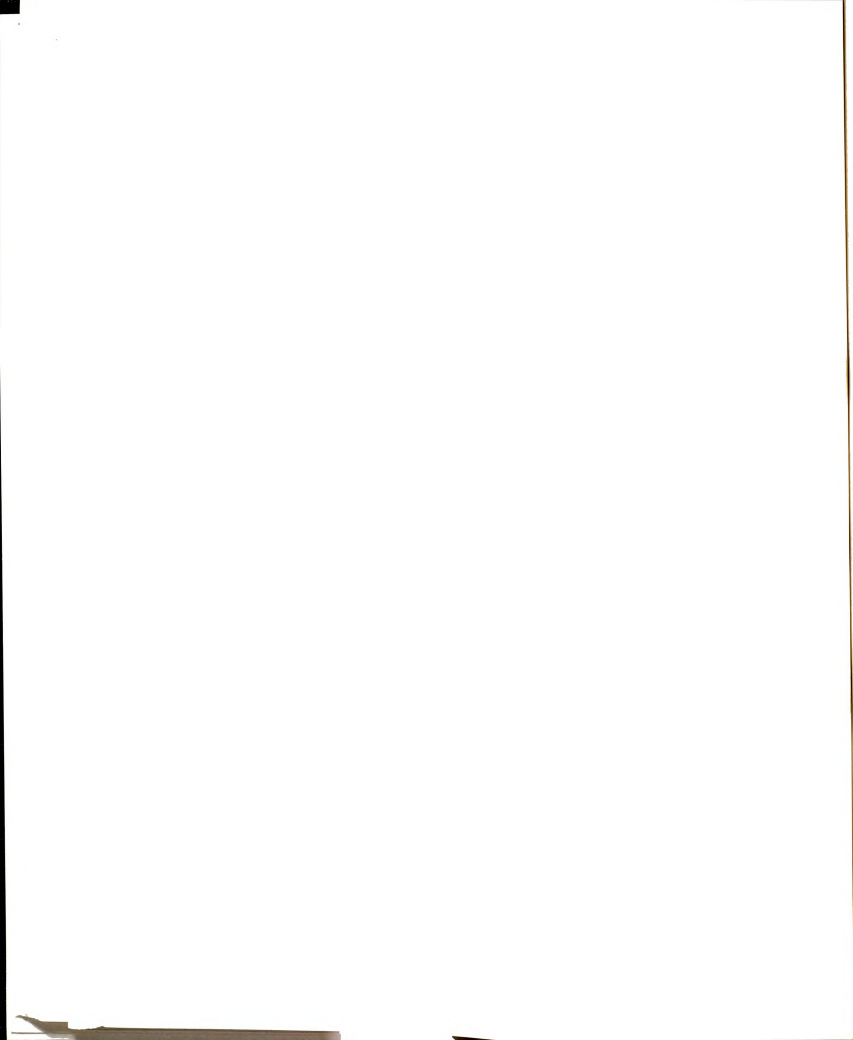
in 1779, indicates this to be so as it follows its "easy lessons" devoted to God's sovereignty ("The eye of God is on us, all the day . . .") with various directives to improve the child's social bearing:

Wash thy face; then mind thy book,
Play with good boys; talk not so loud,
Hold up thy head; go to thy seat,
Come in at two; go home at four. (16)

The social didacticism found in the early reading textbooks is dominated by one insistent preoccupation: moral virtue exhibited through behavior and manners. Society at large and reading textbook writers in particular "believed that one of the most important functions of education was to make children 'good'--in other words, to build character" (Smith 39). "The method which they considered the most effective in promoting this aim," according to Smith, "was that of impressing on young minds the ideals of virtue and moralism; hence, the readers were eagerly seized upon as carriers of moralistic content" (39).

Moral Virtue and Behavior

A preoccupation with social behavior is aptly illustrated in Tom Thumb's Folio, for Little Giants, an interesting departure from the numerous stuffy alphabet texts derived from the New England Primer. This popular book published in 1780 for beginning readers¹ concludes with a relatively up-beat, if not strained, verse:



On a pretty bay nag,
 Here comes *Tommy Tag*,
 Who ne'er knew deceit,
 Nor wou'd lie nor wou'd cheat,
 But was honest and good,
 As all of you shou'd:
 And listen'd and learn'd, when his friends did
 advise,
 And so became wealthy, and happy, and wise. (32)

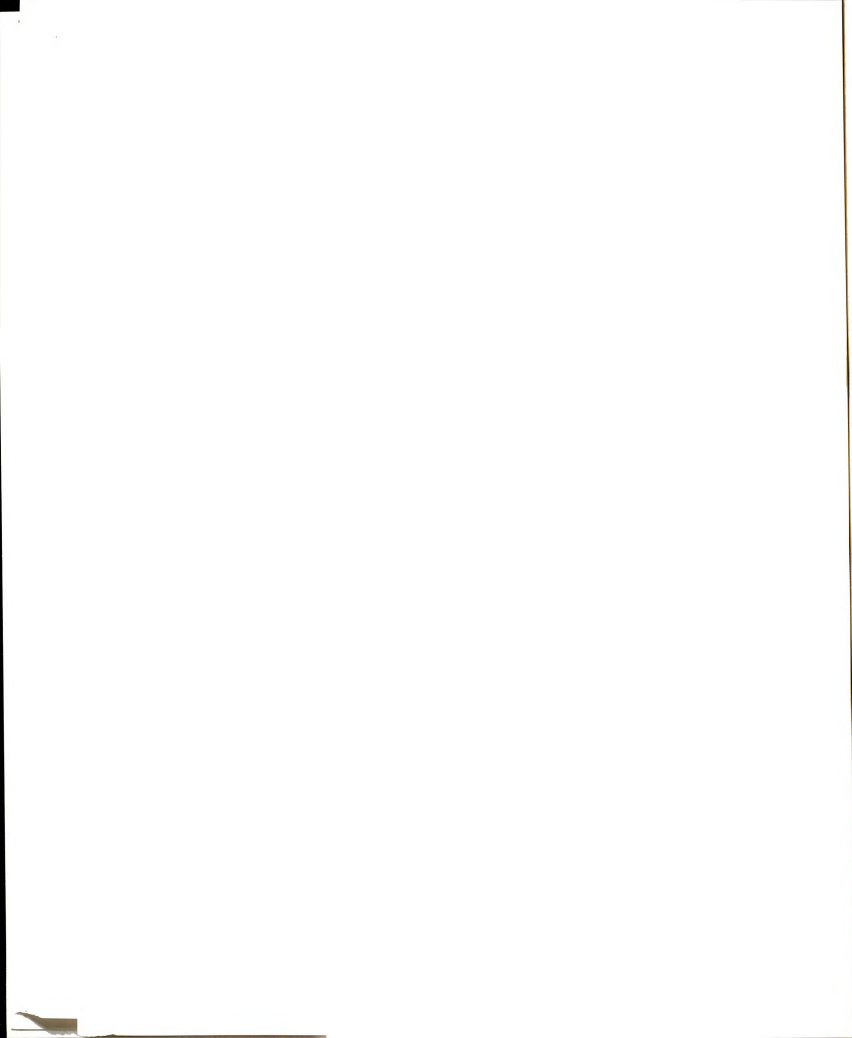
The lesson inculcates in its learners that acceptable, or proper, social behavior (in this case, honesty and a willingness to listen to advice) results in a desirable outcome.

Much of the commentary regarding moral virtue takes the form of *negative example* in the textbooks. By showing what it is to be *bad*, the authors intended for their young audience to strive for the opposite direction. The Child's Instructor, published in 1793, devotes many lines of small type to a "Description of a BAD BOY":

A Bad Boy is undutiful to his father and mother, disobedient and stubborn to his master, and ill-natured to all his play-fellows. He hates his book, and takes no pleasure in improving himself in any thing. He is sleepy and slothful in the morning, too idle to clean himself, and too wicked to say his prayers. (83)

The lesson continues to describe the boy's "mischief" and then explains that the boy does not even consider stealing to be a crime and ignores God's watching his actions (83). The last paragraph of the lesson summarizes the boy's folly and suggests the final outcome of his wrong-doing:

He will steal whatsoever comes in his way; and if he is not caught, thinks it no crime, not considering that God sees whatsoever he does. . . . In short, he neglects every thing that he should learn, and minds nothing but play or mischief; by which means he becomes as he grows up, a



confirmed block-head, incapable of any thing but wickedness or folly, despised by all men of sense and virtue, and generally dies a beggar. (Ely 84)

This same text, however, does alter its heavy-handed tactics and offers more positive didactic messages in the form of short proverbs. A sampling from one page of Chapter 30 follows:

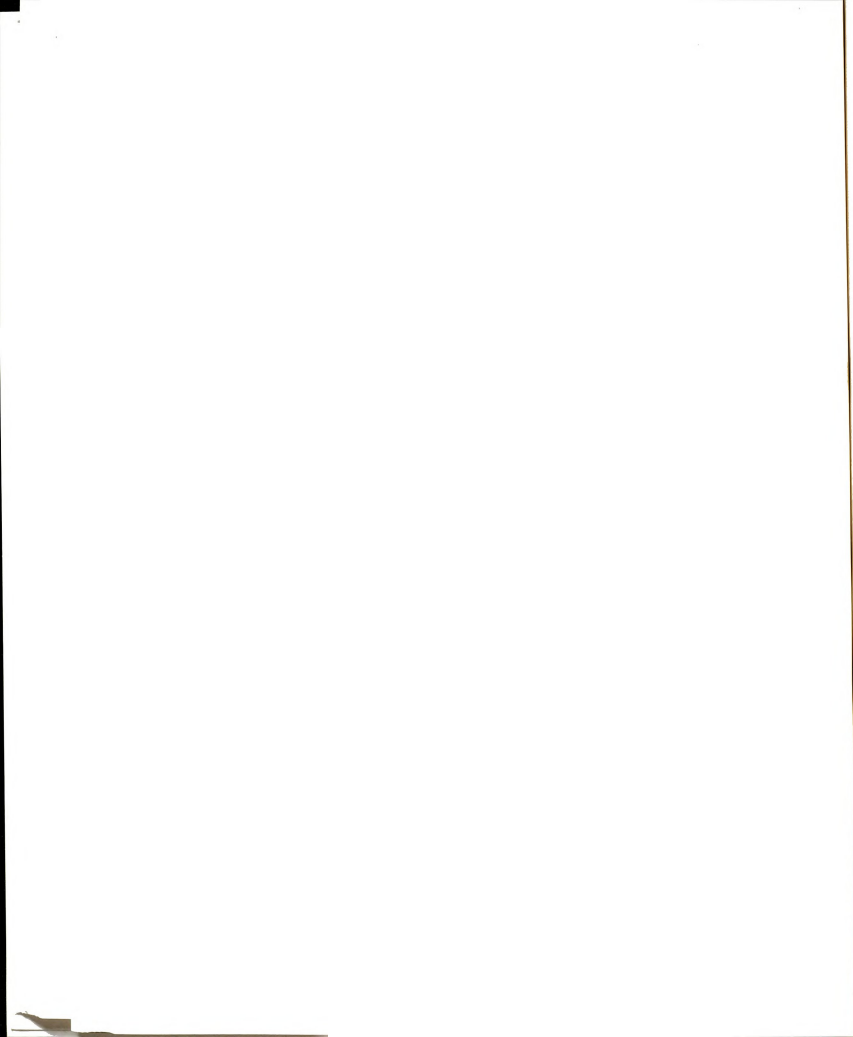
*Correction betimes prevents many crimes.
Diligence gains time.
Even a fool, if he hold his tongue, may be
thought wise.
Gentleness begets friends.
Knowledge is no burthen.
Keep sacred your promise.
Look before you leap.
Manners make the man. (68)*

Such straightforward, brief statements illustrate many of the textbooks' didactic directness. Following the alphabet and lessons in vowels, syllables, words and sentences, the 1794 version of Tom Thumb's Folio states: "The first lesson is to be Good" (23). Within two pages appears this poem:

*The boy who counsel does despise,
And will not listen to the wise,
But stubbornly pursues his will,
May run his nose against a mill. (25)*

On the remainder of the page follows a story about Wat Wilful, "a very naughty boy" who, after being warned, gets in the way of a mill and is thrown "with great violence into the muddy pond" (25).

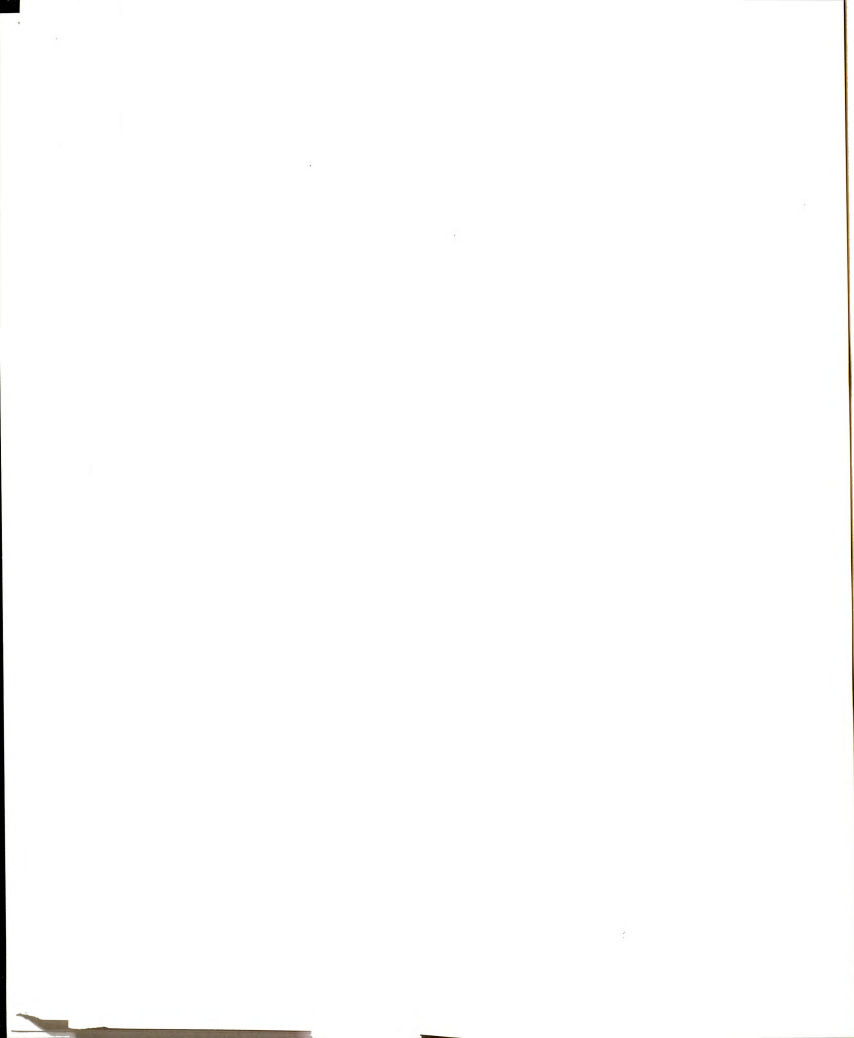
The antithesis to the wilful child featured above is Billy, a model for young readers already introduced in the previous chapter of this study. Along with exhibiting a remarkable capacity for Christian piety, this boy who



appears in a 1796 revision of The New-England Primer also functioned as an example of morally social virtue. Throughout the book's first eight lessons, readers discovered that Billy was good-natured, "obedient to his parents and loving to his brothers and sisters," "tender-hearted," and kind to animals. He "loved his book, and his school," could "spell all the hard words in his lesson," had pity for poor children, and washed his face. Just before the Primer's section of alphabet epigrams, young readers found a kind of conclusion to the Billy lessons: "Now, Billy, as you have said your lessons so well, you may go and play; but do not be rude to your playfellows; nor play with wicked boys" (n. pag.).

Early in America, children were "admonished to be good in order to escape by the narrowest margin the eternal pains of hell," according to Kiefer; however, during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries "such precepts . . . gave way to counsels cautioning the young to be virtuous because such conduct made for a successful life in this world" (14). The 1802 text The Child's Spelling Book emphasizes the social necessity of good works and good manners. In short verses the author's didactic intentions come close to--and, in fact, overlap--the religious didacticism so prevalent in the texts. In the first lesson of the speller, young readers were instructed at once in the bond between good behavior and religious affirmation:

The child who does what good he can,
Will gain the love of God and man.



Soon to bed, and soon to rise,
Will keep thee well, and make thee wise. (17)

And while the text includes many other lessons, they all do not necessarily go to great pains to connect the religious with the socially correct and, rather, concentrate on the more immediately practical and, presumably, acceptable: "Do not spit on the floor. / Spit in the corner" (56).

The story of Harriet Haughty, titled "The Cure of Pride," in The American Primer (1803) illustrates what certainly must have been overstated didacticism on the part of the unnamed author:

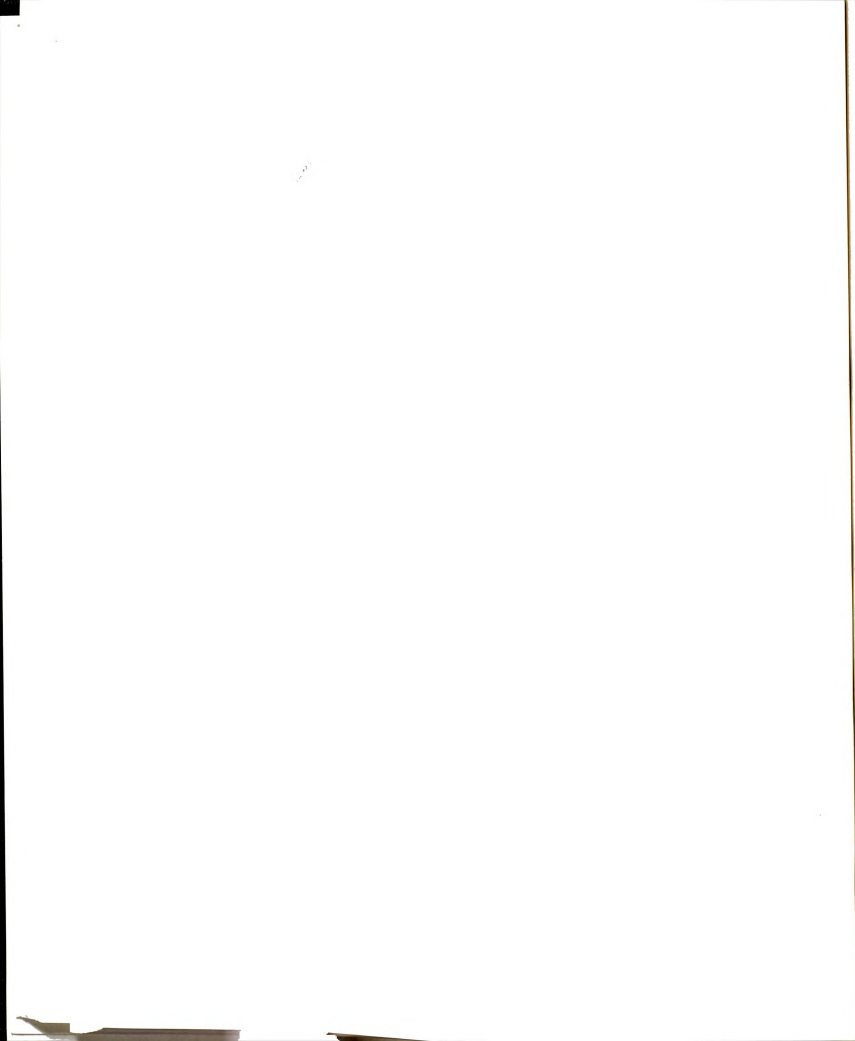
Harriet Haughty had been bred up in high notions by her parents, who fed her with the expectation of a great fortune, but some accidents happening to them, they found that the high notions they had instilled into her young mind, had made her much more lofty-minded than they themselves intended. (29)

To save money, her parents decide to bring Harriet home from boarding school. But "she fretted, grew sullen, and undutiful, and at last quitted them, intending in a silly romantic manner, to seek her fortune" (29).

But she had not long wandered from her father's house before she met with some strollers who striped [sic] her of her clothes, and gave her theirs in exchange. Distressed, lost and famished, not knowing where she was, she applied for assistance at the first farm house she came to, where she told her story, to which the people gave little credit, but allowed her victuals and drink, on condition of serving them, and feeding the hogs. (29)

Harriet, who now has repented of her ungrateful attitude, spends her days in tears as she tends the farm animals.

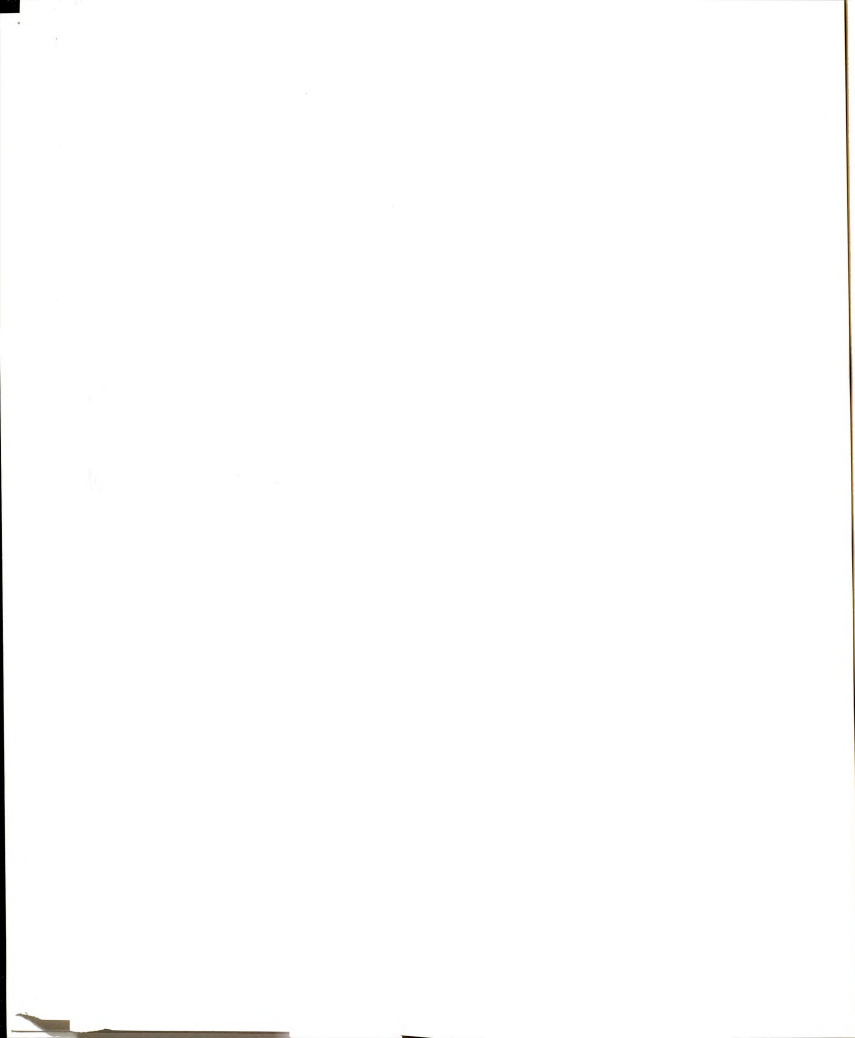
But by coincidence her luck changes:



Oh! with what joy, about a month after she had entered on her place, did she see a cousin come by the door, who knew her: She flew to him! he acknowledged her, took her from the farmer's, now she was sufficiently humbled, and conducted her to her parents' house, where she intreated [sic] forgiveness for her folly, and resolved to live contented in her station. (30)

The story of Harriet--as exaggerated as it is--typifies the tradition to include in the textbooks lengthy stories with a socially didactic purpose. . . .

