

## I. Welcome To New York: 1524 - 1745

**1524** -- April -- [Giovanni da Verrazzano](#), a Florentine in the employ of France, sailed into [New York Harbor](#) aboard [La Dauphine](#); thought site "not without some properties of value"

**1609** --Englishman [Henry Hudson](#) explored New York Bay and the North River (later, Hudson); claimed region up to Albany on behalf of Dutch West Indies Company

**1611** -- Dutch explorer-navigator [Adrien Block](#) circumnavigated Manhattan Island, passed through "Hell Gate" and discovered Long Island Sound

**1624** -- A Dutch settlement of thirty families established a trading post of New Amsterdam on southern tip of [Manhattan Island](#)

**1626** -- [Peter Minuit](#) made director of New Netherland; said to have purchased Manhattan Island from resident Indians.

**1636** -- Massachusetts Puritans open a college outside Boston in Cambridge (later [Harvard](#)); the first college in English North America

**1647** -- [Peter Stuyvesant](#) appointed governor of New Netherland; served in position to end of Dutch rule in 1664

**1654** -- First known Jews take up residence in New Amsterdam

**1664** -- English seize New Netherland for the Duke of York (later James II); renamed New York; New Amsterdam became New York; Dutch encouraged to stay on

**1665** -- New York 1st governor, [Richard Nicolls](#), provides charter for municipal government for New York City

**1673-74** -- Local Dutch briefly reclaim New York; negotiate it away a year later

**1683** -- Governor [Thomas Dongan](#) organizes Provincial government with an appointed Governor's Council and an elected Assembly; marks beginning of representative government in the colony

**1683** -- New York City receives a corporate charter from Governor Dongan; mayor to be appointed by governor

**1685** -- February -- King Charles II died; the Duke of York becomes James II; with its proprietor's accession to the crown, New York becomes a royal colony

Revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV produces a substantial migration of French Huguenots to New York region; DeLanceys, Jays, Boudinots among them

**1688** -- A rebellion against the royal government of James II and his local representative [Edmund Andros](#) led by non-Englishman [Jacob](#)

[Leisler](#); rebels attracted substantial local support but repudiated a year later by the newly installed King William

**1691** -- [Jacob Leisler](#) and co-conspirator [Jacob Milborne](#) hanged on orders of Governor Henry Sloughter

**1693** -- NY provincial government under Governor [Benjamin Fletcher](#) passes Ministry Act -- provides financial support from provincial tax receipts for Anglican churches in NYC, Westchester, Queens and Staten Island; Anglicans thereafter see themselves as the colony's established church; Dissenters opposed to this arrangement

**1693** -- Virginian Anglicans open [William & Mary College](#) in Williamsburg with royal charter; the second college in English North America; operated as a grammar school until 1729

[William Bradford](#) moves from Philadelphia to NYC as public printer; publishes first book in New York

**1695** -- Governor Fletcher approves grant of land in New York City for an Anglican Church; allows Dutch to use their taxes to support Dutch Reform clergy; greatly expands land patents to favored supporters

**1697** -- [Trinity Church](#) founded by NYC Anglicans with royal charter from King William; given 7-year lease of 32 acres of prime NYC property [ "Queens Farm"] by Governor Fletcher; [William Vesey](#) (Harvard, 1688) named first rector of Trinity Church; held position to 1745

**1700** -- New York's 7th governor, Richard Coote, the [Earl of Bellomont](#), a Whig, threatens to reclaim land earlier provided Trinity Church by Governor Fletcher; bans Catholics from holding religious services in NYC

**1701** -- Five Connecticut ministers found a Collegiate School (later [Yale](#)); opened in Saybrook, Connecticut, and moved about before settling in New Haven (1717); is the third college established in English North America

The [Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts](#) (SPGFP) is established in London to provide funds for Anglican missionaries in North American colonies; missionaries dispatched to New York and Connecticut soon thereafter

**1703** -- Newly arrived Governor Edward Hyde, Lord Cornbury (1661-1723), indicates his intention to have some of the Queen's Farm set aside as a site for a college

**1704** -- Lewis Morris (1671-1746), a prominent landowner, urges the SPGFP to support his plan for a local college, declaring "New York is in the middle of America and a fit place for a college"

**1705** -- Trinity Church permanently ceded "[Queens Farm](#)" by NY Governor [Cornbury](#) for its uses.

**1708** -- Governor Cornbury forced to leave New York following attacks from critics of his pro-Anglican policies; charged by [Robert Livingston](#) with cavorting about town in women's clothes

