COLONIAL and FEDERALIST AMERICAN WRITING

Edited by GEORGE F. HORNER and ROBERT A. BAIN
COLONIAL and
FEDERALIST
AMERICAN
WRITING

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THE ODYSSEY PRESS · INC · NEW YORK
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS


PREFACE

Over two centuries of American writing are represented by the selections in this volume. In these two centuries, England, whose literature provided the forms for American writing, passed from the late Renaissance to Victorian times, and the varied modes, interests, and attitudes of England were reflected in the American colonies, altered somewhat by the unique circumstances of colonial and national life. Despite conditions adverse to literary effort during much of the period, a considerable amount of writing was produced in a variety of forms and with a variety of attitudes and interests. The selections offered here are intended to represent the popular forms, to suggest the prominent concerns, and to trace the origins of attitudes and myths that become part of the American inheritance.

Selecting texts, particularly those from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, poses editorial problems, for much of Colonial American writing remains unedited or comes from the hands of nineteenth century editors who labored without the advantages of modern editing techniques. Within these limitations, the editors have attempted to reproduce accurate and representative texts. The readings have been selected from standard editions whenever possible, or from early texts collated with later editions, or from original editions when no subsequent text exists.

The editors have tried to preserve the integrity of the texts used; however, some changes, largely orthographic, have been made in the belief that the peculiarities of seventeenth and eighteenth century spelling and typography often stand between the contemporary reader and the work.

Upon request of the copyright holders of the poetry of Edward Taylor, his work has been reproduced exactly as it appears in the edition used.

The editors wish to thank the staffs of both the University of North Carolina and the Duke University Libraries for their cooperation in allowing us access to material in their rare book collections. Special thanks must go to Bonnie Bain for the tedious work of typing copy from microfilm and to Professor C. Hugh Holman for his encouragement, but most of all for his patience.

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R. A. B.
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