Although not a textbook per se, An Elegy on the Death and Burial of Cock Robin (1805), was a popular book used by primary school children. It features a didactic selection titled "The Farmer's Daughters,"² which emphasizes, again, the moral virtue of behavior and manners. It is the story of two daughters: Fanny, the older, is pretty and vain; Sally, the younger, had been pretty before small pox spoiled her beauty. The book's descriptions of the two girls set up the necessary contrast between sisters: Fanny was "very affected, and proud of being . . . she loved none but herself, was hard hearted to the poor, and unmannerly to every one" (19) while Sally "was loved by all the neighbours; for she endeavoured to oblige every body, and frequently deprived herself of bread to give to the poor" (20). The story progresses as a rich, young gentleman is struck by Fanny's beauty. Fanny, of course, is pleased with the prospect of becoming the gentleman's wife and moving into London. Meanwhile, a poor woman needs money, but Fanny rebuffs her request: "Go your way woman, one can never be quiet for you beggars" (21). At that point,

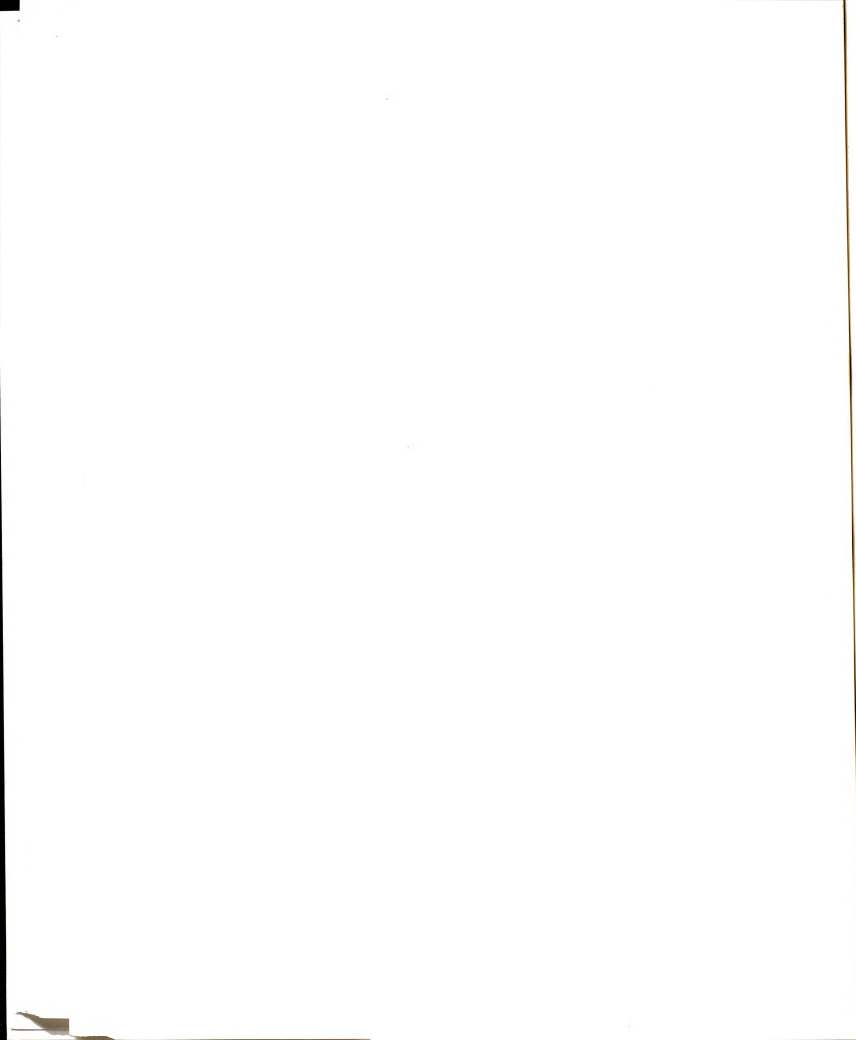


Fanny's sister Sally gives the poor woman a shilling (all she has). When the gentleman hears that Sally gave away all the money she had saved, he says that he will give both Fanny and Sally four guineas. Fanny eagerly accepts and buys ribbon and lace; Sally declines but asks him to give the money to the poor woman. It occurs to the gentleman that Fanny's "behaviour was very forward and he observed she was hard-hearted and selfish; but then she was so handsome he could not help excusing her" (23). His servant notices Fanny's selfishness as well and suggests that if he, the servant, were to dress as a duke, Fanny would undoubtedly be attracted to him. The gentleman agrees to the scheme; and when Fanny's behavior falls into line just as the servant had predicted, the gentleman finds he is more attracted to Sally.

Meanwhile Fanny, who was quite captivated with the thoughts of becoming a duchess, was prevailed upon, by the flattery of the newfangled duke, to desire him to ask her father's consent before the other gentleman came. She was much surprised on there [sic] return to find her lover at her father's; however, when he reproached her with inconstancy she had the boldness to tell him that she had never love[d] him, and, [in] a scornful insulting manner, bid him take her sister to comfort him. The gentleman thinking this good advice, immediately offered his hand to Sally, which she, in a very modest manner, accepted, assuring him she esteemed him more for his virtue than his riches. (25-26)

Then Fanny discovers the duke is a fake:

This disappointment threw Fanny into despair [sic] which lasted as long as she lived; and, as she grew old her disposition was so disagreeable that she was despised by every body; whereas Sally lived in the greatest happiness with her



husband; was admired by all her acquaintances for her good nature and affability. (26)

It is curious to note that the virtuous sister Sally is the one who is not beautiful, suggesting the evils of pride and a tension between moral rectitude and the inherent vanity of beauty. This tension between physical beauty and pride appears in another popular primer, The Silver Penny by J. Horner (1806), in which the letter P provides a didactic platform:

P PEACOCK p

How would the PEACOCK be admir'd
 (Like fops) in various colours drest,
 But that thro' every shade we find,
 That pride which men of sense detest. (19)

This textbook also offers other examples of didacticism devoted to social virtue, with an emphasis on correct behavior. Horner appears to appeal to a social conscience at the conclusion of a stanza representing the letter G:

G GOLD g

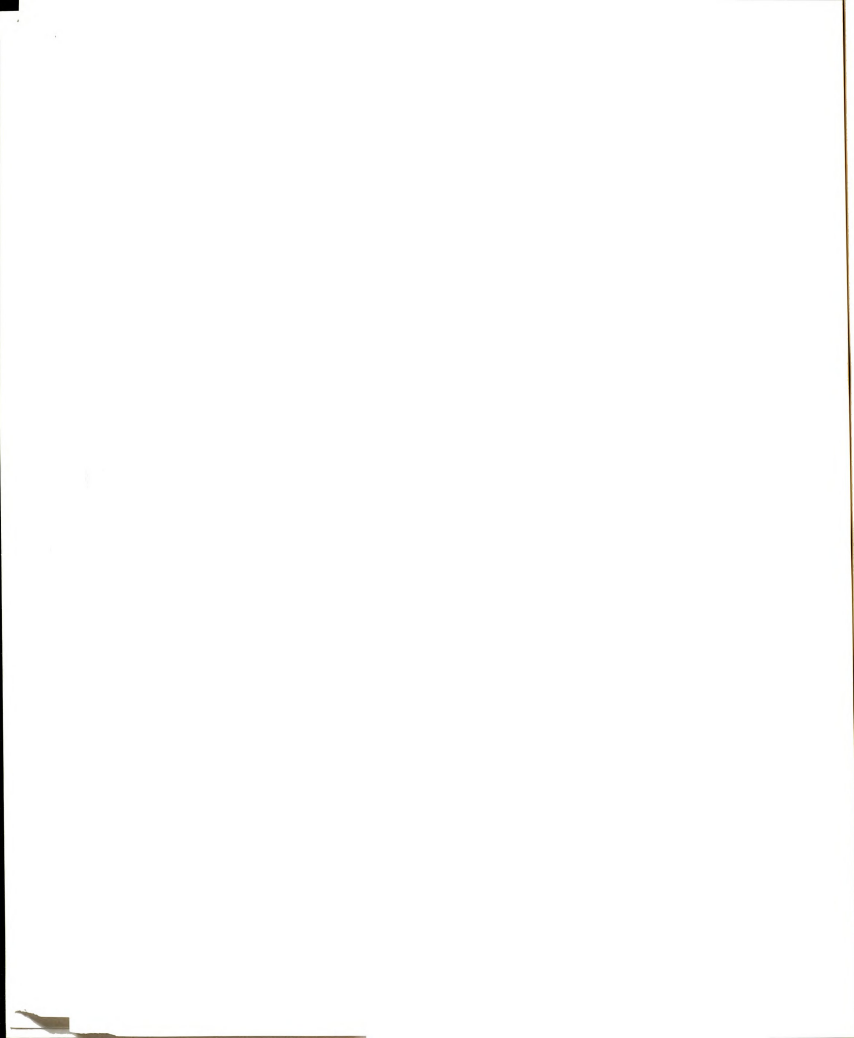
GOLD when to virtuous hands 'tis given,
 It blesses like the dew of heaven:
 Like heav'n then hear the orphan's cries,
 And wipe the tears from widow's eyes. (11)

And appropriate social behavior--to make good use of time--is also emphasized in the following stanza by Horner:

T TIME t

Make much of TIME if you are wise,
 As time it will for no man stay;
 For you may lose it in a trice,
 Then while the sun shines make you hay. (23)

A very subtle shade of instruction appears in The Post Boy (c. 1807) as the understated sentiment of generosity is



sandwiched between prosaic sentences made up of single-syllable words:

She went one day to see the camp.
He clad the poor and lame old man.
She put the fish in a red pan. (n. pag.)

This understated commentary is not consistent in The Post Boy, however. Later in the text young readers encountered a more direct tone in another single-syllable lesson: "If we be led by bad boys, we may do ill. . . . It is bad for a lad to say as bad boys say, or do as they do. . . . A rod is for a bad boy, but a new book for a good boy, who does as he is bid to do" (n. pag.).

The well worn theme of vanity in appearance surfaces again in Pretty Poems, Song, Etc. (1808):

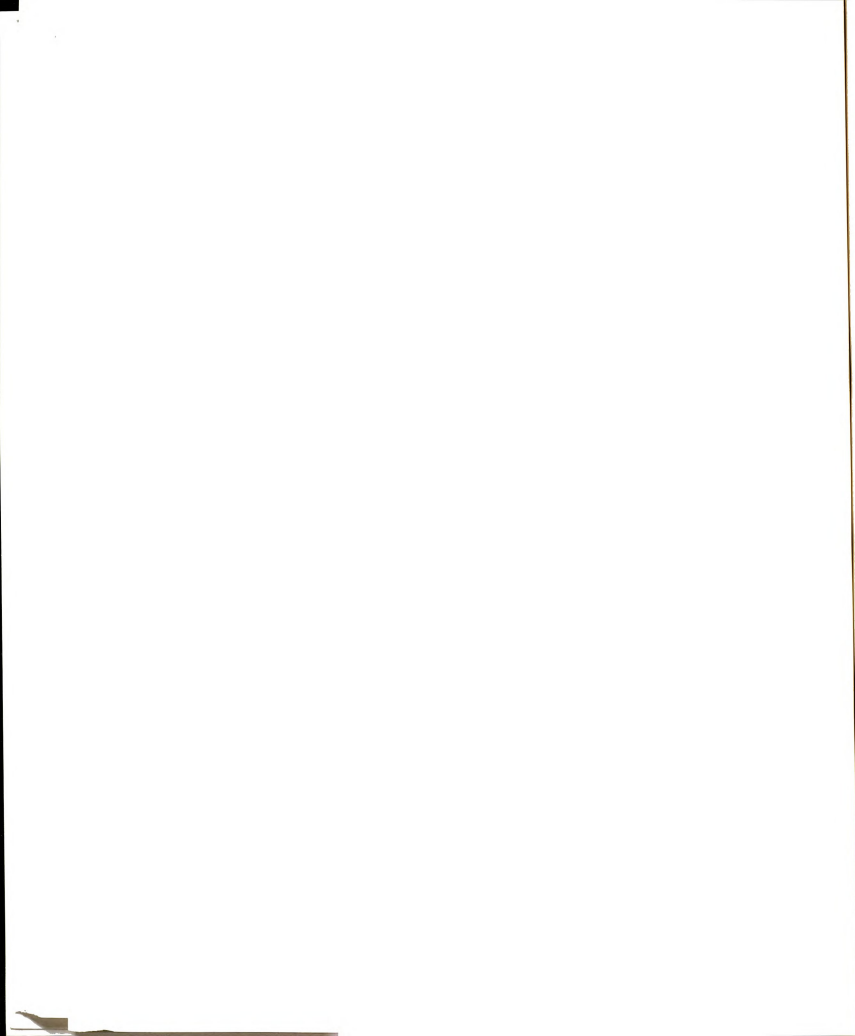
The butterfly, in gaudy dress,
The worthless coxcomb does express,
Who, not regarding, whence he rose,
Is proud of what?--of his fine cloaths" (23).

This text exhibits several examples of social didacticism appealing to moral/virtuous behavior. Just underneath an illustration of a grotesque woman's face and torso, is the title "The Scold" which is followed by a stanza admonishing young readers to speak kindly:

Scylla is toothless, yet when she was young,
She had both teeth enough, and too much tongue;
What shall we then of toothless Scylla say,
But that her tongue has worn her teeth away."
(17)

And later on in the text, the author makes a call for prudent youth:

See Master Heedless at his shadow run,
A strange career in life he has begun:



Be you more wise, and to advice attend,
For prudence is a never failing friend" (28).

Johnson's New Philadelphia Spelling-Book (1809)

provides a storehouse of maxims reminiscent of Benjamin Franklin's sayings: "He that does a kindness to a good man, does a greater to himself" and "In the morning, think what thou hast to do; and at night ask thyself what thou hast done" (45). The text, in fact, is connected with Franklin, according to Rosenbach, in that it incorporates a story authored originally by Franklin (152). The three-page story is titled simply "The Whistle," and it relates a lesson taken from Franklin's childhood:

When I was a child . . . my friends on a holiday filled my little pockets with coppers. I went directly to a shop where they sold toys for children; and being charmed with the sound of a Whistle, . . . I voluntarily offered, and gave all my money for one.

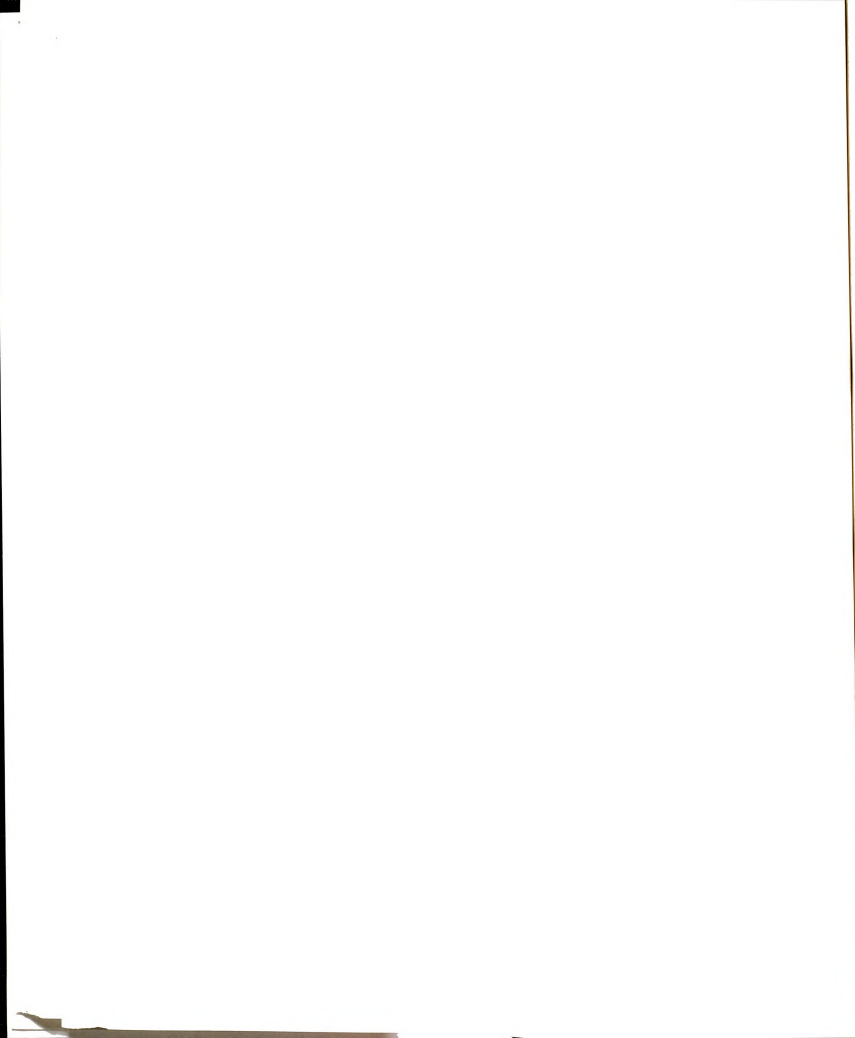
I then came home, and went whistling all over the house, much pleased with my whistle; but disturbing all the family. (77)

When they discover what kind of "bargain" young Benjamin has made, his brothers, sisters, and cousins explain to him that he has paid too much money:

This put me in mind what good things I might have bought with the rest of the money. And they laughed at me so much for my folly, that I cried with vexation; and the reflection gave me more chagrin than the whistle gave me pleasure.

This, however, was afterwards of use to me; the impression continuing on my mind, so that often when I was tempted to buy some unnecessary thing, I said to myself, *Don't give too much for the whistle*. And so I saved my money. (77-78)

This part of the narrative is followed with several examples taken from Franklin's later life. Franklin's



story then draws a parallel between these later experiences and his youthful lesson in frugality: "When I grew up and came into the world, and observed the actions of men, I thought I met with many, very many *who gave too much for the whistle*" (78). Thus, the textbook promotes morally acceptable attitudes and behavior by supplying these didactic examples of moral virtue based on Franklin's observations. The text quotes Franklin:

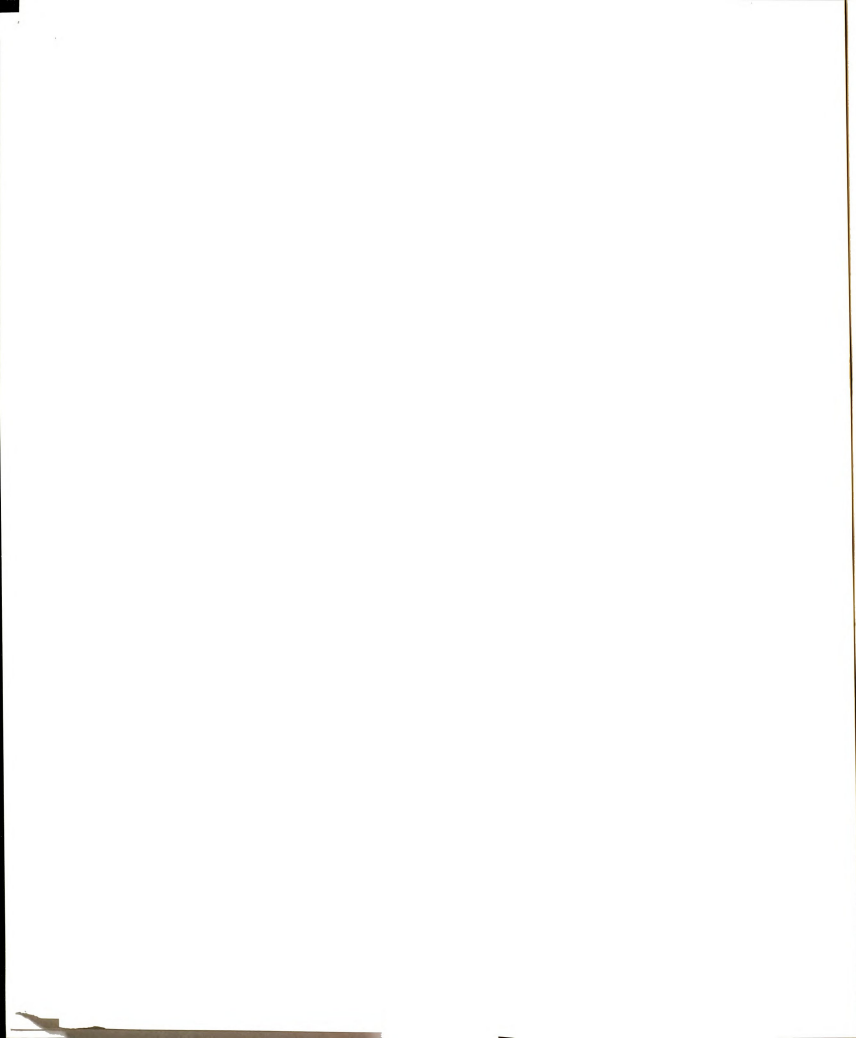
When I saw one too ambitious of court favours, sacrificing his time, in attendance at levees, his repose, his liberty, his virtue, and perhaps his friends to obtain it, I have said to myself, *This man gives too much for his Whistle. . . .*

If I see one fond of fine clothes, fine furniture, fine houses, fine equipage, all above his fortune, for which he contracts debts, and ends his career in prison; alas! say I, *he has paid dear, very dear for his whistle.*

In short, I conceived that great part of the miseries of mankind were brought upon them by the false estimates they had made of the value of things, and by their giving too much for their *Whistles.* (78-79)

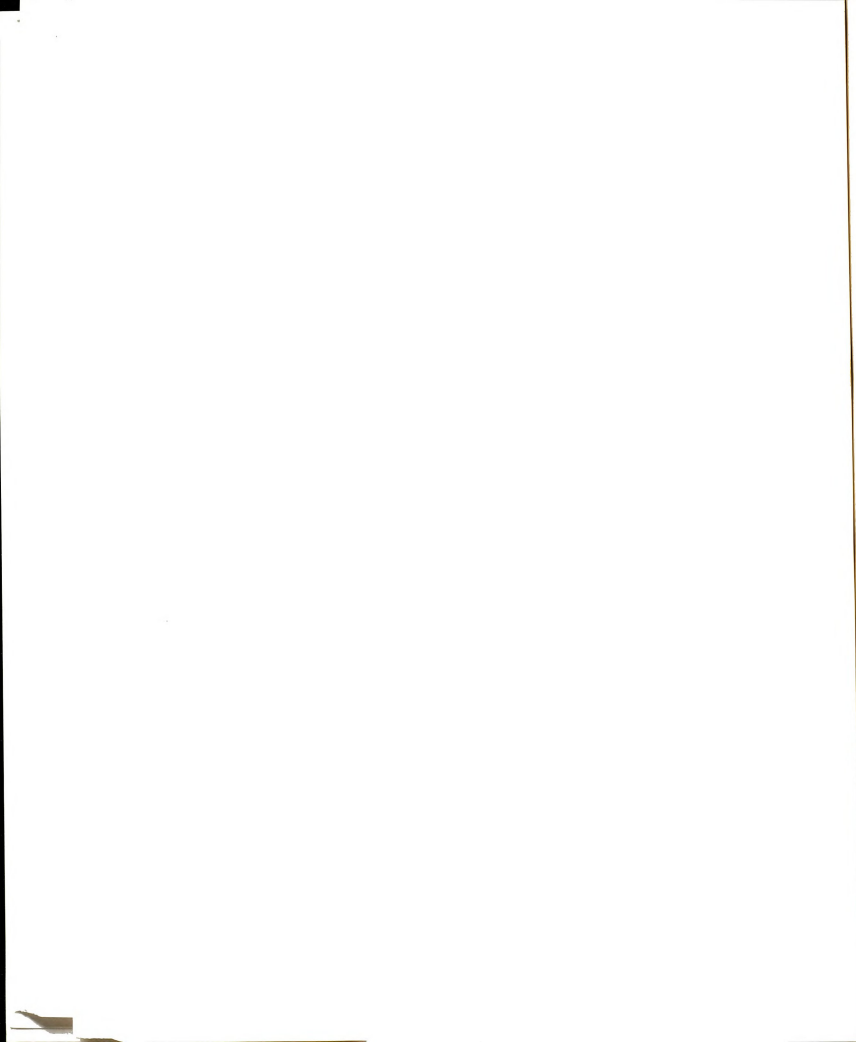
Caleb Bingham's The American Preceptor of 1811, a significant early-nineteenth-century reading text³ for younger students emphasizes socially correct behavior. This early reader begins with six pages of "Select Sentences," a list of 43 extended maxims of virtue. The twenty-third typifies this textbook's ideal of moral virtue through behavior:

When thou dost good, do it because it is good; not because men esteem it so. When thou avoidest evil, flee from it because it is evil; not because men speak against it. Be honest for the love of honesty, and thou shalt be uniformly so. He, who doth it without principle, is wavering.
(10)



Bingham follows these "Select Sentences" with a variety of more developed stories that serve as models of socially moral behavior for young readers. In "The Test of Goodness" he tells the story of three sons with an elderly father who has a diamond to give to the son who performs the best actions. One of the sons does not cheat a man in a business transaction; another son saves a child's life; another son pulls his enemy from a precipice. It is the third son who wins his father's approval for his actions and receives the diamond--because his behavior goes *beyond* the expected actions arising out of justice and mercy (137). In addition, many of Bingham's chapter titles, in themselves, illustrate a variety of aspects of moral behavior and attitude: "The Child Trained Up for the Gallows," "On the Duty of School Boys," "The Art of Pleasing," "On Profane Swearing," "The Triumph of Virtue."