**1712** -- First reported slave revolt in NYC; twenty slaves hanged after nine whites were killed

**1716** -- NY Dissenters organize [Presbyterian Church](#) on Wall Street; Scotsmen [Robert Livingston](#) and [William Smith, Sr.](#) among the prime movers

**1720** -- Presbyterians denied a royal charter (as Anglicans and Dutch Reformed had) by Governor [William Burnett](#); members resent paying taxes to support Anglican clergy

**1722** -- Yale Commencement marked by the declaration of conversion to Anglicanism by President [Timothy Cutler](#) and 6 other recent Yale graduates (including the future King's College president [Samuel Johnson](#))

**1724** -- A [Baptist Church](#) opens in New York City on Cliff Street

**1725** -- Printer [William Bradford](#) begins publication of New York's first weekly newspaper, the [New-York Weekly Gazette](#)

**1727** -- [Ebenezer Pemberton](#) installed as minister of Presbyterian Church on Wall Street

**1728** -- NYC Jewish community organize a [synagogue](#) on Mill Street

**1731** -- Governor [John Montgomerie](#) secures royal charter for municipal government of New York; mayor remains appointed by Governor

**1732** -- Arrival of Governor [William Cosby](#) sparks a political confrontation within the NYC political elite when Cosby fires Chief Justice [Lewis Morris](#), leader of the "country party," and replaces him with the leader of the "court party," Associate Justice [James Delancey](#)

**1735** -- A NYC journalist [John Peter Zenger](#) is tried for seditious libel for criticizing Governor Cosby; his defense, initially led by [James Alexander](#) and [William Smith, Sr.](#), later by [Andrew Hamilton](#) of Philadelphia, based on novel early assertion of freedom of the press; Zenger acquitted

**1739** -- November -- Great Awakening evangelist [George Whitefield](#) preaches in Presbyterian Church on invitation of Rev. [Ebenezer Pemberton](#) after being denied use of Trinity Church by Rector [William Vesey](#)

**1740** -- Philadelphia Presbyterians organize a Charity School, which later becomes Benjamin Franklin's Academy (1749) and, still later, under the auspices of Anglicans and Presbyterians, is chartered in

1755 as the [College of Philadelphia](#), by then the sixth college to be chartered in North America

**1741** -- "Great Negro Plot" discovered by authorities; suspected of it being instigated by a Catholic priest [John Ury](#); he and 3 other whites hanged; 13 Africans burned at the stake

**1745** -- Pro-revivalist "New Light" Presbyterians alienated from Yale, New Yorker [William Smith, Sr.](#) among them, announce plan to establish an Presbyterian college in New Jersey

## II. The Founding of King's College, 1745 - 1754

**1745** -- March 13 -- NYC attorney [James Alexander](#), following his gift of £50 to the organizers of a new college in neighboring New Jersey, pledged £100 in his will to establish a college in NY Province

**1746** -- "New Light" Presbyterians receive provincial charter to found the College of New Jersey (later, [Princeton](#)); the fourth college founded in English North America

Rev. [Henry Barclay](#) (Yale, 1734) appointed second rector of Trinity Church; succeeds [William Vesey](#) who served as first rector for 49 years; Barclay in post to 1763

October 23 -- NY Assembly took under consideration a plan for a college in New York

December 6 -- NY Assembly supports lottery to raise £2250 "to advance learning" by establishing a college in New York; Governor [George Clinton](#) assents to plan "for the encouragement of learning, and towards the founding a college within the same."

**1747** -- Debate begins among college advocates over ideal location: [Cadwallader Colden](#) recommended Newburgh, 40 miles north of NYC on the Hudson; [Rev. James Wetmore](#), recommended Rye, in eastern Westchester County; Rev. [Samuel Seabury](#), recommended Hempstead, on Long Island

October -- College of New Jersey opened in Newark, just across the Hudson River from NYC

**1748** -- NYC Attorney [William Livingston](#) (Yale, 1741) proposed establishment in New York City of a "Society for the Promotion of Useful Knowledge"

**1749** -- March -- [William Livingston](#) published "[Some Serious Thoughts on Erecting a College in New York](#)," intending to sustain interest in flagging project

**1751** -- November -- NY Assembly appointed 10-member Lottery Commission to manage lottery fund of £3443.18s and to settle on locale for college; Commission dominated by Trinity Church and Dutch Reform members; [William Livingston](#) the only Presbyterian

**1752** -- Trinity Church opened its first chapel, [St. George's](#), on Beekman Street, to accommodate its growing and prosperous congregation

March -- Trinity Church offered 5 acres of [Queen's Farm](#) property adjoining Church land to the Lottery Commission as site for the new college; no conditions set for the offer.