In the few, unnumbered pages of the little primer A Picture Book, for Little Children (c. 1812) various directives for moral behavior are evident: "Children obey your mother" and "Do not rob the poor farmer of his fruit" (n. pag.), for example. This small text is notable in that it is one of very few of the period to indicate an awareness of minorities: "Do be kind to the poor black boy" (n. pag.). A Picture Book, for Little Children is also notably interesting because of the following, unexpected and, again, didactic reversal. Where most of the didacticism in the textbooks is directed at children's



behavior and manners, this one targets older people's attitudes: "Old folks should never forget they were once young" (n. pag.).

The tradition continues in the 1813 textbook The American Primer. Direct imperatives make up the section "Moral precepts proper for Children": "Speak the truth and lie not" and "Live well, that you may die well" (17). This imperative tone continues in a longer sequence on the next page: "Love good boys, and play with none that swear, or lie, or steal, or use ill words, or do ill things, for fear you learn their ways, and be as bad as they" (18). The forceful tone seems excessive, and one wonders how effective these lessons could have been, directed at young readers who must have chafed under such a demanding attitude:

The sun is up, rise out of bed, pray to God, wash your face, comb your hair, get your book, go to school, take your seat, strive to learn, mind your book, keep your seat, get your task, then go home. The sun is set; wash your feet, go to bed, pray to God. You nod as you sit; you sit too low; you run all the day; you are a bad boy. (30)

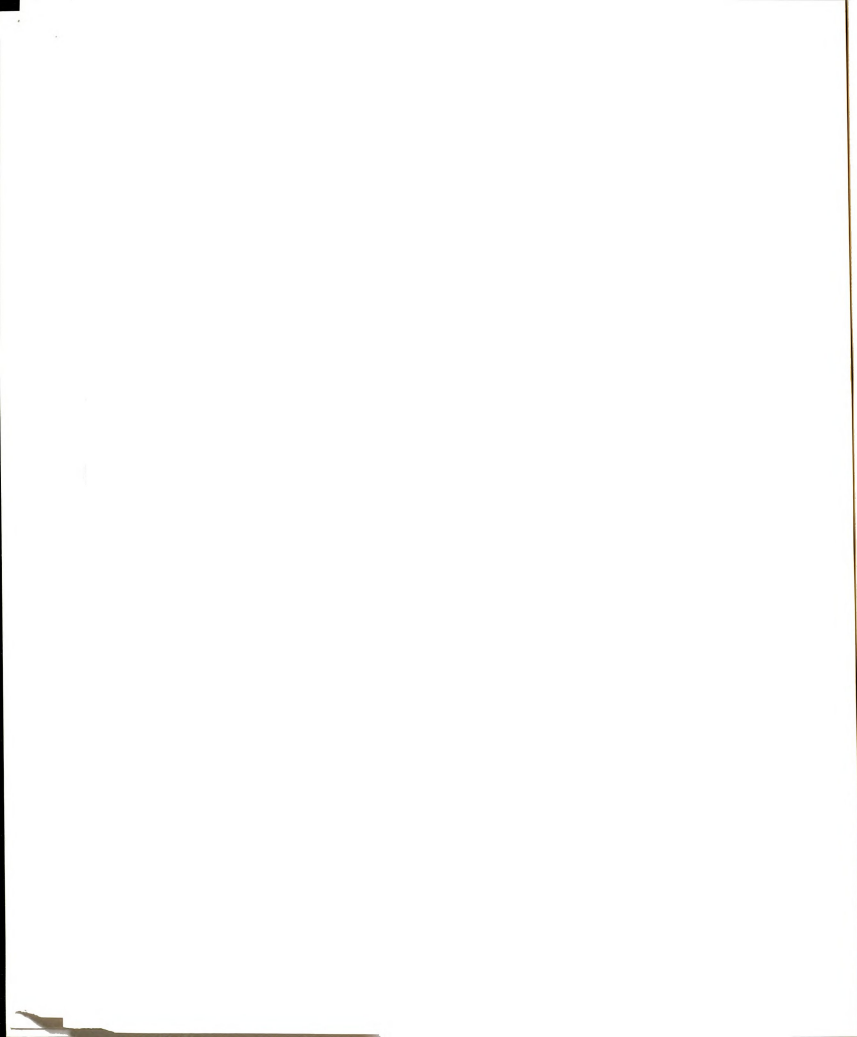
In a reader intended for late primary pupils, The Columbian Reader, published in 1815 and modeled after the popular texts by Bingham, the lesson titles alone indicate the intense preoccupation with moral behavior:

"Disrespect to Parents in No Case Allowable"

"On Good Breeding"

"Honesty the Best Policy"

"The Excellency of Charity"



"Hospitality and Gratitude"

"Ill Effects of Bad Habits"

"In Praise of Virtue"

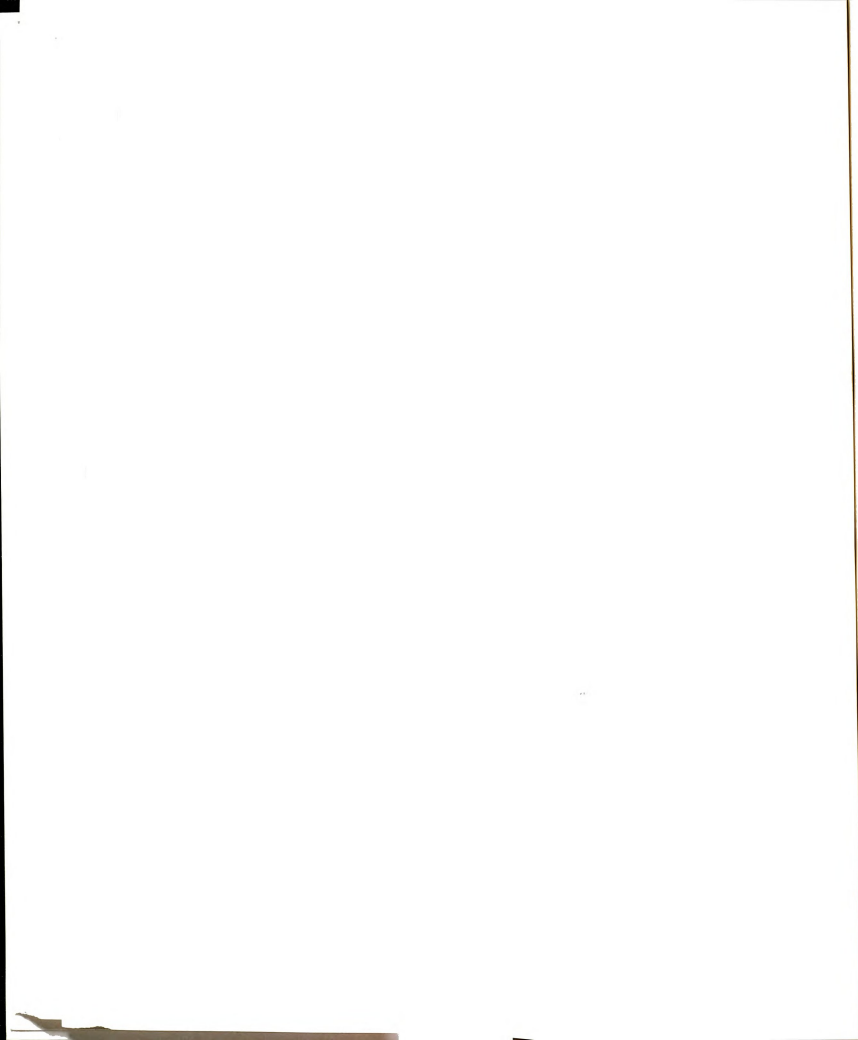
"On Modesty"

Deep within its contents is also found "An Address to Young Persons," in which the unnamed author defends the serious business of moral instruction:

I intend, in this address, to show you the importance of beginning early to give serious attention to your conduct. As soon as you are capable of reflection, you must perceive that there is a right and a wrong in human actions.
(63)

The author goes on to explain that, although a person may be born with natural advantages of moral inclination, it is through a person's conduct whereby virtuous success is achieved or forfeited (63-64).

An 1815 edition of The American Spelling Book by Noah Webster plainly lays out for young readers what is expected by way of moral behavior through negative example: "He is a fool that does not choose the best boys when he goes to play; for bad boys will cheat, and lie, and swear, and strive to make him as bad as themselves" (50). Then immediately after the negative example, Webster uses the imperative approach to achieving moral behavior: "Slight no man, for you know not how soon you may stand in need of his help" (50). Webster incorporates moral instruction into virtually all the lessons in The American Spelling Book. In a lesson whose subject is fruit, Webster cannot resist an opportunity to moralize:



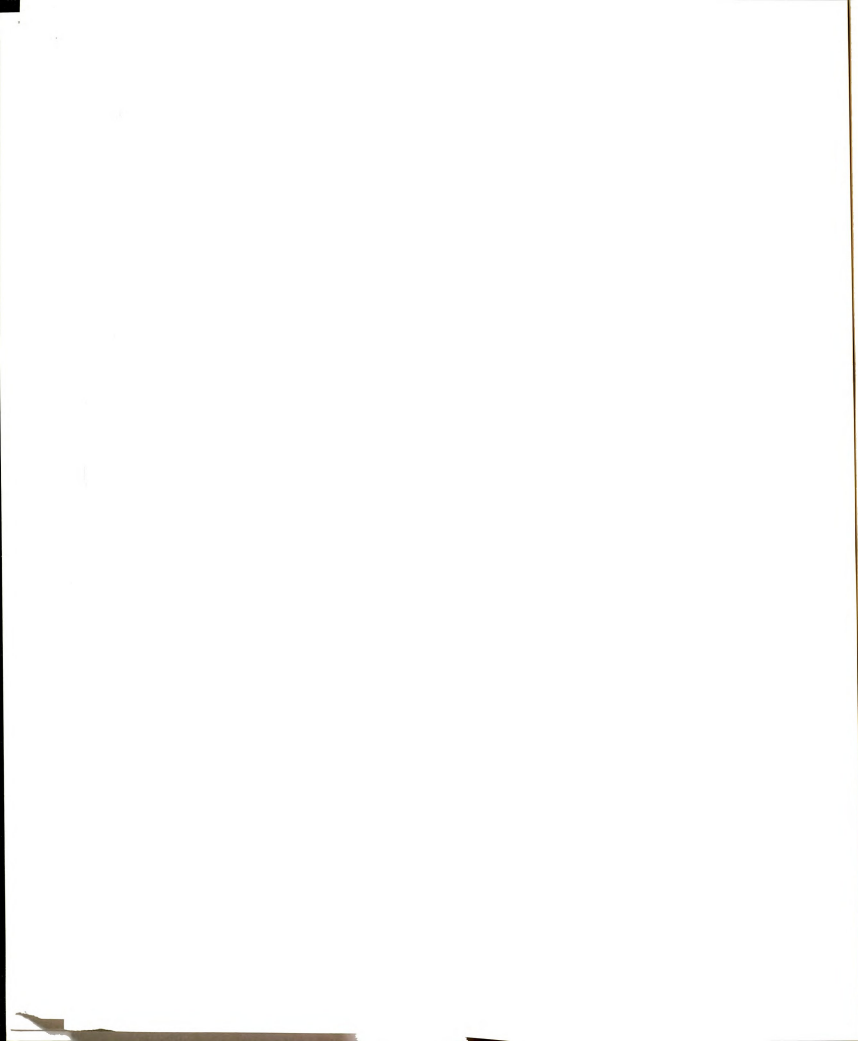
William loves fruit. See him picking strawberries--bring him a basket--let him put the berries in a basket--and carry them to his mamma and sisters. Little boys should be kind and generous--they should always carry some fruit home for their friends. (70)

The reading lesson then discusses cherries, pears, and peaches, eventually picking up its pace of didacticism, advocating socially virtuous attitudes of gratitude: "Such are the bounties of nature, bestowed on man to please his taste, preserve his health, and draw his grateful heart towards the Author of his happiness" (70). Later in the book, Webster offers an amusing and pleasantly worded narrative of "The Country Maid and her Milk Pail":

When men suffer their imagination to amuse them, with the prospect of distant and uncertain improvements of their condition, they frequently sustain real losses, by their inattention to those affairs in which they are immediately concerned. (85)

After Webster has introduced his theme, he launches into his story, providing his young audience with a memorable and enjoyable lesson:

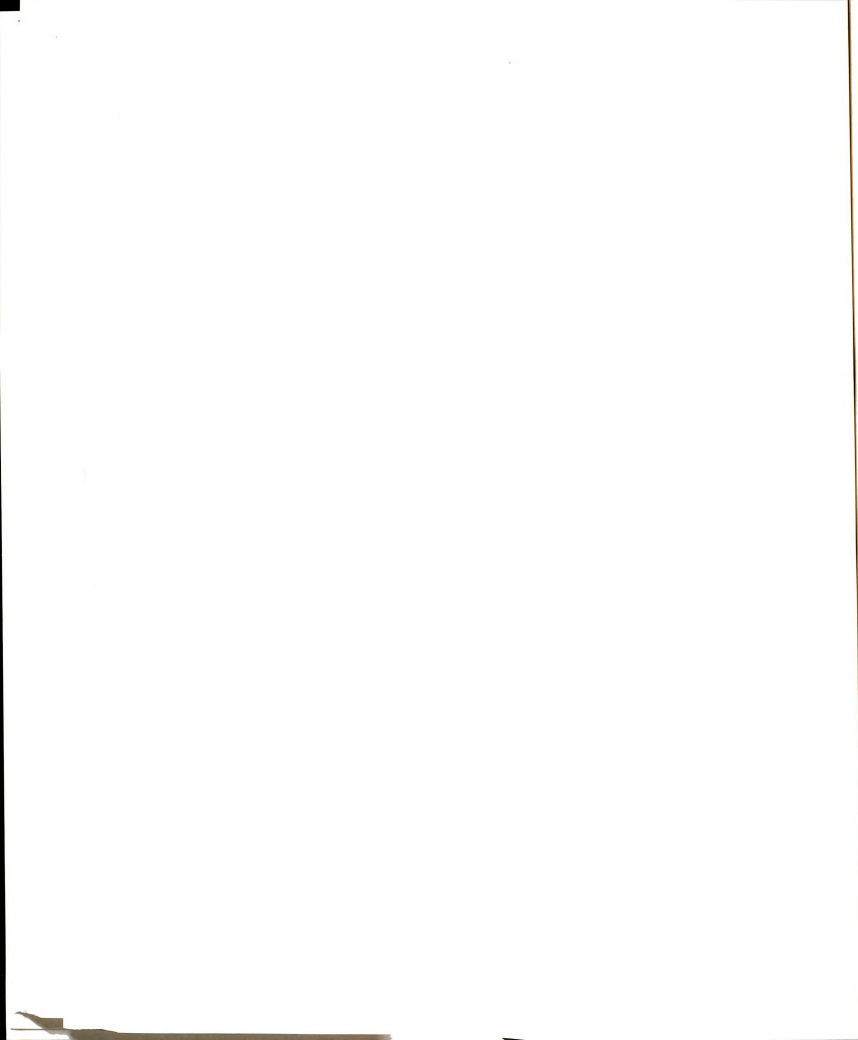
A country Maid was walking very deliberately with a pail of milk upon her head, when she fell into the following train of reflections: The money for which I shall sell this milk, will enable me to increase my stock of eggs to three hundred. These eggs, allowing for what may prove addle, and what may be destroyed by vermin, will produce at least two hundred and fifty chickens. The chickens will be fit to carry to market about Christmas, when poultry always bears a good price; so that by May day I cannot fail of having money enough to purchase a new gown. Green--let me consider--yes, green becomes my complexion best, and green it shall be. In this dress I will go to the fair, where all the young fellows will strive to have me for a partner; but I shall perhaps refuse every one of them, and with an air



of disdain toss from them. Transported with this triumphant thought, she could not forbear acting with her head what thus passed in her imagination, when down came the pail of milk, and with it all her imaginary happiness. (85-86)

Webster concludes The American Spelling Book with "A Moral Catechism," in which he asks "WHAT is moral virtue?" His supplied answer underscores the period's overriding concern with moral behavior: "It is an honest upright conduct in all our dealings with men" (156).

In contrast to the unflagging didacticism of Webster, Anna Letitia Barbauld⁴ does not exhibit an overt moral instructiveness. Lessons for Children, written by Barbauld, relies mostly on short, easy-reading lessons: "The sun shines. Open your eyes, little boy. Get up. / Maid, come and dress Charles. / Go down stairs. Get your breakfast. / Boil some milk for a poor little hungry boy" (7). Typically, Barbauld's commentary is mild in comparison with that of Bingham, Webster, and the other writers. Her tone is slight: "Little boys must always come when mamma calls them" (8) or "Good boys do not cry" (18). But Lessons for Children (1818)⁵ tells the following uncharacteristically didactic story about a naughty little boy who wouldn't give a cold robin a crumb of bread. Instead, the boy pulled the robin's tail and hurt it which made it die. This same boy's parents soon went away and he found that he could not take care of himself. So he asked the neighbors for food, but nobody wanted to help him: "No, we shall give you none, for we do not love cruel, naughty



boys" (46). The boy then gets lost in the woods, sits down, and cries. Barbault curtly sums up the story: "and I believe the bears came and eat him up in the wood, for I never heard any thing about him afterwards" (46).

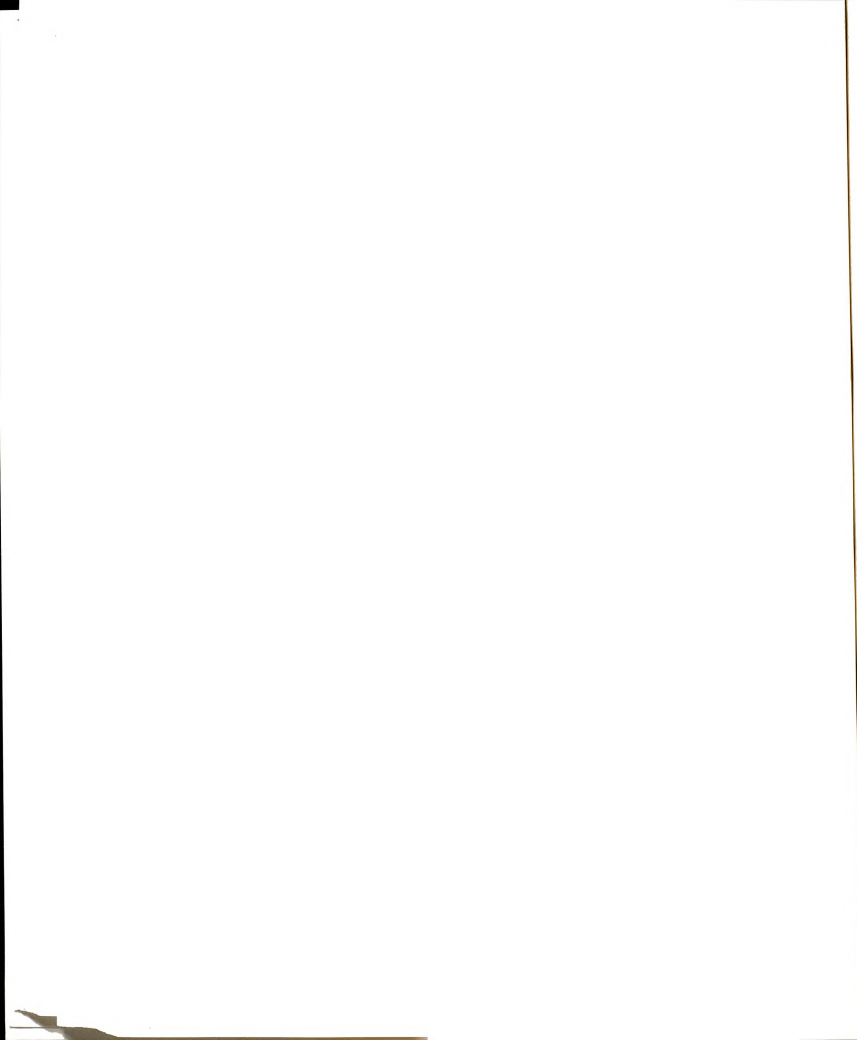
Barbault also includes the lesson of the school boys who receive cakes from their mothers: One boy--Harry--devours his cake quickly before anyone can see that he has received a treat and then turns sick. Peter, another student who receives a cake, decides not to eat up his cake at once and thus hoards it. The cake turns mouldy, dry, and mice nibble at it. Billy, the third boy, shares his cake with friends as well as with an old, poor, blind man. "Billy was more glad than if he had eaten ten cakes. Pray which do you love best? Do you love Harry, Peter, or Billy best?" (82).

In contrast to the questioning tone of Barbault, the imperative is the mode for the social didacticism in William Little's Reading Made Easy (1818). Again, the tone is direct and unswerving as it serves to indoctrinate young readers in acceptable social behavior and attitudes. Yet these moral directives are found alongside other sentences obviously written to appeal to children. Compare the imperative sentences of Lesson 29 with those of Lesson 30:

Lesson 29

Be a good child.
Speak the truth.
Strive to learn.

Love your book.
Fear a lie.
Read your task.



Pray to God.
Mind your book.

Do no harm.
Love your school.

Lesson 30

Sing a song.
Spin the top.
Trot the horse.
Play a tune.
Wipe your face.

Run a race.
Beat the hoop.
Fly the kite.
Toss the ball.
Warm your hands. (23)

This text is particularly interesting in that its placement of the sentences tends to compartmentalize moral virtue, keeping it apart from other activities--flying kites, tossing balls--that would undoubtedly have been more appealing to young readers.

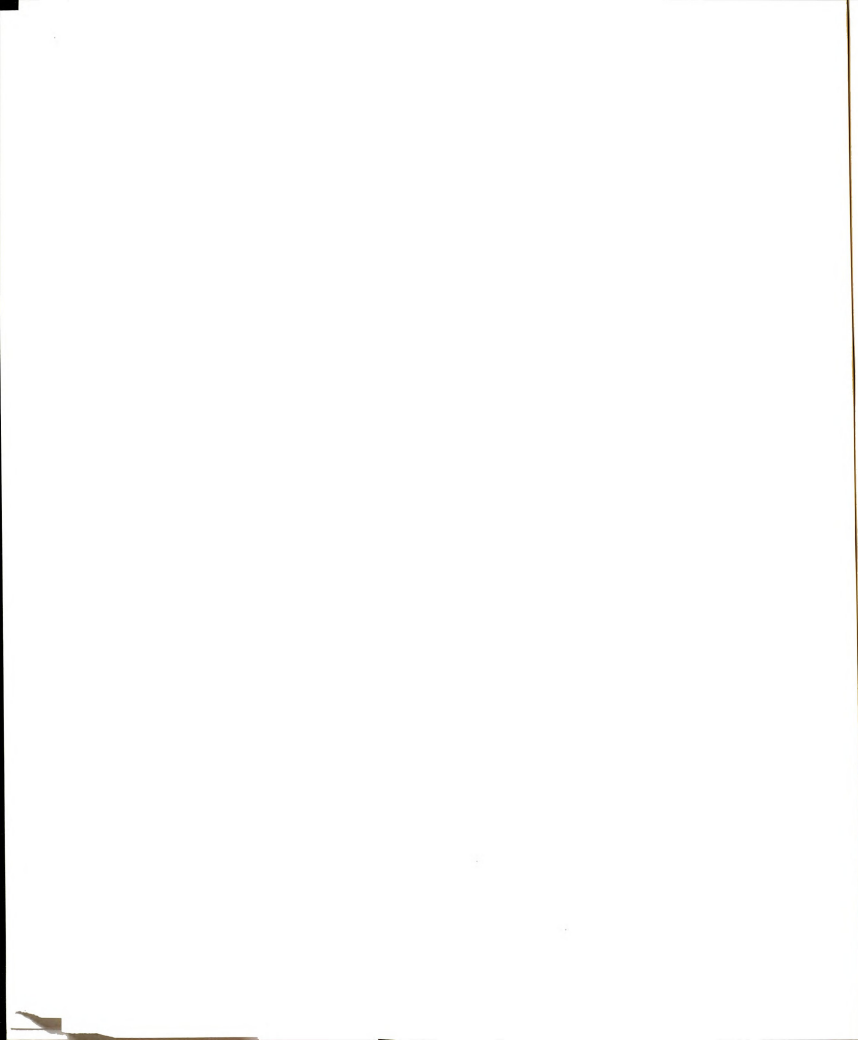
The 1818 edition of Lindley Murray's A First Book for Children (first published in 1815) exemplifies selflessness and charity for the unfortunate in a short narrative titled "The Charitable Little Girl":

A little girl, about four years old, had a great desire to taste a hot muffin. When she heard the muffin man go by her mother's door, crying "Muffins! Muffins! hot muffins! Ho!" she asked her mother to give her a penny to buy one. (64)

After her mother gives her the money, she runs to the door and buys a muffin. However, at the door the girl meets an old woman who asks for a penny so she can get something to eat. The little girl explains that she does not have any money of her own, but that she will ask if her mother has a penny to spare:

She ran up stairs, and soon came back, and said to the poor woman, "My mother has no more pennies to give me, But here is a muffin for you; and it is hot too!"

The little girl never told anybody that she had given away her muffin. And though she heard the man call, muffins! two or three times that



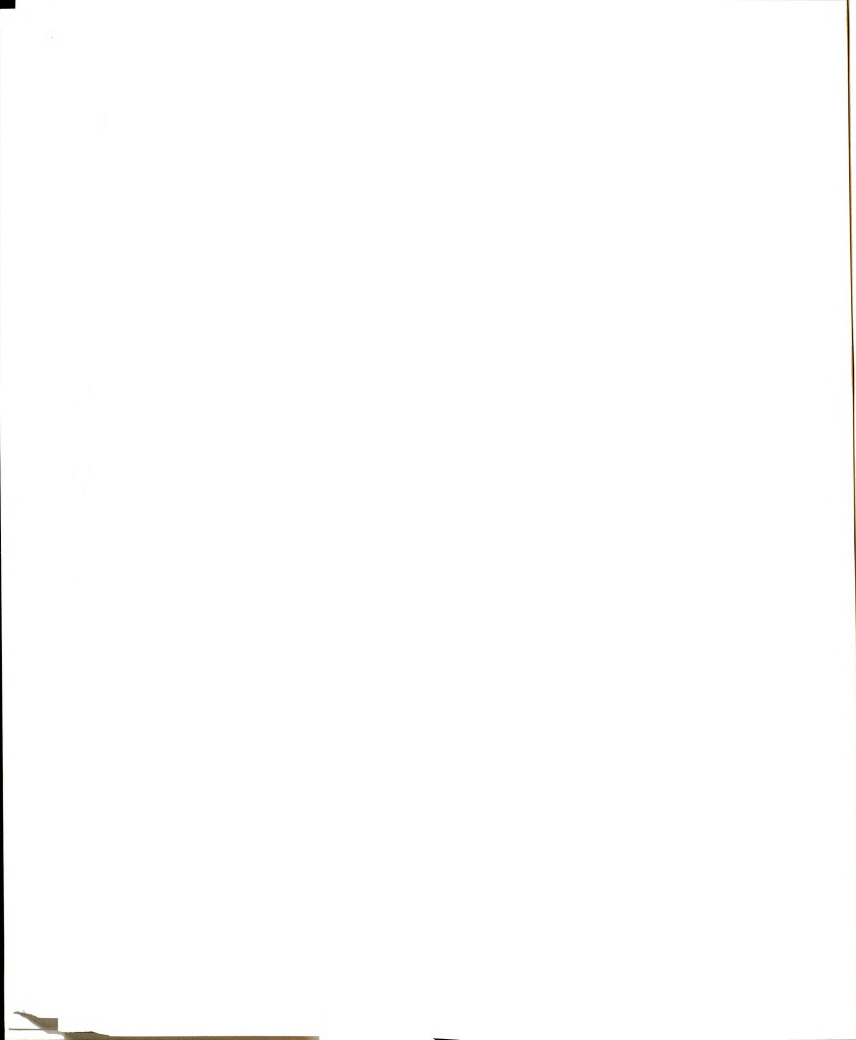
night, she did not ask her mother again to buy one for her. (64-65)

This pleasant story would undoubtedly have appealed to children learning to read, as it provides an example of social charity--interestingly, without the period's typical heavy-handed morality driven home through examples of children's suffering for their misdeeds.

Introduction to the English Reader (1823), a textbook designated for beginning readers, is one title in Lindley Murray's textbook sequence, and in it he strikes a familiar didactic stance in his directives for social virtue: "Avoid all harshness in behaviour: treat every one with that courtesy which springs from a mild and gentle heart. Be slow in forming intimate connexions: they may bring dishonor and misery" (19). Murray later presents a poem titled "To a Child Five Years Old" in which childhood and moral behavior are floridly portrayed and sentimentalized:

1. Fairest flower, all flowers excelling,
Which in Milton's page we see:
Flowers of Eve's embower'd dwelling,
Are, my fair one, types of thee.
2. Mark, my Polly, how the roses
Emulate thy damask cheek;
How the bud its sweets discloses--
Buds thy op'ning bloom bespeak.
3. Lilies are by plain direction
Emblems of a double kind;
Emblems of thy fair complexion,
Emblems of thy fairer mind.
4. But, dear girl, both flowers and beauty
Blossom, fade, and die away:
Then pursue good sense and duty,
Evergreens, which ne'er decay. (140)

By including the poem (and others with similar sentiment), Murray continues to reinforce the theme of moral obligation



and social behavior. Throughout many of his reading selections and lessons, he keeps before his readers a sense of virtuous attitude and, thus, vaguely suggests a socially acceptable behavior:

The human heart ne'er knows a state of rest;
Bad leads to worse, and better tends to best.
Be humble; learn thyself to scan:
Know, pride was never made for man. (107)

A socially acceptable behavior is more than suggested in Joshua Leavitt's Easy Lessons in Reading; this text from 1825 is overt in its teaching young readers what kind of behavior and manners are expected from them. A poem "The Good Child" appears early in this reader intended for early primary school students as an ideal that stresses acceptable conduct:

O, that it were my *chief* delight,
To do the things I *ought*!
Then let me try with all my might
To mind what I am taught.
Whenever I am told to go,
I'll cheerfully *obey*;
Nor will I mind it *much*, although
I leave a pretty *play*.
When I am bid, I'll freely *bring*
Whatever I have got;
Nor will I touch a pretty thing,
If mother tells me *not*.
When she *permits* me, I may tell,
About my pretty toys;
But if she's *busy*, or *unwell*,
I must not make a *noise*.
And when I learn my *hymns* to say,
And *work*, and *read*, and *spell*,
I will not *think* about my *play*,
But try and do it *well*.
For GOD looks down from heaven on high,
Our actions to behold,
And he is *pleas'd*, when children try
To do as they are told. (16-17)

Lea

"sc

tex

Bar

and

boa

"I+

sw

wi

ab

bu

hi

fe

up

g

C

s

f

T

C

n

v

Leavitt also includes a variation on the well-worn "schoolboys and their cakes" lesson that appears in various texts of the period, notably those by Anna Letitia Barbauld. His story is titled "Greedy Harry and His Cake," and it centers around young Harry who had done well at boarding school and was rewarded by his mother with a cake: "It was very *large*, and stuffed full of plumbs and sweetmeats, orange and citron; and it was iced all over with sugar" (21). When the boy saw the cake, he "jumped about for joy; and he could not stay for a *knife* to cut it, but *gnawed* it, like a little *dog*" (21). He hid the cake in his room, eating at it whenever he had a chance. "His bed fellow said that he laid his cake under his *pillow*, and sat up in the *night* to eat some" (21). Within a short time, greedy Harry was taken ill. "So they sent for Dr. Camomile, and he gave, I do not know how much, bitter stuff. Poor Harry did not *like* it at all; but he was forced to take it, or he would have *died*, you know" (22). Two lessons later in the textbook, Leavitt supplies a continuation of the schoolboys and cakes story titled "Covetous Peter and His Cake," in which another student, whom "the boys used to call . . . Peter Careful" (23), received a cake from his parents:

Now Peter thought with himself, "I will not make *myself* sick with this good cake, as silly *Harry* did; I will *keep* it a great while.["] So he took the cake and tugged it up stairs . . . and he locked it up in his box, and, once a day he crept sliily up stairs and ate a very *little* piece, and then locked his box again.

Withi

His C

exam

shar

arou

save

the

fid

upo

will

Bi

T

R

So he kept it several weeks . . . but, behold! the *mice* got into his box and nibbled it. And the cake grew *dry* and *mouldy* and at last was good for nothing at all.

So he was obliged to throw it away; and it *grieved* him to the very heart. But nobody was *sorry* for him, because he had been so selfish and stingy. (23)

Within two more lessons, the story of "Generous Billy and His Cake" surfaces, to present the virtuous Billy as an example of moral generosity and behavior. He readily shared his cake from home with his schoolmates who "came around him like a parcel of bees" (24), but he decided to save the last piece for himself to eat the next day. As the boys were out at play, an old, bearded and blind fiddler with a little dog "came into the yard, and sat down upon a stone and said, 'My pretty lads, if you please, I will play you a tune'" (24). The boys gathered around him; Billy, noticing that the old man is crying, asked why.

And the old man said, "I am very hungry. I have nobody to give me any *dinners*, or *suppers*. I have nothing in the world but this *dog*, and I cannot work. If I *could* work, I *would*."

Then Billy went, without saying a word, and fetched the rest of his cake, which he had laid up for to-morrow, and he said, "Here, old man, here is some cake for you." (25)

This segment of the narrative ends similarly to the earlier Barbauld version: "Pray which do you like *best*? Do you like *Greedy Harry*, or *Covetous Peter*, or *Generous Billy* *best*?" (25).

Later, Leavitt's textbook features a three-page dialogue in which a young boy and a Mr. L explore the topic of contentment and further establish the theme of virtue

rewarded

catches

convers

Then

expl

about

Wh

to

h

rewarded. After Mr. L's horse runs away and the young boy catches it by the bridle, Mr. L initiates the following conversation:

Thank you, my good lad! (said he) you have caught my horse very cleverly. What shall I give you for your trouble? (putting his hand into his pocket.)

Boy. I want nothing, sir.

Mr. L. Don't you? so much the better for you. Few men can say as much. But pray what were you doing in the field?

B. I was rooting up weeds, and tending the sheep that are feeding on the turnips, and keeping the crows from the corn.

Mr. L. And do you like this employment?

B. Yes sir, very well, this fine weather.

Mr. L. But had you not rather play?

B. This is not hard work; it is almost as good as play. (61)

Then Mr. L asks who has sent him out to work, and the boy explains that his father has. Mr. L asks more questions about the boy--his name and age:

B. Peter, sir . . . I shall be eight at Michaelmas.

Mr. L. How long have you been out in this field?

B. Ever since six in the morning, sir.

Mr. L. And are you not hungry?

B. Yes sir, I shall go to my dinner soon.

Mr. L. If you had six-pence now, what would you do with it?

B. I don't know, I never had so much in my life[.]

Mr. L. Have you no play-things?

B. Play-things! what are they? (62)

When the man explains about balls, marbles, tops, and other toys, the boy responds that he is content with what he has--a hoop, stilts, traps for birds. The man asks:

And do you want nothing else?

B. No. I have hardly time for those; for I always ride the horses to the field, and bring up the cows, and run to the town on errands, and that is as good as play, you know.

To 1.

about

that

home

Mr. L. Well, but you could buy apples or ginger-bread at the town, I suppose, if you had money.

B. O--I can get apples at home; and as for ginger-bread, I don't mind it much, for my mammy gives me a piece of pie, now and then, and that is as good.

Mr. L. Would you not like a knife to cut sticks?

B. I have one--here it is--brother Tom gave it me. (62)

To light on a suitable reward for his good deed, Mr. L asks about other needs the boy might have. The boy explains that his shoes are adequate and that he has a good hat at home for Sunday.

Mr. L. What do you do when you are hungry before it is time to go home?

B. I sometimes eat a raw turnip.

Mr. L. But if there are none?

B. Then I do as well as I can; I work on and never think of it.

Mr. L. Are you not dry sometimes, this hot weather?

B. Yes, but there is water enough.

Mr. L. Why, my little fellow, you are quite a philosopher!

B. Sir.

Mr. L. I say you are a philosopher, but I am sure you do not know what that means.

B. No sir--no harm I hope.

Mr. L. No, no! Well, my boy, you seem to want nothing at all, so I shall not give you money to make you want any thing. But were you ever at school?

B. No sir, but daddy says I shall go after harvest.

Mr. L. You will want books then.

B. Yes sir, the boys have all a spelling-book, and a testament, and Easy Lessons.

Mr. L. Well then, I will give you them--tell your daddy so, and that it is because I thought you a very good, contented boy. So now go to your sheep again.

B. I will sir. Thank you. (63)

The didactic intentions in this lesson certainly stress the theme of virtuous action rewarded, and Leavitt as well

pursue

accep

note

in Re

schoo

cond.

lear

earl

impe

Oth

"Te

we

me

co

th

st

i

d

pursues the theme of being content with what you have as acceptable social attitude. But it is also interesting to note the inclusion of the textbook's own title Easy Lessons in Reading (generic as it is) in Peter's list of necessary school texts as perhaps a primitive form of subliminal conditioning.

Sheer repetition seems to be the mode for moral learning in A Spelling Book by William Bolles (1827). The early lessons take the direct approach by offering imperative sentences made up of one-syllable words:

Be a good child.
Mind your book.
Love your school;
And try to learn. (16)

Other directives in the lesson include "Strive to do good," "Tell no tales; / Call no ill names," and "Spend your time well" (16). Many of these imperative directives' didactic messages are then repeated later in the textbook, but couched in a more approachable tone. The didactic style of the sentences in "A Short Description of a Good Boy" is not subtle, but it is neither insistent. Rather, the instructive element conveyed to the reader is simply declarative:

A good boy will do as he is bid; he will mind his book, and try to learn.

He will always mind his parents, and love his brother, and sisters.

A good boy will always learn his lesson before he goes to play.

He chooses the best boys when he goes to play, for he will not go with bad boys.

When he goes to bed he will pray to God, and do the same when he gets up.

Tone

expe

boil

kind

boy

(28

in

gee

ab

Wi

af

ap

sc

t.

v

r

r

When he gets up he will wash his hands and face clean, and comb his hair.

If he has done wrong, he will own it, and take care to do so no more.

He will not play in the dirt, but keep clean and neat.

If he has any thing which his brothers or sisters have not, he will give them a part.

A good boy will do to others, as he would have others do to him. (27-28)

Tone and style aside, the didacticism of the sentences is expected, even, and reasonable. Essentially, moral virtue boils down to behavior; yet the base (for the most part) is kindness to others--as seen in the last sentence: "A good boy will do to others, as he would have others do to him" (28).

Kindness is again the theme of the social didacticism in the 1827 reader Story of William and Ellen. This text geared for primary to intermediate readers includes a story about a bad boy named John Newman who would frighten young William and Ellen by hiding and making threatening noises--after telling them stories of "wolves, bears and apparitions" (4). Soon the two young children hear various sounds (once just a cat caught in a gate, but that William thought was one of John's creatures). After hearing various frightening sounds, William and Ellen start to run--and in doing so, drop a china doll, break a pitcher of milk, sustain cuts on their hands, and eventually trample flower beds. Later John hides himself within the curb of an old well and makes "the most most frightful noises he could invent. The stone on which he stood being loose, slipped, and down he fell with the stone to the bottom of

the w
frigh
John
with
conc
reco
his

appr
("Pr
in t
of s
dida
thee
tha
pre
mai
tir
wou

its
soc
by
obv
un
pr
mo

the well" (11). And, although Ellen runs from the scene in fright, stumbles, and bruises her hand, it is the tormenter John Newman who suffers more. He is taken from the well with a fractured skull and a broken leg. The story concludes with a moral example as John, during his recovery, reflects "upon the wickedness and impropriety of his past conduct" and apologizes to William and Ellen (11).

Although the overt directives, or rules, for appropriate behavior discussed earlier in this chapter ("Pray to God, wash your face, comb your hair") were common in the reading textbooks, various authors pursue the method of supplying examples of good behavior as a means of social didacticism. MacLeod explains that "nineteenth-century theorists of child nurture were tireless in pointing out that children learned much better by example than by precept" ("Children's Literature" 16). Thus, she maintains, "early nineteenth-century authors were equally tireless in their efforts to provide the examples which would edify the young" ("Children's Literature" 16).

Another reader, Good Examples for Children (1828)--as its title suggests--establishes expectations of acceptable social behavior and manners in the minds of young readers by presenting narratives in which a moral lesson is obvious. But the anonymous author of this text seems to understand the reading needs of children as he or she presents concisely written stories of children who learn moral lessons from everyday encounters. Good Examples for

Childr

is ill

qualit

a litt

mirror

the s

littl

ball:

Once

brea

Thi

che

bo

th

Children contains six moral, two-to-three-page stories and is illustrated with original cuts of excellent technical quality. On a page partly taken up with an illustration of a little boy with a paddle and a ball standing next to a mirror leaned backwards against a wall, young readers found the story of "The Boy and the Looking Glass," in which a little boy whose parents had left him alone decided to play ball:

Before he began to play, he had turned the back of the looking-glass towards him, for fear he should break the glass.--It would have been better, if he had gone out of doors to play at ball. As he was not a careless boy, I wonder he was not afraid of breaking the windows as well as the looking-glass; but I suppose he did not think of that.

Whilst he was playing, and, perhaps not thinking at all about the looking-glass, his ball struck the wooden back, and broke the glass. When he saw the mischief he had done, he was very sorry; and, I believe, he was afraid his father and mother would be displeased with him. (6-7)

Once his parents come back home, the boy confesses to breaking the mirror and says how sorry he is.

His father looked kindly at him, and said, "I would rather that all the looking-glasses in my house, should be broken, than that one of my children should tell an untruth."

The little boy hearing his father say this, and seeing that he was not angry, felt comforted; though I suppose, he wished very much that he had not broken the looking-glass. After that time when he met with an accident, he confessed it; and would not on any account, tell an untruth. (7)

This story is remarkable in that it accepts the main character's behavior as a normal child, not belaboring the boy's playing with the bat and ball inside the house and then breaking the mirror. Rather, the author emphasizes

the boy

In this

the ch

handed

to alw

come f

the fa

craft

T

end of

stylis

Noah W

Using

in vi

Stole

and i

the boy's admitting to the accident and telling the truth. In this example, young readers who undoubtedly relate to the character's situation are not "scolded" by a heavy-handed didactic tone but, rather, are admonished positively to always tell the truth. Not only does this encouragement come from the boy's good example, but it is underscored by the father's gentle and kind acceptance in this subtly crafted narrative.

The moral didacticism in one more textbook from the end of the 1820s is memorable primarily because of its stylistic effect. In The Elementary Spelling Book (1829) Noah Webster concludes with several fable-like stories. Using this stylistic format, he instructs his young readers in virtuous behavior and attitudes. In "Of the Boy that Stole Apples" Webster relates a tale of willful contempt and its consequence set in the familiar orchard:

An old man found a rude boy upon one of his trees stealing apples, and desired him to come down; but the young sauce-box told him plainly he would not. Won't you? said the old man, then I will fetch you down; so he pulled up some turf or grass and threw at him; but this only made the youngster laugh, to think the old man should pretend to beat him down from the tree with grass only.

Well, well, said the old man, if neither words nor grass will do, I must try what virtue there is in stones: so the old man pelted him heartily with stones, which soon made the young chap hasten down from the tree and beg the old man's pardon.

MORAL

If good words and gentle means will not reclaim the wicked, they must be dealt with in a more severe manner. (140-141)

the d

the r

the s

exces

focus

serv

surf

this

whic

over

stre

kind

were

For

wor

eat

her

The

bet

Th

pu

Moral Virtue and Excessive Behavior

Undoubtedly, social decorum in behavior and manner is the dominant strain of the social didacticism present in the reading textbooks from 1780 to 1830. In fact, much of the social didacticism illustrates the ill effects of excessive behavior. Typically, these didactic lessons focus on excesses like eating and drinking, eventually serving to promote the fledgling temperance movement.

Early on, lessons devoted to moderation in all things surface in the social didacticism. An early example of this is the 1794 primer Easy Lessons for Young Children in which vivid lessons that emphasize excessive behavior--like over-eating and crying--are interspersed with lessons stressing neatness, frugality, industriousness, and kindness. The consequences of excess in one's behavior were sure to have made an impression on beginning readers. For example, one lesson, made up of only one-syllable words, discusses a girl who ignores her aunt's advice and eats too many sweets: "Miss Page did not chuse to mind what her aunt said . . . and [her teeth] grew quite black" (24). The textbook author explains the consequences of her behavior:

Miss Page would have been glad if they had dropt out, for she had a tooth ache, which is a sad pain; and could not eat in the day, or sleep by night, but would lie in bed and cry, "O that I had not eat sweet things to spoil my teeth!"
(25)

The story explains that the girl had to have her teeth pulled and that "she mumpt and mumpt with her bare gums

like a

a que

exces

would

the s

Instr

"Tom

aggre

pois

the

the

clai

glut

him

Temp

his

any

tha

con

the

gro

ret

th.

th

ne

ar

like an old woman" (26). The reading lesson concludes with a question designed to require reflection on the girl's excessive behavior: "Who that had sense and good teeth would eat sweet things to be like Miss Page?" (27).