October 24 -- Anglican newcomer to New York, The Reverend [William Smith](#), published "[Some Thoughts on Education: With Reasons for Erecting a College in this Province](#)";

November 6 -- Smith reprinted "Some Thoughts on Education " in The [New-York Mercury](#) and [N.Y. Post Boy](#) and went on to propose [Samuel Johnson](#), a prominent Anglican minister from Stratford, Connecticut, as head of college

November 30 -- [William Livingston](#), [William Smith, Jr.](#), and [John Morin Scott](#) issue first number of the [Independent Reflector](#), New York City's first periodical, consciously modeled after English Whig periodicals

December 4 -- In a letter to the [N.Y. Post Boy](#), Livingston and William Smith, Jr. attack the Rev. Smith's efforts on behalf of an Anglican college as shameless job-hunting.

**1753** -- February -- NY Assembly authorized a third lottery and an annual appropriation of £500 for five years to support a college; publicly committed funds to date for the college total more than £7000

March 22 to April 26 -- [William Livingston](#), aided by [William Smith, Jr.](#) and [John Morin Scott](#), responding to what they saw as a plot to erect a "Episcopal college" with public funds, launched a series of articles in their [Independent Reflector](#), attacking Anglican plans for a college in New York City. Six extended articles committed to the subject over the course of six weeks

April 11 -- [William Smith](#) published "[A General Idea of the College of Mirana](#)," at the urging of the Lottery Commissioners, in which he argued for the use of Anglican liturgy in college services; his efforts won him the attention of Benjamin Franklin and eventually the provostship of the College of Philadelphia

April to October -- Series on anonymous rejoinders to the [Independent Reflector](#) attack on plan for a college appear in New-York [Mercury](#); likely the work of the region's Johnson-trained Anglican ministers, among them [Henry Barclay](#), [Thomas Bradbury Chandler](#), [Samuel Seabury](#), [James Wetmore](#), [Samuel Auchmuty](#)

October 7 -- Arrival of Governor [Sir Danvers Osborne](#) followed five days later by his suicide; newly sworn in Lt. Govr. [James De Lancey](#), an ally of the Anglican cause, becomes Acting Governor

November -- [Independent Reflector](#) ceases publication after Governor [De Lancey](#) threatened its printer with withdrawal of provincial printing jobs.

November 22 -- On William Livingston's motion, the Lottery Commission unanimously elected [Samuel Johnson](#) as president of new college; New Haven Congregationalist minister, [Chauncey Whittelsey](#), elected "first tutor" as Livingston's urging.

**1754** -- January 7 -- Samuel Johnson makes non-committal response to presidency offer from Lottery Commissioners; absence of a charter and salary cited as issues; Johnson did not want Whittelsey as "First Tutor" and discouraged him from accepting the position.

February -- Anglican lawyers Benjamin Nicolls and John Chambers prepare draft of a college charter, based in part on the 1748 charter of the College of New Jersey.

March -- [Samuel Johnson](#) accepts the presidency of King's College -- and post as assistant minister at Trinity Church -- for combined annual salary of £450

April -- New Yorkers aligned with William Livingston organize a private circulating library, the New-York Society Library. It may have been thought of as a counter to the imminent Anglican college.

May 14 -- Trinity Church vestry informed the Lottery Commission that it was conditioning its earlier offer of land for a college on assurances that its president would always be an Anglican and that official religious services would use Anglican prayers

May 16 -- Draft of college charter, including Trinity Church's conditions, adopted by Lottery Commissioners, despite 20 objections by [William Livingston](#) who contended charter created "The College of Trinity Church"; charter forwarded to Acting Governor [DeLancey](#) and the Governor's Council.

May 31 -- [Advertisement](#) for the College of New York published in the [New York Gazette](#) by [President Johnson](#); notice stressed that College would welcome all Protestant Christians

June -- Governor's Council endorses the draft charter 7 to 2, [William Smith Sr.](#) and [James Alexander](#) dissenting.