Excessive behavior, or intemperance, is the theme of the social didacticism in Moral Stories. Written for the Instruction of Young Minds in 1806. The didactic tone of "Tom Tipler, or The vices of intemperance" begins aggressively: "Intemperance in eating or drinking is the poison of human life. It is not only a direct inlet to all the diseases of the body, but to all the vices that degrade the character of man" (24-25). As illustration of these claims, the lesson introduces Tom Tipler, "who became a glutton and a rum-drinker when but a very boy, which gained him the sir-name of Tipler--His natural name was *Tom Temperance*" (25). This once-promising child was coddled by his parents--"blind to a fault" (25)--and was given anything he wanted. He grew "peevish and dainty . . . so that at the age of seven years, *Tom's* appetite may be considered never to have known true relish" (25-26). By the time Tom was in his teens, he "was permitted to visit grog-shops with his companions, to stay late at night, and returning home, become riotous in the streets" (26). At this point in the lesson, the author intrudes, establishing the lesson's overt authority: "Reason and prudence are never more out of office, than when the body is filled with ardent spirits. Thus it is truly said, *When wine is in,*

wit is

his dr

pears

they b

starts

to es

shook

(28).

man)

Soon

he r

don

the

cor

ove

up

l

(

:

vit is out" (27). The story resumes, telling how Tom and his drunk friends on their way home one night steal some pears from a tree. After eating all the pears they want, they begin to throw them at windows, when a large dog starts to chase them. Just as Tom was going over a fence to escape, "the dog laid hold of his leg, and gripped and shook so severely, that he tore the flesh to the bone" (28). The dog's owner (apparently a kind and forgiving man) comes to Tom's rescue and summons a surgeon,

who, on examining the wounds, pronounced them very dangerous; as the flesh of his leg was not only much torn but the sinews injured. It being then about the first of September, the weather was very hot; and in three days signs of mortification appeared. (30)

Soon the surgeon declares that in order to save Tom's life, he must amputate the injured leg: "This accordingly was done, to the distraction of his overfond parents, and to the making a cripple through life of their son" (31). The consequences of excessive behavior are undoubtedly overstated; nevertheless, the lesson's social didacticism upholds the virtue of temperance:

Let all boys, therefore, who would live sober, temperate and honest [lives], avoid the evil habits of *Tom Tippler*; who, heated with strong liquor, and with unprincipled dispositions, in the very flower of life, was made an awful example of his folly and wickedness. (31)

Compared to the didacticism of the "Tom Tipler" lesson, the instructive quality of The New-York Preceptor (1812) is reserved. The didactic sentiment is restrained in reference to temperance: "Grapes grow on a vine. From

them, wi

In this

a conce

descript

picture

pipe an

time an

Te

in The

early r

descrip

wall.

becaus

Undou

coupl

more

stin

shou

mean

focu

them, wine is made, which should be used sparingly" (62). In this text the issue of smoking tobacco also surfaces as a concern of the fledgling temperance movement. In a descriptive alphabet, the letter P is illustrated with a picture of a pipe and the following paragraph: "Smoking the pipe and segar is a kind of amusement that destroys much time and property; and injures the health of many" (67).

Temperance is also at issue in the alphabet featured in The Wonderful History of an Enchanted Castle (1813), an early reader in which a couple of young boys read an descriptive alphabet written in gold letters on the castle wall. Among the lessons presented to them, three stand out because of the their focus on the virtues of temperance:

D is a drunkard both ugly and black,
And such are all those who follow his track.
(16)

G is a glutton who eats till he's sick,
But the doctor and death will soon play him a
trick. (17)

V is a vine, which revives every heart,
But the juice, if ill-used, will soon make you
smart. (24)

Undoubtedly, the didactic intention of the "V is a vine" couplet is lost if readers interpret the word *smart* to mean *more intelligent*; the intended denotation of *smart* would be *sting*. Likewise, the word *black* in the first couplet should not be read as to suggest race; rather, the intended meaning would suggest that the drunkard *deserves dishonor*.

Excessive behavior in the form of gluttony is the focus of one lesson in Story of William and Ellen, a primer

publis

an olc

rests

and d

"neve

frequ

paren

fath

she

pluc

was

sett

far

con

con

un

di

an

18

fa

Re

w

i

F

published in 1827. Again, the consequences of not heeding an older person's advice are dire, yet the didacticism rests on a tenuous connection between excessive behavior and drastic result. The lesson describes how Emma, who "never paid attention to what was said to her, and would frequently act in opposition to the commands of her parents" (14), eats a large amount of fruit from her father's garden "until she could scarcely move" (15). When she sees an especially nice peach, however, "she hastily plucked it; but just as she had put it into her mouth, she was stung in the most dreadful manner, by a bee that had settled unperceived by her on the other side" (15-16). As far as the didactic stance goes, the bee sting is a convenient reward for Emma's excessive behavior; yet the connection between the two has little substance.

Moral Virtue and The Family

Although a family setting or situation is not an unusual element in much of the didacticism, lessons which directly focus on family relationships are not overabundant and do not appear in the textbooks I researched until after 1800. Prior to that date, didacticism emphasizing the family was typically couched in religious terms. The Reprobate's Reward, a chapbook from 1798 that undoubtedly was used for beginning reading instruction, direly illustrates the child's divine mandate to honor his or her parents:

The to

well a

impres

MacLe

for a

neces

be ta

subse

are

for

illu

"The

i.

Just as the holy scriptures doth say,
 He that his parents dear doth disobey,
 A prey shall be to every bird that flies,
 The ravens likewise shall pick out his eyes (8).

The tone of the lesson and its evocation of scripture--as well as the young "reprobate's reward"--were sure to impress upon the young reader the importance of obedience. MacLeod states: "Obedience was the most fundamental virtue for a child to acquire. . . . because it provided the necessary framework within which all other morality could be taught" ("Children's Literature" 20).

Within the paradigm of social didacticism are the subsequent moral lessons of family unity and support. They are the themes of the first lesson in The Book of Books, for Children, an easy-reader from 1801. The unnamed author illustrates the lesson, then offers a concluding moral in "The Father and the Son":

A Father who had several Sons that were always quarrelling among themselves, took this method to reconcile them.

He brought a bundle of rods firmly tied together, and desired them to break them: they all tried but were not able; he then untied the bundles, and gave each a single rod, which they easily snap[ped] in two.

Behold! (says the father) the power of unity! while you keep together, none shall be able to hurt you, but when you fall to variances, you become an easy prey to every enemy.

MORAL

When difference arise among those, who should live together in love and friendship, they bring upon themselves their own ruin. (2-4)

Another easy-reader promotes family harmony. One illustration in Little Prattle over a Book of Prints (1808)

portray
girls.

Johns
the n

In b
read
dome

fam
Web

The
spe
on
sc

portrays two older girls sketching portraits of two littler girls. The following text explains:

Here is a charming picture! Sophia and Caroline drawing their little sisters, Lucy and Charlotte, in a chaise.

How kind and affectionate are the elder girls, and how pretty and cheerful the little ones appear.

When they reached home, Caroline being fatigued, asked Charlotte to take her bonnet up stairs and put it in the band box; which small request the little girl refused. But at night, when she recollected her sister's kindness in drawing her in the chaise, and her own ill-nature, she could not sleep. Quitting her bed, she went gently over to that of Caroline, and kissing her, said, Dear sister, forgive me. I never will be cross to you again. The delighted Caroline returned her kisses with eagerness.
(n. pag.)

Johnson's New Philadelphia Spelling-Book (1809) looks to the natural world for another model of domestic harmony:

Birds in their little nests agree;
And 'tis a shameful sight,
When children of one family
Fall out, and chide, and fight. (19)

In both the above examples of social didacticism, young readers were certain to be impressed with the ideal of domestic harmony.

The dire consequences of parental disrespect and family disquiet are again presented in 1815 in Noah Webster's The American Spelling Book. As in the earlier The Reprobate's Reward of 1798, Webster's book literally spells out, in simple syllables, the outcome of dishonoring one's parents: "The eye that mock-eth at his fath-er, and scorn-eth to o-bey his moth-er, the ra-vens of the val-ley

shall pic

(65).

Jos

Lessons

lessons

lessons

fable-li

not to v

foolish

care of

falls p

wolf's

As in

farmya

The fo

feudin

hardl

other

all b

alway

parag

and s

doine

shall pick it out, and the young ea-gles shall eat it"
(65).

Joshua Leavitt's text for younger readers, Easy Lessons in Reading (1825), contains good examples of lessons promoting family accord that grow out of object lessons from nature. For example, "The Silly Lamb" is a fable-like story of a lamb who ignores her mother's advice not to wander away from the fold. "She thought, as many foolish *children* think, that she was *big* enough to take care of *herself*" (15). As might be expected, the lamb falls prey to a wolf and is carried off and eaten by the wolf's cubs. The lesson concludes with the expected moral:

Little Children should always mind what their parents say to them, and remember that those who are older, know better than they do, what is good for them. Children who do what their parents *forbid* them, or what they tell them they had better *not* do, very often get hurt by having their own way. (16)

As in "The Silly Lamb," Leavitt draws on the familiar farmyard for a moral endorsement of domestic tranquillity. The fourth chapter of the text⁶ is a fable about two feuding chickens from the same hen's brood: "They were hardly out of the *shell*, before they began to *peck* at each other; and as they grew *bigger*, they fought till they were all *bloody*. If one picked up a barley corn, the other always wanted it" (17). Clearly overstated, the concluding paragraph deals with the issue of family harmony: "Brothers and sisters who *quarrel*, are always *unhappy*, and often doing each other *harm* instead of *good*; and those who

indulge i
be sure t
(18).

The
period pr
married
rarely f
seldom a
the inte
particip
relative
context
centuri
life is
However
textboo
Pretty
include

I
social
didact
early
lesso

indulge in malice and revenge, and other evil passions, may be sure to bring trouble upon *themselves* as well as *others*" (18).

The idea of family harmony in the reading texts of the period presupposes a positive attitude to marriage and married life. Yet, surprisingly, examples of didacticism rarely feature the idea of marriage. Perhaps marriage is seldom an issue found in early reading textbooks because of the intended audience's personal distance from participation in the subject; perhaps it is due to the relative stability of the institution within the social context of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. At any rate, the idea--or ideal--of married life is rarely an issue promoted *per se* in the didacticism. However, it does find its way into at least one of the textbooks included in this study, in the form of verse. Pretty Poems, Song, Etc., an easy-reader published in 1808, includes the following stanza, titled "The Happy Pair":

Thrice happy is the marry'd life.
As sages gravely say,
With mutual aid when man and wife
Agree to draw one way" (15).

Moral Virtue and the Community

I found few examples of didacticism that illustrate a social awareness beyond the scope of the family. Social didacticism rarely explores the concept of community in the early reading textbooks. Although many of the didactic lessons are set in a community context, the focus is not on

civil dyn

town or a

setting.

responsil

The larg

textbook

sentimen

social c

brief s

nations

"All me

sentime

/ a mar

couplet

unfortu

the ha

conclu

didact

later

and c

of s

Prim

civil dynamics. Rather, the community--usually a small town or a farming community--acts solely as a physical setting. In this sense, the concept of social responsibility within a community is addressed--but subtly. The larger idea of *community*, however, does surface in one textbook that addresses the issue of equality. The sentiment in The Instructive Alphabet (1814) asserts a social conscience at the end of the text in a grouping of brief slogans and verse: "He hath made of one blood all nations of / them that dwell on the face of the earth" and "All men are born FREE and EQUAL" (n. pag.). The equality sentiment is further pursued with the short verse "Am I not / a man, and a / brother!" (n. pag.) which is followed by a couplet that points to society's responsibility to the unfortunate: "Ah! pity human misery! human woe / 'Tis what the happy to th' unhappy owe" (n. pag.). The primer concludes with "The Negro's Complaint," an example of didactic verse that opposes slavery:

Forc'd from home and all its pleasures,
 Afric's coast I left forlorn;
 To increase a stranger's treasures,
 O'er the raging billows borne.
 Men from England bought and sold me,
 Paid my price in paltry gold,
 But, though theirs they have have enroll'd me,
 Minds are never to be sold. (n. pag.)

Didacticism dedicated to the downtrodden appears in later textbooks in the occasional reference to poor people and one's responsibility to them. An example of this type of social didacticism is the line in Johnson's Philadelphia Primer of 1821: "When thou givest to the poor, let not thy

left h
relati
with p
indust
didact
textbo
perio
moral
indiv

and
text
indu
comm
best
the

on
is
has
inc
re

left hand know what thy right doeth" (24). Perhaps the relative vacuum of didactic empathy for those afflicted with poverty stems from the era's attitudes about industriousness and thrift, as illustrated in the social didacticism of the reading textbooks. As background to the textbooks' scant discussion of poverty, Elson explains the period's attitude: "To remain in poverty in America is a moral wrong and indicates a lack of virtue in the individual" (253).

Moral Virtue and Industriousness

Thus, the well established Puritan values of industry and thrift are represented in many of the early reading textbooks through a variety of lessons. These lessons on industriousness seem to grow out of a religious attitude or commitment: "The Christian duty of employing time to the best advantage was one of the first moral lessons taught the children . . ." (Kiefer 97).

In The American Preceptor (1811) Caleb Bingham draws on nature⁷ to illustrate the virtue of industry: "The Bee is a noble pattern of industry and prudence" (31). Once he has established the connection between the bee and industriousness, Bingham draws a parallel for his young readers' edification:

Like the industrious insect . . . we should learn to make every occurrence of life serviceable to us; for nothing is so small or minute but it may be made of use; nothing so bad in nature, but we may draw from it some profit or instruction.

(32)

Bingha

morali

evil,

hopes

D

often

trans

New-Y

"Swif

Make

writes

drive

empl

prov

indu

thre

"I-

and

rel

"Se

mak

anc

th

th

tw

Ur

Bingham then takes his reader back to a religious base by moralizing: "Thus, by choosing the good, and avoiding the evil, we may purchase to ourselves peace here, and the hopes of a brighter reward hereafter" (32).

Didacticism dealing with industry--the use of time--often overlaps with the didacticism concerned with the transcendence of life, already discussed in Chapter 3. The New-York Preceptor (1812) blends the two concerns subtly: "Swift as the arrow from the bow, our time doth fly away. Make much of time" (30). A few pages later, the textbook writer more directly states his lesson on industry: "To drive the plough, is a wholesome, innocent, and useful employment" (52).

The American Spelling Book by Noah Webster (1815) provides many examples of social didacticism emphasizing industry and thrift. In a lesson on "Words not exceeding three syllables, divided," beginning readers learned that "I-dle-ness will bring thee to pov-er-ty; but by in-dus-try and pru-dence thou shalt be fill-ed with bread" (64). The religious connotations of industry are echoed in Webster's "Select sentences": "We may as well expect that God will make us rich without industry, as that he will make us good and happy, without our own endeavors" (97). Webster's thoughts on thrift are apparent in "Domestic Economy; or, the History of Thrifty and Unthrifty" in which he compares two farmers, one named Thrifty and the other named Unthrifty (151-154).

Murra
addresses
of alphab
first ins
presented
best use
Introduct
intended
The Engl
"Ingenui
gives hi
take can
they wil
reward
younger
busied
propped
it. . .
his in
His br

Moses
but i

Murray's primer A First Book for Children (1818)

addresses the idea of industriousness after several pages of alphabets, consonants, vowels, and one-word lists. The first instance of didactic tone in this textbook is presented simply in one-syllable words: "I will make the best use of my time" (30). Murray's later textbook Introduction to the English Reader (1823), which was intended for primary students not yet ready to read from The English Reader, offers a lengthy story titled "Ingenuity and Industry rewarded" in which a wealthy farmer gives his two sons--Edmund and Moses--two apple trees to take care of: "'They will thrive as much by your care, as they will decline by your negligence; and their fruit will reward you in proportion to your labour'" (29). The younger son Edmund, explains Murray, was industrious: "He busied himself in clearing his tree of insects . . . and he propped up its stem. . . . He loosened the earth about it. . . . His mother had not tended him more carefully in his infancy, than he tended his young apple-tree" (29). His brother, on the other hand, was not industrious:

He spent a great deal of time . . . throwing stones at the passengers in the road. He went among all the little dirty country boys in the neighbourhood, to box with them; so that he was often seen with broken shins and black eyes. . . .

In short, he neglected his tree. . . . till one day in autumn, he, by chance, saw Edmund's tree so full of apples streaked with purple and gold. . . . (29)

Moses then expects to find his own tree loaded with fruit, but is disappointed: "He saw scarcely any thing, except

branch
leaves

The f
compa
tree,
then
"Mos
wisd
brot

In
les

Les
inc
pa
wh
th
ar

branches covered with moss, and a few yellow withered leaves" (30).

Full of passion and jealousy, he ran to his father, and said; "Father, what sort of a tree is that which you have given me? It is as dry as a broomstick; and I shall not have ten apples on it. My brother you have used better: bid him at least share his apples with me."

"Share with you!" said his father; "so the industrious must lose his labour, to feed the idle! Be satisfied with your lot: it is the effect of your negligence. . . . (30)

The father then explains to Moses why his tree does not compare to Edmund's. He tells him that he may have another tree, but that he must listen to his brother's advice and then follow it "to make amends for your fault" (30).

"Moses felt the justice of his father's sentence, and the wisdom of his design" (30) and paid attention to his brother's instruction:

He applied cheerfully to work: and, in autumn, he had the pleasure of seeing his tree fully answer his hopes. Thus he had the double advantage, of enriching himself with a splendid crop of fruit; and, at the same time, of subduing the vicious habits he had contracted. (30)

In this example, not only is virtue rewarded, but the lesson of industry as acceptable virtue is extolled.

"Lazy Lawrence" is a dialogue from Leavitt's Easy Lessons in Reading (1825) in which lazy Lawrence and industrious Jem debate working for money vs. asking their parents for money. Lawrence starts the conversation: "See what I got from father to-day, because I asked him just at the right time, when he was good-natured; then, I can get any thing out of him that I want" (78). The outcome of the

lesson

"Lawre

and wh

think

and to

overs

refer

conse

The

illu

beh

sta

alw

In

dr

so

"h

lesson belabors the virtues of industry and thrift:

"Lawrence soon spent his money for apples and gingerbread, and when those were all gone, he had nothing to do but to think of Jem's four and seven-pence [which Jem had earned], and to wish he was as rich" (80). Yet the lesson finally overstates the notion of those virtues as religious tenets, referring to the Ten Commandments and warning of extreme consequences:

From breaking the *tenth* commandment, by coveting what was his neighbour's, this idle boy at length became so wicked as to break the *eighth*, and steal Jem's hard earned treasure, for which he was tried and sent to prison; a warning, both to parents and children, that *Idleness is the root of much evil*. (80)

The chapter following "Lazy Lawrence" is a didactic poem illustrating the effects of haste, an aspect of social behavior not unrelated to industry and thrift. In eleven stanzas of "Nimble Dick," Leavitt portrays a character always in a hurry:

He'd never wait; was always late,
Because he was so *quick*.
This *shatter-brain* did thus obtain
The name of *Nimble Dick*" (80).

In the course of the poem this character foolheartedly drenches his clothes with water, scalds his mouth with hot soup, and finally sets out to run a race, showing how "haste makes waste":

All in despatch, Dick made a *match*,
To run a *race* with *Bill*.
"My boy," said he, "I'll win you'll see,
"I'll best you, that I will!"
With merry heart, now off they start,
Like *ponies*, full in speed,
Soon Bill he pass'd, for very fast

spell

up th

indus

The

a F.

beat

mos

(92

foc

sl

of

en

pa

ar

wo

This Dicky ran indeed.
 But hurry all, Dick got a fall,
 And whilst he sprawling lay,
 Bill reach'd the post, and Dicky lost,
 And Billy won the day.

MORAL.

Still show and sure, success secure;
 And be not over-quick;
 For method's sake, a warning take,
 From hasty Nimble Dick. (81)

Along the same lines, idleness is under attack in A spelling book by Bolles (1827). The virtues of work make up the theme of a poem titled "Idleness," and, again, industry is portrayed closely akin to religious piety:

You, who never needed to labour for bread,
 And indolent always have been;
 Does it never so much as come into your head,
 That, wasting your time is a sin?
 For man was created for useful employ,
 From earth's first creation till now.
 And 'tis good for his health, his comfort, and
 joy,
 To live by the sweat of his brow. (91)

The poem is followed by a section titled "Summer morning in a Flower Garden," in which the writer describes the beautiful scents and sights, asking, "And is not this a most engaging inducement to forsake the bed of sloth?" (92). Idleness, the theme of the preceding verses, is the focus then: "Who would lie dissolved in senseless [sic] slumbers, while so many breathing sweets invite to a feast of fragrancy?" (92). Just under an octogonally framed engraving of a man at work in a formal garden, a succinct paragraph, emphasizing the social virtue of industry, answers this question: "See the gardner! how diligently he works; how pleasant his task" (92).

Th
the soc
relied
indust:
1830 o
one's

indo:

mess:

educ

dida

scho

lite

ster

my

did

ins

to

in

mo

ab

The bee is again featured as a model of industry in the social didacticism of the textbooks. Just as Bingham relied on the bee to illustrate the virtue of industriousness in 1811, A Pleasing Toy, for Girl or Boy of 1830 offers the insect as an example of moral commitment to one's social environment:

BEES.

The Bees, industrious, swarm around the hive,
 And for support most diligently strive:
 So let us labour in the state we're plac'd,
 Because by indolence we are disgrac'd. (11)

Moral Virtue and Literacy

The last line of the preceding poem--"Because by indolence we are disgrac'd"--could very well apply to the message promoted in the social didacticism dealing with education. Throughout the textbooks, a strong current of didacticism stresses the need for students to try hard in school, to learn to read, and to achieve success through literacy. Although a strong emphasis on formal learning stems in part from a deep-rooted Puritan attitude, I place my discussion of it in this chapter devoted to social didacticism (rather than the previous chapter on religious instructiveness) because I believe it conforms more closely to the general expectations of social attitude and behavior in the reading textbooks of 1780-1830.

Davidson explains that literacy was equated with morality in early America: "Literacy is not simply the ability to decode letters upon a page, the ability to sign

a name

(58).

reader

burgeo

litera

For ex

sets a

chapt

anony

From

equa

such

of

for

Kir

acc

(1)

fo

re

ex

ne

tr

a name instead of making a mark. Literacy is a value" (58). Many of the textbooks endeavor to induce young readers to value literacy and thus attend to their burgeoning ability to read. As Davidson points out, literacy is "a test of the moral fiber of a nation" (58). For example, in 1780, Tom Thumb's Folio, For little Giants sets an attitude for acceptance of literacy. In the chapter "How Tom became a greater Man than his Mother," the anonymous author states:

Before we attempt to prove [how Tom became a greater man than his mother], we must enquire what makes a great man. Is it a great head? No. Is it a long arm? No. Is it a big body? No. Is it a large leg? No. But I'll tell you what it is: It is a wise head and good heart that constitutes a great man. It is wisdom and virtue, and they only, which can make us great and happy. (3)

From the very beginning of this text, readers are led to equate greatness with wisdom and learning. The "folio" as such begins on page 19, and it sets the stage for the idea of literacy: "In composing the History of Tom Thumb, we forgot to recite one circumstance, which gave the giant King and all his court a great inclination to become acquainted with letters, modern learning and religion" (19). Thus, literacy--or learning to read--becomes the focal point of the anticipated plot. At this point, young readers are undoubtedly ready to pursue the story, which explains how Tom Thumb taught a court philosopher, "who never knew the use of letters" (19), how to read and how in turn the philosopher taught the giant to read. The story

is foll

instruc

and ma

(22) w

vowels

The le

title

textl

lear

is n

nega

179

gir

Har

(91

the

cat

ole

is

le

vi

to

B

is followed by "Learned Lessons, composed for the instruction of the great giant in the Kingdom of Cuckows, and may be read by all the little giants upon the earth" (22) which instruct in capital letters, little letters, vowels, and syllables, later covering words and sentences. The lesson eventually culminates with a didactic verse titled "Tom Thumb teaching the Alphabet":

He who ne'er learns his A, B, C,
For ever will a Blockhead be;
But he who to his Books inclin'd,
Will soon a Golden Treasure find. (26)

The paradigm is not so elaborate in subsequent textbook examples of didacticism regarding literacy and learning. However, the positive attitude about schoolwork is nevertheless pursued throughout the didacticism.

That positive approach to learning is established by a negative example in Easy Lessons for Young Children in 1794. One of the lessons tells about Miss Eliza Blisset, a girl who "did not love her Book, and thought it quite a Hard-ship to be asked to read e-ven a di-vert-ing Stor-y" (91). When Eliza's mother takes her to Sunday School where the children are all reading very well and saying their catechism, one little girl wants to read to Eliza, who is older, but needs help on some of the longer words. Eliza is chagrined to be of no help since she herself has not learned to read any better: "She did not know how to di-vide e-ven a Word of three Syl-la-bles, and in attempting to teach the Child, made her read Non-sense. On this Mrs. Blis-set mild-ly said, 'Leave off teaching, E-li-za, I must

find a

another

pleads

textbo

decide

readin

where

T

strai

educa

acqui

didac

"Ther

know

us i

1806

peda

to

Tha

al

Am

sp

du

find a *Teacher for you*'" (96). Then the mother asks another little girl to teach Eliza. Embarrassed, Eliza pleads with her mother to go home. The next lesson in the textbook is a continuation of Eliza's story: She has decided to learn to read, and in a month's time she is reading "ve-ry well in-deed" and goes back to Sunday School where she is a success at reading aloud (98-101).

The author of Wisdom in Miniature (1805) takes a straightforward approach and explains that gaining an education is serious business: "Knowledge will not be acquired without pains and application . . ." (6). The didactic focus is on the moral applications of learning: "There is nothing good or evil, but virtue or vice; so that knowlege is of all things the most precious, which guides us in the paths of truth, piety, and righteousness" (6).

"Lessons in Verse" in The Franklin Family Primer of 1806 by Willard indicates the period's predominant pedagogical theory that maintained spelling was the avenue to reading:

Salute every person as to school you do go,
When at school, to your master due reverence
show;
And if you can't read, pray endeavor to spell,
For by frequently spelling you'll learn to
read well. (24)

That pedagogical alliance between spelling and reading is also the message in the following didactic lesson from The American Primer of 1813: "If you do not take pains to spell, you will not know how to read, but will be a great dunce" (28). That misguided pedagogical notion is

paralle

develop

1815.

learn h

toys" (

intent:

"If you

such b

what y

to add

too mu

of wh

"The

when

tells

robber

a nes

down

he w

rage

pick

"and

sch

the

cor

rec

paralleled by another misinformed notion about children's development in Webster's The American Spelling Book of 1815. One short lesson claims that "a wise child loves to learn his book, but the fool would choose to play with toys" (51). Following that lesson, Webster pursues a well-intentioned, but possibly elitist, attitude about reading: "If you want to be good, wise and strong, read with care such books as have been made by wise and good men; think of what you read in your spare hours . . ." (51). He goes on to add: "Be brisk at play, but do not swear; and waste not too much of your time in bed" (51).

In the same text, Webster provides a negative example of why a child should appreciate school and learning in "The Boy that went to the Wood to look for Birds' Nests, when he should have gone to School" (100). The lesson tells how Jack decided he would rather spend the day robbing eggs from bird nests than go to school. Jack found a nest at the top of a tree, took the eggs, and on his way down the tree caught his shirt on a branch: "At this time he would have been glad to be at school; for the bird in a rage at the loss of her eggs, flew at him and was like to pick out his eyes" (100). A kind man helped Jack get down, "and from that time forth [Jack] would not loiter from school; but grew a good boy and a wise young man; and had the praise and good will of all that knew him" (100). The connection between Jack's actions and his eventual high regard for school seems tenuous; nevertheless, the story

leaves

school

enrage

I

consci

Lindle

(1818)

senten

quest

"Sit

my bo

(39)

to k

begi

soci

"Pro

valu

Mur

tec

sto

pos

in

wi

leaves the young reader with the impression that being in school is somehow more desirable than being attacked by enraged birds.

Introducing his young readers to a "literate consciousness" is the underlying objective of much of Lindley Murray's didacticism in A First Book for Children (1818). Sprinkled throughout the reading exercise sentences are short imperatives, declarations, and questions that keep the idea of literacy before the reader: "Sit down. Read to me" (34); "I love to learn. Where is my book?" (36); "I know how to read. I wish I could write" (39). These brief sentences act as near-subliminal prompts to keep a positive attitude toward reading before the beginning reader. Murray's lessons further underscore social attitudes and expectations of literacy.

"Promiscuous Reading Lessons" points to acceptable social values regarding reading:

Come to me, Charles. Come and read.
Here is a new book.
Take care not to tear it.
Good boys do not spoil their books. (49)

Murray continues with sentences devoted to reading technique--"Stand still. Do not read so fast. Mind the stops" (50)--and then takes pains to further establish a positive literate consciousness in his readers by incorporating a basic recognition of objects of literacy with his didacticism:

Charles has read a whole page now.
This is a page. This is a leaf.
A page is one side of a leaf.

This meth

learning

textbooks

read ora

textbook

(1821) s

(18). A

attempt

learning

textboo

standar

and lea

lessons

accept

S

was an

primar

certa

perio

Ameri

essen

assum

in re

auth

acce

Shut the book. Put it by.
Now give me a kiss. (50)

This method of keeping a positive idea of reading and learning before the young students surfaces in several textbooks. For example, after brief instruction on how to read orally (the dominant approach to reading in the textbooks) the author of Johnson's Philadelphia Primer (1821) states: "It is a pleasant thing to learn to read" (18). As noted, throughout the textbooks an obvious attempt to inculcate positive attitudes about literacy and learning exists in the didacticism. Although many of the textbooks may stress learning theories that by current standard seem misinformed, the attempts to portray reading and learning as positive moral virtues solidly place these lessons in the tradition of using didacticism to promote acceptable social values.

Social didacticism in all its various manifestations was an outgrowth of the religious didactics that pervaded primary-level reading textbooks in America before (and to a certain extent, during and after) the Revolutionary War period. As the holds of sectarian education loosened in America following the Revolution, social dictates--essentially an overt preoccupation with moral behavior--assumed a prominent place in the tradition of didacticism in reading textbooks.

Through directives, narrative examples, and verse, authors incorporated a broad emphasis of socially acceptable teaching into their textbooks. But this general

didacti

focused

specifi

Republ.

arose,

indust

admoni

in the

const.

socia

theme

didacticism of social virtue was often punctuated by more focused and defined elements of moralism that more specifically addressed social concerns of the early Republic. Issues of family life and community obligation arose, as did other issues rooted in Puritan thought like industry and thrift. Interestingly, morally charged admonishments to pursue literacy and learning also surface in the didacticism. These more pointed social concerns constitute an undercurrent for the larger category of social didacticism and underscore the firmly established theme of moral virtue as typified in social behavior.

¹Thi
tradition
market.
as its s
because
instruct.
that the
fare for

²Ro
Daughter
and The
titled "
daughter

³N.
American
because
teachin
or spea

⁴E
in Engl
1830.
English
United
the tr

5.
printi
printe
Frankl
includ
story
severa
foreru
Lesson
(Phil.
Four
1788)
(Phil
from
Brynb
four
1803)

their
Agnes
Montl
high
righ
crit

Notes

¹This book would not have typically been used as a traditional textbook as it was prepared for a more popular market. Nevertheless, I include it in this study (as well as its subsequent 1794 edition later on in this chapter) because it undoubtedly was used as an aid to reading instruction (but probably on a casual basis) and it shows that the didactic approach pervaded the popular reading fare for children.

²Rosenbach explains that the story of "The Farmer's Daughters" is also found in other works: The Sugar Plumb and The Wisdom of Crop the Conjurer. However, the story is titled "The Farmer and His Two Daughters," and the daughters' names in those works are Betsey and Laura (123).

³Nietz explains that Bingham's two readers The American Preceptor and The Columbian Orator were popular because they satisfied the time period's two main goals of teaching reading: "the teaching of morals, and of elocution or speaking" (65).

⁴Barbauld, the popular writer of children's textbooks in England, was often published in America between 1780 and 1830. Although the social context of her reading books is English, she was read widely by school children in the United States and is therefore included in this study of the tradition of didacticism in early reading textbooks.

⁵This edition of Lessons for Children is a later printing of Barbauld's popular textbook, which was first printed in America in 1788 by B. F. Bache, Benjamin Franklin's grandson (Rosenbach 56). The text of 1818 includes many of the earlier Barbauld lessons, such as the story of the three schoolmates and their cakes. I examined several earlier Barbauld texts printed in America, all forerunners to the 1818 edition used in this dissertation: Lessons for Children, from two to four years old. (Philadelphia: B. F. Bache, 1788); Lessons for Children of Four Years Old. Part II. (Philadelphia: B. F. Bache, 1788); Lessons for Children from four to five years old. (Philadelphia: B. F. Bache, 1788); Lessons for Children from four to five years old. (Wilmington, Del.: P. Brynberg, 1801); and Lessons for Children, Part II. From four to five years old. (Wilmington, Del.: James Wilson, 1803).

Interestingly, Mrs. Barbauld's reading textbooks in their own time were not exempt from negative criticism. Agnes Repplier, in a late-nineteenth-century Atlantic Monthly discusses the criticism: "Even Mrs. Barbauld's highly correct and righteous little volumes are not quite right in [her critics'] eyes" (509). Repplier reveals the critics' concerns:

6,
entitled
"The S
Barbau
that t
in Bar
direct
with a

7
incor
later
world
well
life
store
rathe

Evil lurks behind the phrase "Charles wants his dinner," which would seem to imply that Charles must have whatever he desires; while to say flippantly, "The sun has gone to bed," is to incur the awful odium of telling a child a deliberate untruth. (509)

⁶Both this lesson in Leavitt's Easy Lessons in Reading entitled "The Two Cocks--A Fable" and the preceding lesson, "The Silly Lamb," appeared in earlier texts by Anna Letitia Barbauld (1801, 1803) but without the fable-like format in that the animals do not speak to each other. Neither story in Barbauld's Lessons for Children texts concludes with direct application to family harmony, nor does either end with a stated moral.

⁷Elson explains that nineteenth-century thought incorporates a "moral character" into the universe and later discusses the textbook authors' use of the natural world within the context of didacticism: "All nature as well as man is invested with morality; animal and plant life both follow moral law. In schoolbooks, when ants store up food they do so as an act of moral responsibility rather than as instinctual behavior" (338).

didac

in it

State

perfe

a mo

auth

acce

"The

the

exp

ins

"de

ma

ch

of

au

CHAPTER 5

NATIONALISTIC DIDACTICISM

Washington was not a selfish man. He labored for the good of his country, more than for himself.

--Noah Webster. The Elementary Spelling Book
(1829)

The moral education served by the religious and social didacticism found its strongest and most practical appeal in its application to the young citizens of the United States of America. Beginning reading students were the perfect target of didactic commentary devoted to fostering a moral climate in the new nation, and American textbook authors took great pains to indoctrinate them in an acceptable concept of American citizenship and patriotism. "The sentiment of patriotism, love of country, vies with the love of God as the cornerstone of virtue," Elson explains (282). Because "permanent support of democratic institutions lay in public virtue" and because that virtue "depended upon the character of private citizens," MacLeod maintains, ". . . only the firm establishment of exemplary character in the rising generation could secure the future of the republic" ("Children's" 15). Therefore, textbook authors relied on the tradition of didacticism to promote a

nationa

mind th

he shou

Mc

reading

nation

Revolu

Smith;

nation

gener

in th

point

the p

rela

impl

work

comm

the

the

is

par

be

na

ar

nationalistic spirit in their young audience, keeping in mind the biblical mandate "to train up a child in the way he should go."

Most of the literature that is devoted to early reading textbooks in America stresses the emphasis on nationalism and patriotism that occurred during the post-Revolutionary period (Robinson; Applebee; Elson; Venezky; Smith; Earle; Kiefer). Didactic lessons promoting nationalistic attitudes stand out in comparison with the general moralistic examples of social and religious virtue in the textbooks--probably because the content is so pointed and obvious. Yet, while this focus is apparent in the primers, spellers, and readers, my research turned up relatively few examples. In saying that, I do not mean to imply that the researchers noted above are wrong. Their work accurately reflects the upsurge in nationalistic commentary in the textbooks, but the research suggests (for the most part) that the nationalism completely took over the textbook lessons when, in fact, nationalistic comment is added to the existing lessons and, in some cases, partially supplanting the religious commentary.

An American Perspective

The very fact that the didactic lessons' settings began to shift from England to America indicates a subtle nationalistic mood in the textbooks. Many of the readers and primers were American printings or American revisions

of Engl

the Eng

trend i

with a

stories

enviro

from 1

two- a

del-ph

(58).

Phila

Marke

Chand

Pre-s

gres

this

util

awar

the

acq

est

con

wit

a

ca

po

of English texts, and, therefore, the books often retained the English locale of the original lessons. However, the trend in the American textbooks--especially those published with a mind to promoting nationhood--was to set their stories and reading exercises in a familiar American environment. The primer Easy Lessons for Young Children from 1794 provides an example in a lesson that introduces two- and three-syllable words: "I shall take you to Phi-la-del-phi-a, Wil-li-am, said Mr. Chand-ler to his son . . ." (58). The reading exercise continues as the two travel to Philadelphia and visit the city library, the museum, and a Market Street meeting house. By the end of the lesson the Chandlers have gone to the "Con-gress-hall [to see] the Pre-si-dent de-li-ver an ad-dress to both hou-ses of con-gress a-midst ma-ny fine gen-tle-men" (61). The setting of this lesson is significant in that it represents a utilization of American locale to promote a geographical awareness in young readers. It is also significant in that the lesson discusses American government in passing, thus acquainting readers with certain institutions and thereby establishing them as the norm.

Webster, also, incorporates specifically American concerns in a lesson designed to acquaint young readers with American monetary standards, thus further establishing a specifically American outlook. Webster sets up a near-catechism format in The American Spelling Book of 1815, posing a question, then answering it:

Although

constitut

nationali

the perio

against

on Ameri

system o

shilling

from sta

dollar

England

North C

A

subtle

America

great

money

Webste

geogra

this t

geogr:

natio

namin

"Vern

WILLIAM, tell me how many mills make a cent?
 Ten.--How many cents a dime? Ten.--Tell me the
 other coins of the United States. Ten dimes make
 a dollar, ten dollars an eagle, which is a gold
 coin, and the largest which is coined in the
 United States. (69)

Although the preceding example from Webster does not constitute didacticism as such, it does illustrate the nationalistic perspective apparent in many of the texts of the period. This perspective often plays the American against the British. Several pages following the dialogue on American currency, Webster discusses the U.S. dollar system over the old values of English currency--the pound, shilling, and penny--explaining that their values differ from state to state: "English money is called Sterling--One dollar is four shillings and sixpence sterling--in New England and Virginia, it is six shillings--in New York and North Carolina, it is eight shillings . . ." (113).

A preference for American over British constitutes a subtle nationalism, as Webster points to a coming change in America's monetary system: "But these differences give great trouble, and will soon be laid aside as useless,--all money will be reckoned in dollars and cents" (114). Webster's spellers typically present quite a bit of geography, with an emphasis on American place names. In this text he keeps before the young reader American geographical coinages that have grown in use along with the nation. The nationalistic attitude is maintained in lists naming people coming from various states. For example, "Vermonters" come from the state of Vermont, and

"Boston

America

does ma

that di

M

overt

out of

in th

Engla

publi

prese

that

"Our

howe

coup

king

Prin

Eng

rem

spe

mor

goo

ef

co

le

"Bostonians" come from Boston (120). Again, these uses of Americanisms do not constitute didacticism, but their use does maintain the nationalistic intentions in the textbooks that didacticism further established.

American vs. English

Much of the nationalistic didacticism represents an overt reaction to the English monarchy that of course grew out of the American Revolution. Rosenbach charts the shift in thinking about the monarchy as it appears in the New England Primer, illustrating how editions of the Primer published in America before the Declaration of Independence presented a benign attitude about the king. He explains that the couplet illustrating the letter K earlier read: "Our king the good / No man of Blood" (41). By 1780, however, a revised edition of the Primer had altered the K couplet, indicating a subtle ideological defiance: "The king should be good / No man of blood" (The New-England Primer. For the more easy attaining the true Reading of English n. pag.). A 1782 edition of The New-England Primer removes the definite article *the* before *king*, softening its specific criticism of George III and directing it at monarchy in general by pluralizing *king*: "Kings should be good / Not men of blood" (n. pag.).

While the choice of words in these couplets varies the effect, the intent still is evident. But word choice was a concern for the textbook writers as they prepared their lessons after the American Revolution. In The A, B, C.

with t

recogn

be use

page,

expla.

with

Expre

Teach

Words

reade

The

in

tex

and

in

att

st

Pr

17

na

/

i

with the Church of England Catechism (1785) the author recognizes the need for different wording in a catechism to be used with American students. On the verso of the title page, under an alphabet and syllabarium, the text's author explains: *"The Blanks left in Page 6, were formerly filled with the Words King, and him; but as that Form of Expression does not suit our Republican Governments, the Teacher will be pleased to fill up the Blanks with what Words he may deem Expedient."* Upon turning to page 6, readers found the following lesson from the catechism:

Q. What is thy Duty towards thy Neighbour?
 A. My Duty towards my Neighbor, is to love him as myself, and to do to all Men as I would they should do unto me; to love, honour, and succour my Father and Mother; to honour and obey the , and all that are put in authority under ;" (6)

The choice of words to determine a more nationalistic tone in the New England Primer continued to be a factor in the text's publication history throughout the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, since the Primer was often still in use throughout America. The dominating nationalistic attitudes found in it, therefore, are relevant to this study of the tradition of didacticism. And, again, the Primer's illustration of the letter K in an edition from 1796 shows the overriding preoccupation with American nationalism--in reaction against England: "The British King / Lost States Thirteen" (The New-England Primer; much improved n. pag.).

The
textbooks
however,
More oft
freedom
general.
shaped A

At the
didacti
certain
eviden
In thi
an obv
titled
pictur
over
upon
digre
attit

An American Superiority

The nationalistic didacticism found in the reading textbooks does not all necessarily oppose just England; however, Britain is the only nation singled out by name. More often than not, America's qualities of democracy and freedom are showcased in contrast to European nations in general. Elson explains that the textbooks, in part, shaped American attitudes about other nations:

The majority of voters in the United States met [in the textbooks] their first and only formal presentation of most other nations, and they memorized what they read. From such estimates of national character and behavior they probably formed latent opinions easily called into consciousness by current international events.
(103)

At the heart of much of this kind of nationalistic didacticism is a sense of superiority in being American. A certain intolerance for other nations and peoples is often evident, as in Little Prattle over a Book of Prints (1808). In this reader geared for early-to-intermediate students, an obvious anti-foreign attitude surfaces in the lesson titled "The Hungry Dog," which is illustrated with a picture of a man raising a stick to a dog that has tipped over a pot on an outdoor fire. The text that follows calls upon the man not to beat the dog because it is just hungry, digressing then to inculcate a prejudiced and ethnocentric attitude:

I should think this man is a gipsy. These people travel about in large companies, and dress their food in the open air, as you see in this print. They are accused of stealing poultry, and taking linen which is left on the hedges to dry.

Rosenba

lesson

1804 or

appear

1808,

accept

anti-f

overri

early

reade

reade

in co

poem

the

How much better it would be, if these gipsies would settle, and work for their living, instead of wandering from place to place, telling fortunes, which is only a pretence for stealing. (n. pag.)

Rosenbach explains that the textbook in which the above lesson appears was a copy of a London edition printed in 1804 originally (145). However, because the lesson does appear in the later reader published in Philadelphia in 1808, it would undoubtedly have been perceived as being acceptably American. As a result, its ethnocentricity and anti-foreign bias would have become enmeshed with the overriding nationalism that appeared in so many of the early American reading textbooks written for beginning readers from 1780 to 1830.

"Columbia," a poem in Bingham's 1811 primary-level reader The American Preceptor, showcases American virtues in contrast to European traits. The second stanza of the poem addresses the young nation:

To conquest and slaughter let Europe aspire,
Whelm nations in blood and wrap cities in fire;
Thy heroes the rights of mankind shall defend,
And triumph pursue them, and glory attend.
A world is thy realm: for a world be thy laws,
Enlarg'd as thine empire, and just as thy cause;
On freedom's broad basis thy empire shall rise,
Extend with the main, and dissolve with the
skies. (43)

Patriotic Orations

Patriotic speeches served the nationalistic goals of the textbook authors well. In 1787 Webster stated:

"Several of those masterly addresses of Congress, written at the commencement of the late Revolution, contain such noble sentiments of

Althoug

levels

Lessons

"ORATIO

honora

evenin

citize

quarte

speech

War a

indep

Bing

Prec

Dawe

Amer

liberty and patriotism, that I cannot help wishing to transfuse them into the breasts of the rising generation. . . ." (quoted in Robinson 21)

Although these speeches do not seem suited to the reading levels of beginning students, in An American Selection of Lessons in Reading and Speaking (1804) Webster includes "ORATION, delivered at Boston, March 5, 1774, by the honorable JOHN HANCOCK, Esq. in commemoration of the evening of the Fifth of March 1770; when a number of the citizens were killed by a party of the British troops, quartered among them in the time of peace," a lengthy speech that reminds young Americans of the Revolutionary War and calls them to an appreciation of their recently won independence:

Patriotism is ever united with humanity and compassion. This noble affection, which impels us to sacrifice every thing dear, even life itself, to our country, involves in it a common sympathy and tenderness for every citizen, and must ever have a *particular feeling* for one who suffers in a public cause. (144)

Bingham includes several patriotic speeches in The American Preceptor (1811). "Extract from the Oration of Thomas Dawes, Esq. Delivered at Boston, July 4, 1787" promotes an American education to foster a stronger nation:

. . . in a government where the people fill all the branches of the sovereignty, *intelligence* is the life of liberty. An American would resent his being denied the use of his musket; but he would deprive himself of a stronger safeguard, if he should want that *learning* which is necessary to a knowledge of his constitution. . . . (107)

A clear ca

Mr. John C

1793":

Per

didactic

British

the mat

reputat

describ

notable

radiate

other c

author

portra

of mor

glory

C

readin

hero

Webst

Speak

A clear call to patriotism is the theme of "Extract from Mr. John Q. Adam's Oration, Delivered at Boston, July 4, 1793":

. . . should the voice of our country's calamity ever call us to her relief, we swear by the precious memory of the sages who toiled, and of the heroes who bled in her defence, that we will prove ourselves not unworthy of the prize which they so dearly purchased; that we will act as the faithful disciples of those who so magnanimously taught us the instructive lesson of republican virtue. (145)

American Lives of Virtue

Perhaps the most obvious form of nationalistic didacticism found in the textbooks (other than the anti-British attitudes of the New England Primer revisions) is the material that relies on the lives, actions, and reputations of famous figures from American history. Elson describes the early textbooks' portrayal of such American notables: "America's prominent, great, or heroic men always radiate an inner virtue not to be found in the great men of other countries" (187). As Elson suggests, the textbook authors romanticized the figures' lives; in this romantic portrayal, however, they establish these figures as models of moral virtue, thus promoting an attitude of national glory in the minds of their young readers.

Christopher Columbus finds a place in the early reading textbooks as an example of moral virtue, thus a hero to promote American nationalism. Chapter 21 of Webster's An American Selection of Lessons in Reading and Speaking (1804) is titled "HISTORY of COLUMBUS"; it

establis

attentio

and sett

inquiry'

America

of virt

I

the Am

lends

virtue

attitu

Ameri

has

dida

Phil

it c

Fran

nat

int

establishes Columbus as a figure worthy of young readers' attention: "Every circumstance relating to the discovery and settlement of America, is an interesting object of inquiry" (77). Bingham's "Account of Columbus" in The American Preceptor (1811) holds up the explorer as a model of virtue:

In the life of this remarkable man, there was no deficiency of any quality, which can constitute a great character. He was grave, though courteous in his deportment, circumspect in his words and actions, irreproachable in his morals, and exemplary in all the duties of religion. (43)

In the case of The Franklin Primer, published in 1802, the American statesman's name in the title purportedly lends an aura that recommends the book's nationalistic virtue. The primer's introduction, as well, typifies the attitude the textbook writers held about using prominent American figures to inculcate nationalistic values:

The compiler has introduced the BUST of Doct. FRANKLIN for a frontispiece--a man whose manner of life from his youth up, is worthy [of] the most minute observation, and imitation of the rising generation. (vii)

"The Whistle," a didactic story related by Franklin, has already been discussed in the chapter on social didacticism. But its inclusion in Johnson's New Philadelphia Spelling-Book (1809) is significant in that it derives some of its attraction and effect from Franklin's reputation, thus establishing a certain brand of nationalistic authority and endorsement in its didactic intentions¹. As soon as the reading lesson begins--"When

I was a cl
friends o
(77)--rea
another s
and they
story's r
national
color th

Alt
further
they dic
Washing
edition
portrai
Under t
rightec
Lord w
him" (
in nat
its ju
to Was
incor
Where
epigr
publi
synon
were

I was a child at seven years old, says Dr. Franklin, my friends on a holiday filled my little pockets with coppers" (77)--readers were aware that this lesson was not just another story, but a story coming from a great American, and they would be wise to pay attention. So, although the story's moral in itself did not give rise to any sort of nationalistic sentiment, its author's name and reputation color the moral in shades of national virtue.

Although Columbus and Franklin were often used to further nationalistic objectives in the reading textbooks, they did not enjoy the popularity accorded to George Washington in the school books. A late-eighteenth-century edition of the New England Primer (1796) features a portrait titled "G. WASHINGTON" opposite the title page. Under the wood-cut is the following caption: "Love righteousness, ye that be judges of the earth: think of the Lord with a good heart, and in simplicity of heart seek him" (n. pag.). Obviously, the caption is more religious in nature than nationalistic; however, it is startling in its juxtaposition to the portrait, offering a near-sanctity to Washington. Later editions of the New England Primer incorporate Washington into their illustrated alphabets. Where the letter W in 1762 had been illustrated with the epigram "Whales in The Sea, / God's Voice obey," in Primers published in 1800 (and later in 1814) the letter W was synonymous with Washington: "By Washington, / Great deeds were done" (14).

Jo
up Geor
emulate
Leavitt
young C
sharin
a fine
little
friend
fruit
apple
to hi
Upon
son c

Geor
quit
scr
him
"Wh
fir
loc
sh

Joshua Leavitt's Easy Lessons in Reading (1825) sets up George Washington as a model for young readers to emulate. In a lesson boldly titled "GEORGE WASHINGTON" Leavitt allows his young readers a chance to relate to a young George, incorporating into the story a moral on sharing and forgiveness. The author starts the lesson: "On a fine morning in the fall of 1737, Mr. Washington, having little George by the hand," (142) invite a cousin and a friend to walk through his orchard, which was "strewed with fruit: and yet the trees were bending under the weight of apples, which in *clusters*, like grapes, and vainly strove to hide their red cheeks behind the green leaves" (142). Upon looking out at the bounty, Mr. Washington reminds his son of a past incident:

"Now, George, . . . look here, my son! don't you remember, when this good cousin of yours brought you that fine large apple last spring, how hardly I could prevail on you to *divide* with your brothers and sisters; though I *promised* you that if you would but do it, God Almighty would give you *plenty* of apples this *fall*?" (142)

George does not reply, "but hanging down his head, looked quite confused, while with his little naked toes he scratched in the soft ground" (142-43). His father asks him to look out through the orchard at how God blessed him: "Wherever you turn your eyes, you see the trees loaded with fine fruit" (143). The young boy does not say anything but looks at the orchard, "then lifting his eyes filled with shining moisture, he said, softly, to his father, 'Well,

Pa, only -

stingy and

Earl

a model f

Soldier,'

Ashton, :

The fat

explain

qualit:

sir, w

and tr

almost

F

becaus

young

undou

textb

surfa

the p

(182

Pa, only *forgive me this time*, and see if I ever be so *stingy* any more'" (143).

Earlier in the textbook, Leavitt offers Washington as a model for admiration in the reading lesson "He Would Be a Soldier," a dialogue between Charles and his father Mr. Ashton, in which they discuss Charles's becoming a soldier:

Mr. A. And pray what in the history of the American Revolution, makes you wish to be a *soldier*? Do you like the idea of so much fighting with *Americans* and *Indians*, who will shoot you down from behind fences and trees . . . ?

Char. Oh! dear, no sir; I would not have fought against the Americans. It is *General Washington* that I admire so much. Father, don't you think he was a *good* man, though he was a *soldier*? (Leavitt 73-74)

The father answers that he does admire Washington, but explains that not every soldier can live up to Washington's qualities, to which Charles answers: "Yes, but as you say, sir, what man *has* been, man *can* be; and if I am a soldier, and try hard, *perhaps* I shall be as good a man as *he*,-- almost" (Leavitt 74).

Presumably, George Washington was a figure to admire because of the good example his life had set. The story of young George and the cherry tree has become legendary; undoubtedly, the inclusion of this piece in the reading textbooks has much to do with that fact. The story surfaces in several of the early reading texts, including the preceding Leavitt reader. Good Examples for Children (1828) includes the story with the title "Truth Commended"

as the f

lesson b

When yo

favorit

money .

ruined

The m

as Ge

you h

hatch

arti

run

sinc

the

man.

and

nat

rea

as the first of six moral stories. The short, two-page lesson begins:

When GEORGE WASHINGTON, the late President of the United States, was about six years of age, some one made him a present of a hatchet. Being, like most children, immoderately fond of his weapon, he went about, chopping every thing that came in his way, and going into the garden, he unluckily tried its edge on an English cherry-tree, stripping it of its bark, and leaving little hope of its recovery. (4-5)

When young George's father later finds the tree--one of his favorites--he announces that he would not have even taken money for the cherry tree. But no one can tell him who ruined it.

At length, however, came George, with the hatchet in his hand, into the place where his father was, who immediately suspected him to be the culprit. "George," said the old gentleman, "do you know who killed that beautiful little cherry-tree yonder in the garden?" (5)

The moral virtue--the good example--becomes apparent as George "nobly" answers: "'I can't tell a lie, father;--you know that I can't tell a lie, I did cut it with my hatchet'" (5). The elder Washington's response then articulates the moral lesson: "Run to my arms, my boy . . . run to my arms! I forgive you for destroying my tree, since you have had the honesty and manliness thus to tell the truth respecting it" (5). The qualities of honesty and manliness, then, become synonymous with national virtue, and the example of George Washington promotes a nationalistic consciousness in the didacticism of the reading lessons.

1" The V
textbooks.
Preceptor o

Notes

¹"The Whistle" is a popular selection in many of the textbooks. Bingham also includes it in The American Preceptor of 1811.

I
twenti
postur
period
exerc
tone

tenor
exper
85-8
vari
lite

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

What matchless skill is in the quill,
Pluck'd from a goose's wing;
By this the wise their maxims teach,
By this the poets sing.

--Juvenal Poems, or the
Alphabet in Verse (1808)

Books are delightful things: they tell us of
pleasant countries, and of good men and women.
They teach us how to be useful, good, and
happy.

--The New-York Preceptor
(1812)

It is easy, I think, for us at the end of the
twentieth century to be unduly critical of the didactic
posturing found in the textbooks from the early National
period. The overt moralizing in the reading lessons and
exercises seems forced and unnatural to us; the didactic
tone sounds uncomfortably parochial to modern ears.

What we must keep in mind, however, is the moral
tenor of the period. Readers--young and old, alike--
expected a moral orientation in their reading (Carpenter
85-86; McLeod, A Moral Tale 15). The orientation took
various forms. In much of the general children's
literature--apart from textbooks--the moral instruction

took a somb

attests: A

account of

Eighteen C

the genera

allegoric,

children's

Idle and

between t

inatentic

style and

is appar

decades.

Fro

the dida

social,

recogni

the rel

belief

stories

perspec

themes

behavi

awaren

of nat

promot

goal

took a somber turn as the following title of an 1806 book attests: A Memorial for Children; being an authentic account of the Conversion, Experience and happy Deaths of Eighteen Children. On the other hand, the didacticism in the general books prepared for children was often more allegoric, if not light-hearted, as the title of another children's book from 1806 suggests: The History of Jacky Idle and Dicky Diligent, exhibiting a striking contrast between the different consequences arising from indolent inattention [sic] and laudable perseverance. Whatever the style and tone of the didacticism, the didactic tradition is apparent in the reading of the post-Revolutionary decades.

From the beginning of my research I have categorized the didacticism in the textbooks as essentially religious, social, or nationalistic. Within these three categories¹ I recognize a variety of themes. Thematic emphases within the religious didacticism include lessons devoted to a belief in God, doctrinal or church-related teaching, Bible stories, and lessons dealing with death from a spiritual perspective. The social didacticism branches into several themes, as well, offering lessons devoted to virtuous behavior, excessive behavior, family matters, community awareness, industriousness, and literacy. The didacticism of nationalism is presented differently. Its basis is the promotion of national values and identity. This didactic goal is approached via a number of formats, notably shifts

in word

patrioti

the live

Ove

reading

opportun

behavio

younges

teachin

doctrin

the ye

didact

textbo

slight

appear

with t

the p

chang

affec

nati

the

for

soci

this

in word choice within the lessons to favor America, patriotic orations, and examples of moral virtue drawn from the lives of famous American figures.

Overall, the tradition of didacticism in the early reading textbooks provided the textbook authors with opportunity to impress concepts of correct and appropriate behaviors and attitudes upon the minds of America's youngest citizens. With the tradition of religious teaching already firmly entrenched in the primers, doctrinal instruction was easily introduced. However, in the years following the Revolutionary War, the religiously didactic material appears to loosen its hold in the textbooks. This letting-go, it must be pointed out, is slight, however; religious comment in the textbooks does appear consistently. Yet, it shares the textbook pages with the emerging social and nationalistic commentary of the period.

As the didactic content in the beginning reading texts changed from overtly religious to socially virtuous, the affective content began, as well, to turn toward nationalism. Literature in the field primarily recognizes the shift in emphasis from religious to nationalistic, and for the most part scholarship downplays the strong flow of social didacticism that grows up with it. Smith notices this duality:

The stress on nationalism is so startling and conspicuous at first sight that it overshadows a second and independent point of emphasis which is revealed upon closer study. This second emphasis

Most of

overshad

the dida

readers

textboo

social

didacti

overemp

the in

textbo

nation

the te

teach.

textb

being

highl

schol

the

spel

text

sent

olde

Web

tex

is moralism, an influence which permeated reading instruction quietly and unassumingly but so persistently and universally as to claim an equal rank with nationalism in our characterization of the period. (38-39)

Most of the research describes social moralism as being overshadowed by the rise of nationalism. My research into the didactic content of the early primers, spellers, and readers does not support such a conclusion, however. The textbooks I examined offer two times as many examples of social didacticism as instances of nationalistic didacticism. I can speculate on reasons for the scholars' overemphasis on nationalism. First, as Smith describes it, the inclusion of overtly national sentiment in the textbooks is "startling and conspicuous" because the nationalism is the first *issue* to have found its way into the texts. In other words, where earlier religious teaching, as a given, was expected in the reading textbooks, the new concept of nationalism was consciously being applied to the content, and examples of it were highly conspicuous. A second reason I can think of for the scholarly attention centered on nationalism has to do with the level of textbook. In my examination of the primers, spellers, and readers, I focused primarily on beginning texts. Although I found several instances of nationalistic sentiment in them, I believe that textbooks geared for older readers held far more examples of nationalism. Noah Webster's works are traditionally recognized as the primary texts of this period that are devoted to national values;

yet his t
typically
compared
research
typically
levels
substan
for old
emphas
works;
textbo
didact
any re
the e
readi

gener
the
envi
auth
of
sto
arc
hou
so
he
le

yet his textbook formats and lessons are what would be typically prepared for more intermediate pupils (as compared with many of the other beginning texts). The research into the area of early American textbooks typically covers elementary, intermediate, and secondary levels of instruction, and the research finds its most substantial examples of nationalism in the books prepared for older students. Perhaps that is due to the stronger emphasis on reading selections given in the more advanced works; perhaps it is because Webster and his contemporary textbook authors consciously endeavored to balance their didactic moralizing with basic literacy instruction. At any rate, the examples of social didacticism far outnumber the examples of nationalistic didacticism in the beginning reading textbooks I examined.

Regardless of the didactic theme, the lessons generally offer an idealized picture of life. Typically, the stories are set in a comfortable, middle-class environment; both indoors and out, the settings reflect the authors' idealized concept of American life. An attitude of physical and material contentment often underlies the story line in the lessons as the stories' action centers around physical objects like furniture, books, and other household items. The lessons set outside usually focus on some sort of horticultural scene. Orchards, gardens, and hedgerows seem to be particularly popular settings for lessons. By looking carefully at the clues in the stories,

one could
lessons in
sense of
this is d
texts were
hand, per
were mor
course,
obvious
to prom
of a st
attenti
story o
Philade

Th
textbo
simpli
texts
all ba
later
texts
contr
selfi
child
wishes
exam
and

one could speculate that the physical settings of the lessons in the textbooks more accurately reflect an English sense of place than an early American environment. Perhaps this is due to the fact that many (but not all) of the texts were revised editions of British books; on the other hand, perhaps American textbook authors' sentimental ideals were more akin to a middle-class English existence.² Of course, there are exceptions to this attitude, the most obvious being those lessons whose didactic intentions are to promote nationalistic goals. However, only one example of a story that included a named American place came to my attention during my primary research, and that was the story of the boy and his father who traveled to Philadelphia (Easy Lessons for Young Children [1794]).

The settings of the lessons notwithstanding, the textbook authors typically presented an idealized and simplistic view of children in the lessons. The earlier texts generally portrayed children as either all good or all bad. For example, the character Billy that appears in later revisions of the New England Primer, Barbauld's texts, and other lessons is remarkably righteous. In contrast, Billy's classmates in the boarding school are selfish, greedy, and intemperate. Other lessons feature children stealing fruit, going against their parents' wishes, and neglecting their studies. In addition to the examples of naughty children, names like Harriet Haughty and Wat Wilful, of course, are caricatures; nevertheless,

they feed
writers.
undoubtedly
children.

In 1
appear to
capable o
intended
response
chops do
his erro
response

By
styles,
have pro
period'
early r
during
establi
America
social
believ
valued
today.

A
the sp
Ameri

they feed into the simplistic view held by many of the text writers. Such examples of children's wrongdoing undoubtedly reflect their authors' limited understanding of children.

In later textbooks, the children in the story lessons appear to be more realistically drawn. The characters are capable of both good and bad behavior; perhaps that is the intended moral--that "bad" action requires a "good" response. Young George Washington, for instance, willfully chops down his father's cherry tree, but he does admit to his error. His bad action is absolved in his good response.

By examining and analyzing the didactic themes, styles, and intentions of the various textbook authors, I have provided a more fully drawn perspective of the period's expectations of reading. I contend, too, that the early reading textbooks published for beginning students during this critical period in America's history established, in part, the perceptions and attitudes of Americans toward reading. The authors' overt religious, social, and nationalistic didacticism in the textbooks, I believe, may have done much to condition how Americans valued reading--and, to some extent, how they perceive it today.

Although I can only offer conjecture at this point, the speculation that early textbook content affected Americans' valuation of reading is worth further study.

Just as a
degree est
later on i
(i.e., Dur
collective
practices
text that
child in
it.") in
impressi
and Chri
nation's
further
indoctr
expecta
early A
a "mor
of rea
M
other
a car
secta
signi
autho
reli
be t
soci

Just as a child's early experiences with print to a large degree establish his or her attitudes related to literacy later on in life, according to a wide range of experts (i.e., Durkin; Taylor; Trelease; Leichter), America's collective valuing of literacy was affected by its early practices and expectations of reading. Just as the Bible text that opened so many of the early primers ("Train up a child in the way he should go and he will not depart from it.") indicated the authors' intentions to instill in impressionable young minds a long-lasting love of virtue and Christian morality, so can it apply to the young nation's consciousness. This speculation leads me to ask further questions: Does early American society's indoctrination by textbook didacticism color society's expectations of reading and its affective milieu? Did early American didacticism condition readers to always seek a "moral" in their reading? Does that earlier expectation of reading still prevail to some degree within America?

My study of textbooks from 1780 to 1830 raises several other areas of interest for further inquiry. For instance, a careful examination of the religious didacticism from a sectarian or denominational point of view could be significant, especially if that study would pinpoint the authorship of the various lessons and texts, establishing religious affiliation. Another area for examination would be the authors' conscious shift from religious sentiment to social instruction in the individual authors' revisions of

specific textb

within the wo

the shift be

The text

further atten

culminate in

agenda for t

inclusions o

the concerns

nineteenth c

My stu

the notable

successful

of the more

popular wor

Who in the

Altho

during the

as the Bar

heavy-hand

based book

in Americ

Perh

practice

sentences

Many of t

reading :

specific textbooks. How does the evolution come about within the work of one author? Can the forces producing the shift be established and quantified?

The textbooks' social didacticism, as well, deserves further attention. What are the social forces that culminate in the textbook lessons? What was the social agenda for the didacticism? How conscious were the inclusions of didactic examples that heralded attention to the concerns of the temperance movement of the later nineteenth century?

My study of the reading textbooks includes several of the notable authors' popular, and, therefore, commercially successful works, but I wonder about the commercial success of the more obscure titles. How did they fare against popular works like Webster's speller or Murray's reader? Who in the common schools decided on the reading textbook?

Although many of the textbooks published in America during the period were reprintings of British texts--such as the Barbauld Easy Lessons--they do not contain such heavy-handed didacticism as that appearing in the American-based books. Does this suggest a propensity for moralism in American society as opposed to British society?

Perhaps most engaging is the problem of--or, at least, practice of--the various authors and compilers who borrowed sentences, lessons, and exercises from previous textbooks. Many of the lessons (especially the "Select Sentences" for reading instruction) incorporate stock sentences that

appear with some
cases, the text
imitations and
It seems, too,
from one another
to describe the
development.

imbue, impress
indicate the
instructive
changes and
various editions
and analysis
literary borrowing

The early
between 1780
to American
like Murray
designed for
textbooks written
educators.
textbooks and
instructive
textbook literature
in their youth
Revolution
consciousness

appear with some regularity from text to text. In many cases, the texts' longer lessons, or stories, are imitations and adaptations of previously published works. It seems, too, that the textbook authors borrowed language from one another--or, at least, they selected similar terms to describe their intentions to instruct students in moral development. The prefaces of the textbooks use words like *imbue*, *impress*, *instill*, and *inculcate* over and over to indicate the authors' obligation to include morally instructive reading material. I have charted some the changes and variations in text that I have noticed in the various editions, but a more comprehensive documentation and analysis would be significant for future research into literary borrowings and copyright practices.

The early reading textbooks published in America between 1780 and 1830 constitute significant contributions to American education. In several cases, notable authors like Murray and Webster were responsible for these works designed for beginning readers; in more cases, the textbooks were published by now-long-forgotten printers and educators. Whatever their publication history, these textbooks all endorsed the tradition of didactic instructiveness at a critical period of time. These textbook lessons that were designed to instill moral truths in their young readers appeared during the post-Revolutionary period--a time when the national consciousness was being formed. They continued in the

tradition of d

Primer, and th

expectations o

tradition of didacticism established by the New England Primer, and they further established the young nation's expectations of moral learning as an outgrowth of literacy.

¹As I have
overlap--with
For example, the
didactic that
and the inevi
the context of
and thrift: "
fly away. Ma

²Possible
the fact that
1745 and live
England in 17
never return.
(Rosenbach 2

Notes

¹As I have noted, the three types of didacticism often overlap--with one lesson emphasizing more than one concept. For example, the lessons I have categorized as religiously didactic that have to do with the transitory nature of life and the inevitability of death can easily be read within the context of social didacticism that emphasizes industry and thrift: "Swift as the arrow from the bow, our time doth fly away. Make much of time" (The New-York Preceptor 30).

²Possibly significant to this item of speculation is the fact that Lindley Murray was born in Pennsylvania in 1745 and lived in the United States until he emigrated to England in 1784. He settled near York and lived there, never returning to America, until he died in 1826 (Rosenbach 209).

The A, B, C
which
Protes
Hymn c
Easter
M'Cull

Alexander,
Language
of Tea
Speak
10th c

The American
Young
(Micro

The American
and R
1813.

Barbault,
five
(Micro

---. Less
Wilmi

---. Less
Phila

---. Less
Benja

---. Less
Phila

---. Less
years
(Micro

Beauties c
1814

PRIMARY SOURCES

The A, B, C. with the Church of England Catechism. To which is annexed, Prayers used in the Academy of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in Philadelphia. Also, A Hymn on the Nativity of our Saviour; and another for Easter-Day. Philadelphia: Young, Stewart, & M'Culloch, 1785. (Microfiche.)

Alexander, Caleb. Grammatical System of the English Language: Comprehending a Plain and Familiar Scheme of Teaching Young Gentlemen and Ladies the Art of Speaking and Writing Correctly Their Native Tongue. 10th ed. Keene, N. H.: John Prentiss, 1814.

The American Primer, calculated for the Instruction of Young Children. Norfolk: A. C. Jordan & Co., 1803. (Microfiche.)

The American Primer; or, an easy introduction to Spelling and Reading. 4th ed. Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1813. (Microfiche.)

Barbault, Anna Letitia. Lessons for Children from four to five years old. Philadelphia: B. F. Bache, 1788. (Microfiche.)

---. Lessons for Children from four to five years old. Wilmington, Del.: P. Brynberg, 1801. (Microfiche.)

---. Lessons for Children, from two to four years old. Philadelphia: B. F. Bache, 1788. (Microfiche.)

---. Lessons for Children. In Four Parts. Philadelphia: Benjamin Warner, 1818. (Microfiche.)

---. Lessons for Children of Four Years Old. Part II. Philadelphia: B. F. Bache, 1788. (Microfiche.)

---. Lessons for Children, Part II. From four to five years old. Wilmington, Del.: James Wilson, 1803. (Microfiche.)

Beauties of the New-England Primer. New York: Samuel Wood, 1814. (Microfiche.)

Benezet, Ant.
Youth's
Plan, f
Instruct
Reading
of Orth
their M
More p
Guardi
privat
Domest
Cruksh

Bentley, Re
Contai
Alphab
the U
Usefu
with
Co.,

Bingham, C
Selec
Desic
Mann

---. The
Orig
Calc
Orna
Bing

---. Juv
Chi
Dav

Bolles,
Ort
New
(Mi

The Book
Gi
Ma

The Chi
Le
c.

The Chi
Co
th
ac
I

Benezet, Anthony, comp. The Pennsylvania Spelling-Book, or Youth's friendly Instructor and Monitor: On an easy Plan, for exciting the Attention, and facilitating the Instruction of Children and others in Spelling and Reading, and acquainting them with the essential Parts of Orthography, Pointing, Etc. As also, training their Minds to early Sentiments of Piety and Virtue. More particularly calculated for the use of Parents, Guardians and others, remote from Schools; in the private Tuition of their Children, and illiterate Domesticks, Etc. 2nd ed. Philadelphia: Joseph Crukshank, 1779. (Microfiche.)

Bentley, Rensselaer. The Pictorial Spelling Book: Containing an Improved Method of Teaching the Alphabet, and Likewise Spelling and Pronunciation, by the Use of Pictures: Interspersed with a Variety of Useful and Interesting Reading Lessons, Illustrated with Numerous Engravings. New York: Pratt, Woodford & Co., 1844.

Bingham, Caleb. The American Preceptor; Being a New Selection of Lessons for Reading and Speaking. Designed for the Use of Schools. 42nd ed. Boston: Manning & Loring, 1811.

---. The Columbian Orator: Containing a Variety of Original and Selected Pieces; Together with Rules; Calculated to Improve Youth and Others in the Ornamental and Useful Art of Eloquence. Boston: Caleb Bingham & Co., 1817.

---. Juvenile Letters; being a Correspondence between Children, from eight to fifteen years of age. Boston: David Carlisle for Caleb Bingham, 1803. (Microfiche.)

Bolles, William. A spelling book: containing exercises in Orthography, Pronunciation, and Reading. 2nd ed. New-London, Conn.: William Bolles, 1827. (Microfiche.)

The Book of Books, for Children, To teach all good boys and Girls to be wiser than their school-fellows. Salem, Mass.: N. Coverly, 1801. (Microfiche.)

The Child's First Step up the Ladder of Learning; or, Easy Lessons for the Infant Mind. New York: Mahlon Day, c. 1830. (Microfiche.)

The Child's Spelling Book: Calculated to render Reading Completely Easy to Little Children; To Impress upon their minds the importance of Religion, and the advantages of Good Manners. 4th ed. Hartford: Increase Cooke & Co., 1802. (Microfiche.)

Cobb, Lyman.
for Pro
Penn.:

---. Cobb's
Penn.:

The Columbi
collec
Pathet
with S
which
Design
H. & I

Dickinson,
New a
and P
State
Arts
& C.

Douglass,
Doug

Easy Less
1794

[Edgewort
firs
Par
Joh

An Elegy
sto
The
Joh

[Ely, J
Le
to
Vo
(M

Good Ex
(I

Hendle
a
h
S

Cobb, Lyman. Cobb's Spelling Book, Being a Just Standard for Pronouncing the English Language. Lewistown, Penn.: J. H. Hickok & Co., 1835.

---. Cobb's Toys. Second Series, nos. 1-11. Lewistown, Penn.: Hickock and Stark, 1835. (Microfiche.)

The Columbian Reader; containing a New and Choice collection of Descriptive, Narrative, Argumentative, Pathetic, Humorous, and Entertaining Pieces. Together with Speeches, Orations, Addresses, and Harangues. To which is Added, a New Collection of Dialogues. Designed for the Use of Schools. Cooperstown, N. Y.: H. & E. Phinney, 1815.

Dickinson, Rodolphus. The Columbian Reader, Comprising a New and Various Selection of Elegant Extracts in Prose and Poetry, For the Use of Schools in the United States. To which is Prefixed an Introduction on the Arts of Reading and Speaking. 2nd ed. Boston: R. P. & C. Williams, 1818.

Douglass, Frederick. Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave. New York: Penguin, 1982.

Easy Lessons for Young Children. Philadelphia: W. Young, 1794. (Microfiche.)

[Edgeworth, Maria.] Harry and Lucy, Part I. Being the first part of Early Lessons, by the author of The Parent's Assistant, six volumes. Philadelphia: Jacob Johnson, 1805. (Microfiche.)

An Elegy on the Death and Burial of Cock Robin. With the story of the Farmer's Daughters. To which is added, The Tragical Death of an Apple-Pye. Philadelphia: John Adams, 1805. (Microfiche.)

[Ely, John.] The Child's Instructor: Consisting of Easy Lessons for Children; on Subjects which are Familiar to them, in language adapted to their capacities. Vol. 1. 2nd ed. Philadelphia: John M'Culloch, 1793. (Microfiche.)

Good Examples for Children. New York: Mahlon Day, 1828. (Microfiche.)

Hendley, George. A Memorial for Children; being an authentic account of the Conversion, Experience and happy Deaths of Eighteen Children. New Haven: Sidney's Press, 1806. (Microfiche.)

The History
strikin
arising
perserv
(Microf

The Instruct
N. pag

Johnson's N
Path t
1809.

Johnson's F
childn
(Micro

Juvenal Po
Enter
other
(Micr

Kimber and
Phila
(Micr

Leavitt, J
the
[Tit
Verm

Little Pr
Chil
(Mic

The Litt
(Mi

Little,
Spe
Ber

M'Carty
mos
Imp
M'

Melvill
No
19

Moral s
De

The History of Jacky Idle and Dicky Diligent, exhibiting a striking contrast between the different consequences arising from indolent inattention [sic] and laudable perserverance. Philadelphia: John Adams, 1806. (Microfiche.)

The Instructive Alphabet. New York: Samuel Wood, 1814. N. pag. (Microfiche.)

Johnson's New Philadelphia Spelling-Book: or, A Pleasant Path to Literature. Philadelphia: Benjamin Johnson, 1809. (Microfiche.)

Johnson's Philadelphia Primer. Or, a first book for children. Philadelphia: Benjamin Warner, 1821. (Microfiche.)

Juvenal Poems, or the Alphabet in Verse. Designed for the Entertainment of all good Boys and Girls, and no others. New Haven: Sidney's Press, 1808. (Microfiche.)

Kimber and Conrad's ABC Book, with Pictures for Children. Philadelphia: Kimber and Conrad, c. 1810. N. pag. (Microfiche.)

Leavitt, Joshua. Easy Lessons in Reading; For the Use of the Younger Classes in Common Schools. 6th ed. [Title page mutilated; "Preface" indicates Putney, Vermont: 1825.]

Little Prattle over a Book of Prints. With easy tales for Children. Philadelphia: J. Johnson, 1808. N. pag. (Microfiche.)

The Little Primer. New York: Mahlon Day, c. 1830. (Microfiche.)

Little, William. Reading made Easy: Or, a New Guide to Spelling and Reading. In Four Parts. New York: Benjamin G. Jansen, 1818. (Microfiche.)

M'Carty's American Primer. Being a selection of words the most easy of pronunciation. Intended To facilitate the Improvement of Children in Spelling. Philadelphia: M'Carty and Davis, 1828. (Microfiche.)

Melville, Herman. Moby-Dick or The Whale. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern Univ. Press and The Newberry Library, 1988.

Moral Stories. Written for the Instruction of Young Minds. Dedham: H[erman] Mann, 1806. (Microfiche.)

Muckars

tl

or

Sl

I

(

Murray

E

9

2

3

4

The M

The M

The

The

The

The

Th

Th

- Muckarsie, John. The Children's Catechism; or, an the more easy Understanding of the Doctrine Taught our Confession of Faith, and, Catechisms, Large Shorter. Humbly offered for instructing the Young Ignorant. Philadelphia: R. Aitken, 1780. (Microfiche.)
- Murray, Lindley. A First Book for Children. Philadelphia: Benjamin Warner, 1818. (Microfiche.)
- . Introduction to the English Reader: Or, a Selection of Pieces, in Prose and Poetry; Calculated to Improve the Younger Classes of Learners in Reading; And to Imbue their Minds with the Love of Virtue to Which Are Added, Rules and Observations for Assisting Children to Read with Propriety. Boston: Lincoln & Edmans, 1823.
- The New-England Primer. Philadelphia: Charles Cist, 1782. N. pag. (Microfiche.)
- The New England Primer. For the more easy attaining the true Reading of English. Philadelphia: R. Aitken, 1780. N. pag. (Microfiche.)
- The New-England Primer Improved. For the More Easy Attaining the Reading of English. Boston: S. Kneeland, 1762. (Microfiche.)
- The New-England Primer, Improved, for the More Easy Attaining the True Reading of English. Hartford: John Babcock, 1800. (Microfiche.)
- The New-England Primer, Improved; Or, an Easy and Pleasant Guide to the Art of Reading. Pittsburgh: Cook and Schoyer, 1833. (Microfiche.)
- The New-England Primer; much improved. Containing, a Variety of easy Lessons. For Attaining the true Reading of English. Germantown: n.p., 1796. N. pag. (Microfiche.)
- The New-England Primer; much improved, Contaning [sic], A Variety of easy Lessons, for Attaining the true reading of English. Philadelphia: Johnston and Justice for [Robert] Campbell, 1792. N. pag. (Microfiche.)
- The New England Primer. Or, an Easy and Pleasant Guide to the Art of Reading. Also, the Assembly of Divines and the Episcopal Catechism. New York: C. W. Bunce for Samuel A Burtus, 1814. (Microfiche.)

The Ne
W

The O

Osbor

The I

A Pi

A Pl

The

Pre

The

T

S

;

The New-York Preceptor; or, Third Book. New York: Samuel Wood, 1812. (Microfiche.)

The Orphans, or, Honesty Rewarded. Philadelphia: Bennett and Walton, 1808. (Microfiche.)

Osborne, Henry. An English Grammar, adapted to the capacities of children. Charleston, S. C.: Burd & Boden, 1785. (Microfiche.)

The Penny Primer. New York: Mahlon Day, c. 1830. (Microfiche.)

A Picture Book, for Little Children. Philadelphia: Kimber and Conrad, c. 1812. N. pag. (Microfiche.)

A Pleasing Toy, for Girl or Boy. Wendall, Mass.: J. Metcalf, 1830. (Microfiche.)

The Post Boy. Philadelphia: Jacob Johnson, c. 1807. N. pag. (Microfiche.)

Pretty Poems, Songs, Etc. In Easy Language, for the Amusement of Little Boys and Girls. By Tommy Lovechild. Litchfield: Hosmer and Goodwin, 1808. (Microfiche.)

The Reprobate's Reward, or, a Looking-Glass for Disobedient Children, being A full and true Account of the barbarous and bloody Murder of one Elizabeth Wood, living in the city of Cork, by her own Son, as she was riding, upon the 28th day of July, to Kingsdale market. How he cut her throat from ear to ear; as also how the murder was found out by her apparition or ghost; the manner of his being taken; his dying words at the place of execution; with a true copy of verses written with his own hand in Cork jail, being a warning to all disobedient Children to repent, and obey their Parents. Philadelphia: n. p., 1798. (Microfiche.)

The Silver Penny; or New Lottery-Book for Children. Philadelphia: John Adams, 1806. (Microfiche.)

Story of William and Ellen. Wendell, Mass.: J. Metcalf, 1827. (Microfiche.)

Tom Thumb's Folio, For little Giants. To which is prefixed, An Abstract of the Life of Mr. Thumb. And an Historical Account of The wonderful Deeds he performed. Together with Some Anecdotes respecting Grumbo, the great Giant. Boston: T. and J. Fleet, c. 1780. (Microfiche.)

Tom T

The U

Watt:

Webs

[

Tom Thumb's Folio: Or, A new Threepenny Plaything for Little Giants. To which is prefixed, an Abstract of the Life of Mr. Thumb, and an Historical Account of the Wonderful Deeds he performed. Together with some Anecdotes respecting Grumbo, the great Giant. Boston: Samuel Hall, 1794. (Microfiche.)

The Uncle's Present, A New Battledoor. Philadelphia: Jacob Johnson, c. 1810. N. pag. (Microfiche.)

Watts, Isaac. Dr. Watts' Plain and Easy Catechisms for Children. Exeter: Henry Ranlet, 1791. (Microfiche.)

Webster, Noah. An American Selection of Lessons in Reading and Speaking; Calculated to Improve the Minds and Refine the Taste of Youth. And also to Instruct Them in Geog., History, and Politics of the United States. To which are prefixed, Rules in Elocution, and Directions for Expressing the Principal Passions of the Mind. Being the Third Part of a Grammatical Institute of the English Language. Exeter, Conn.: Edward Little & Co., 1804.

---. The American Spelling Book: Containing an easy standard of pronunciation. Being the first part of a Grammatical Institute of the English Language. 5th ed. Boston: Isaiah Thomas and Ebenezer T. Andrews, 1793. (Microfiche.)

---. The American Spelling Book; Containing the Rudiments of the English Language, for the Use of Schools in the United States. Rev. ed. Boston: Bradford & Read, 1815.

---. The Elementary Spelling Book; Being an Improvement on the American Spelling Book. New York: G. F. Cooledge, 1829.

[Willard, Samuel.] The Franklin Family Primer: containing A new and useful selection of Moral Lessons. Adorned with a great variety of Cuts, calculated to strike a lasting impression on the Tender Minds of Children. Boston: J. M. Dunham, 1806. (Microfiche.)

---. The Franklin Primer. Containing a new and useful selection of Moral Lessons. Adorned with a great variety of Elegant Cuts; calculated to strike a lasting impression on the tender minds of children. Boston: J. M. Dunham, 1802. (Microfiche.)

Wisdom in Miniature: or the Young Gentleman and Lady's Magazine--Being a collection of Sentences, Divine and Moral. Hartford: J. Babcock, 1796. (Microfiche.)

Wisc

The

The

Wisdom in Miniature: or the Young Gentleman and Lady's Magazine. Being a Collection of Sentences, Divine and Moral. Philadelphia: John Adams, 1805. (Microfiche.)

The Wonderful History of an Enchanted Castle, kept by Giant Grumbo, the most humane and tender-hearted giant in the known world. Albany: E. and E. Hosford, 1813. (Microfiche.)

The Young Child's A, B, C; Or, First Book. New York: Samuel Wood, 1820. (Microfiche.)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alvine, Lynne. "Noah Webster: The Legacy of 'The Prompter.'" Virginia English Bulletin 37 (Spring 1987): 52-62.
- Applebee, Arthur N. Tradition and Reform in the Teaching of English: A History. Urbana, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1974.
- Babbidge, H. D. Noah Webster On Being American: Selected Writing, 1783-1828. N. p.: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967.
- Binder, Frederick M. The Age of the Common School, 1830-1865. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1974.
- Blinderman, Abraham. Three Early Champions of Education: Benjamin Franklin, Benjamin Rush, and Noah Webster. ERIC ED 120 098 (1976).
- Buell, Lawrence. New England Literary Culture: From Revolution Through Renaissance. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1986.
- Carpenter, Charles. History of American Schoolbooks. Philadelphia: Univ. Pennsylvania Press, 1963.
- Chalmers, G. S. Reading Easy, 1800-50: A Study of the Teaching of Reading with a List of the Books Which Were Used and a Selection of Facsimile Pages. London: The Broadsheet King, 1976.
- Cremin, Lawrence A. The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961.
- Davidson, Cathy N. Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1986.
- Douglas, Ann. The Feminization of American Culture. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977.
- Durkin, Dolores. Children Who Read Early. New York: Teachers College Press, 1966.

Earle

Elson

Fitzg

Ford

Graf

Hals

*Hea

Irv

Jo

Ke

K

L

L

- Earle, Alice Morse. Child Life in Colonial Days. New York: Macmillan Co., 1899; rpt. 1930.
- Elson, Ruth Miller. Guardians of Tradition: American Schoolbooks of the Nineteenth Century. Lincoln: Univ. Nebraska Press, 1964.
- Fitzgibbons, Kathleen Connery. "A History of the Evolution of the Didactic Literature for Puritan Children in America from 1656-1856." DAI 48 (1987) 09A (Univ. Massachusetts).
- Ford, Paul Leicester. The New-England Primer: A History of Its Origin and Development. 1897; rpt. New York: Teachers College, Columbia Univ., 1962.
- Graff, Harvey J. The Legacies of Literacy. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1987.
- Halsey, Rosalie V. Forgotten Books of the American Nursery: A History of the Development of the American Story-Book. Boston: Charles E. Goodspeed and Co., 1911.
- *Heartman, Charles Frederick, comp. American Primers, Indian Primers, Royal Primers and Thirty-seven other Types of Non-New-England Primers Issued Prior to 1830. Highland Park, N. J.: Harry B. Weiss, 1935.
- . The New England Primer Printed in America Prior to 1830: A Bibliographical Checklist. New York: n. p., 1915.
- Irwin, John T. American Hieroglyphics. New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1980.
- Johnson, Clifton. Old-Time Schools and School-Books. New York: Macmillan Co., 1917.
- Kennedy, William Bean. The Shaping of Protestant Education. New York: Association Press, 1966.
- Kiefer, Monica. American Children Through Their Literature, 1700-1835. Philadelphia: Univ. Pennsylvania Press, 1948.
- Leichter, Hope Jensen. "Families and Communities as Educators: Some Concepts of Relationships." Teachers College Record, 79.4 (May 1978): 567-658.
- Lockridge, Kenneth A. Literacy in Colonial New England. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1974.

MacLeod
C
I
C

Meigs

Monag

Monag

Mosi

Mye

Nie

Ny

Os

Pe

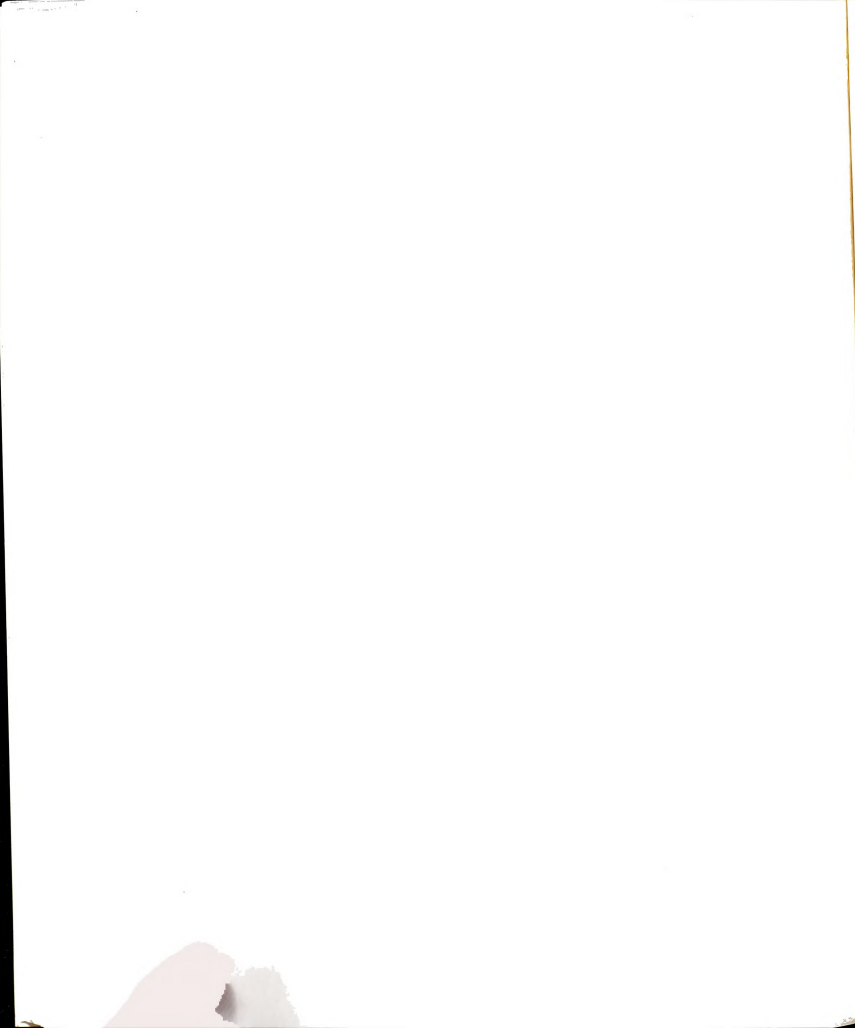
Q

R

- MacLeod, Anne Scott. "Children's Literature and American Culture 1820-1860." In Society and Children's Literature. Ed. James H. Fraser. Boston: David R. Godine, 1978. 11-31.
- . A Moral Tale: Children's Fiction and American Culture 1820-1860. Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1975.
- Meigs, Cornelia, et al. A Critical History of Children's Literature. Rev. ed. London: Macmillan Co., 1969.
- Monaghan, E. Jennifer, and E. Wendy Saul. "The Reader, The Scribe, The Thinker: A Critical Looks at the History of American Reading and Writing Instruction." In The Formation of School Subjects: The Struggle for Creating an American Institution. Ed. Thomas S. Popkewitz. New York: The Falmer Press, 1987. 85-122.
- Monaghan, Edith Jennifer. "Noah Webster's Speller, 1783-1843." DAI 41 (1980) 04A (Yeshiva Univ.).
- Mosier, Richard D. Making the American Mind: Social and Moral Ideas in the McGuffey Readers. New York: Russell and Russell, 1965.
- Myers, Miles. "Shifting Standards of Literacy--The Teacher's Catch-22." English Journal (April 1984): 26-32.
- Nietz, John A. Old Textbooks: Spelling, Grammar, Reading, Arithmetic, Geography, American History, Civil Government, Physiology, Penmanship, Art, Music--As Taught in the Common Schools from Colonial Days to 1900. Pittsburgh: Univ. Pittsburgh Press, 1961.
- Nye, Russel Blaine. Society and Culture in America, 1830-1860. New York: Harper and Row, 1974.
- Osborne, Edgar. "Introduction." In The Osborne Collection of Early Children's Books, 1566-1910: A Catalogue. Vol. 1. Ed. Judith St. John. Toronto: Toronto Public Library, 1958; rpt. 1975.
- Packer, Katherine H. Early American School Books: A Bibliography Based on the Boston Booksellers' Catalogue of 1804. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan, 1954.
- Quayle, Eric. Early Children's Books: A Collector's Guide. London: David & Charles Pub., 1983.
- Reeder, Rudolph R. The Historical Development of School Readers and of Method in Teaching Reading. New York: Macmillan Co., 1900.

- Repplier, Agnes. "Children, Past and Present." Atlantic Monthly 57 (April 1886): 508-17.
- Robinson, R. R. Two Centuries of Change in the Content of School Readers. Nashville: George Peabody College for Teachers, 1930.
- Rosenbach, A. S. W. Early American Children's Books. Portland, Maine, 1933; rpt. New York: Kraus Reprint Corp., 1966.
- Scudder, Horace E. Noah Webster. 5th ed. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1885.
- Sloan, Douglas, ed. The Great Awakening and American Education: A Documentary History. New York: Teachers College Press, 1973.
- Smith, Nila Banton. American Reading Instruction. Rev. ed. Newark: International Reading Assoc., 1965.
- Soltow, Lee, and Edward Stevens. The Rise of Literacy and the Common School in the United States: A Socioeconomic Analysis to 1870. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1981.
- Taylor, Denny. Family Literacy: Young Children Learning to Read and Write. Exeter, N. H.: Heinemann Educational Books, 1983.
- Thwaite, M. F. From Primer to Pleasure. London: The Library Association, 1963.
- Trelease, Jim. The New Read-Aloud Handbook. New York: Penguin, 1989.
- Venezky, Richard L. "A History of the American Reading Textbook." The Elementary School Journal 87 (Jan. 1987): 247-65.
- Walton, Susan. "Once Upon a Time in Schools: Reading Methods Stressed Alphabet, Rote Drill." Education Week 5 Sept. 1984: L9, L62.
- Welch, d'Alte A. A Bibliography of American Children's Books Printed Prior to 1821. [Worcester] Mass.: American Antiquarian Society and Barre Publishers, 1972.
- Welter, Rush. The Mind of America, 1820-1860. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1975.

Westerhoff, John H. McGuffey and His Readers: Piety, Morality, and Education in Nineteenth-Century America.
Nashville: Abingdon, 1978.







MICHIGAN STATE UNIV. LIBRARIES



31293008802823