### III. The King's College Years -- 1754-1776

**1754** -- July 17 -- Classes began in rectory of Trinity Church school on Rector Street; eight matriculants; [Samuel Johnson](#) did all the teaching that summer; in fall assisted by his second son, [William Samuel Johnson](#)

October 31 ["Charter Day"] -- Governor's Council accepted proposed [charter](#) from Lottery Commission for college; [William Smith, Sr.](#) lone dissent. Acting Governor DeLancey declined to present the charter to the more critically disposed Assembly for its consideration.



November 1 -- [William Livingston](#) lodged lengthy objection to charter with the Assembly, which voted to withhold lottery funds from the College when it was bypassed by Governor DeLancey

November 2 -- Lieutenant Governor [James DeLancey](#) signed college charter on behalf of King George II; Designated "The College of the Province of New York, in the City of New York... known by the name of King's College;" is the fifth college chartered in British North America

Livingston persisted in his assault on King's College in the Assembly and in the "Watchtower," a regular insert in the [New-York Mercury](#); College's defenders respond in a new periodical of their own, [John Englishman's True Notion of Sister-Churches](#)

November -- Newly appointed College Governor (and step-son of Samuel Johnson) [Benjamin Nicoll](#) defends College Charter against Livingston's objections in [Vindication of the Proceedings of the Trustees](#)

**1755** -- May 7 -- First meeting of [Governors of King's College](#) -- 26 members present; Governors receive charter from [Acting Governor De Lancey](#); College Governor Rev. [Joannes Ritzema](#) promptly called for charter revision to permit establishment of a Dutch divinity professorship as inducement for continued Dutch support for the College

May 13 -- Trinity Church conveys deed for college property to King's College Governors; Governor [Leonard Lispenard](#) appointed Treasurer of the College

May 27 -- [Joannes Ritzema](#)'s effort to align Dutch Reformed with King's college challenged by "New Light" Dutch under the leadership of Rev. [Theodore Frelinghuysen](#) who subsequently called for a Dutch college (later, Queens/Rutgers) that would be established in New Brunswick, New Jersey in 1766, when it became the eighth college founded in British North America.

June 3 -- A supplementary charter establishing the professorship in Dutch Reformed theology granted by Governor De Lancey; the professorship never filled due to disagreement among Dutch Reformed churchmen.

June -- Pennsylvania proprietors granted charter to the College of Philadelphia (later, the [University of Pennsylvania](#)); it becomes the 6th college chartered in British North America

Active fundraising undertaken among Trinity Church members; parallel fundraising in England and West Indies, where effort led by Dr. [James Jay](#), which eventually yielded over £4000

[Leonard Cutting](#) is hired to replace the temporary [William Johnson](#) as the College's first regular faculty member; £80 annual salary; taught classics and rhetoric until he resigned in 1763

September 2 -- Governor Charles Hardy arrives in New York; assumes executive powers from Acting Governor DeLancey.

September 16 -- [Governor Hardy](#) welcomed by College Governors; made personal gift of £500 to College

**1756** -- NYC lawyers seek to limit admission to the bar to college graduates, followed by five years of clerking; also propose 12-year moratorium on New York lawyers accepting new clerks

May 7 -- College governors vote to proceed with constructing a building for the College; [Robert Crommelin](#) hired as architect, had been the architect for St. George's Chapel

May 10 -- English Parliament declares war on French; beginning of French & Indian War in America; much of it fought within province of New York; ushers in period of wartime economic prosperity for NYC

August 23 -- [Cornerstone](#) of King's College building laid, on [corner of Murray \(N\) and Church\(E\) Streets](#), near what is now West Broadway;

December 16 -- NY Assembly, now preoccupied with wartime activities, effect a compromise whereby the impounded college lottery funds are split between King's College and NYC for a municipal infirmary and pest house; College's share was £3728; idea of an annual appropriation of £500 dropped. College ceases to be a political issue until the eve of the Revolution.

**1757** -- May 11 -- The estate of college governor [Joseph Murray](#), valued at £8000, bequeathed to King's College; is the largest single benefaction to a colonial college; paid for most of College Hall;

[Daniel Treadwell](#), 27-year-old Harvard-trained scientist, appointed KC's first Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy; £100 salary; appointment arranged by newly elected Governor [Samuel Auchmuty](#) in Johnson's absence; Treadwell taught for three years until his death in 1760

**1758** -- June 21st -- First commencement exercise of King's College, held at [St. George's Chapel](#); five AB graduates.

**1759** -- March 21 -- Governors informed that [William Livingston](#) will not take up ex-officio position as Speaker of NY Assembly

June -- No public commencement; only one AB graduate

**1760** -- May -- President Johnson and new wife take up residence in new [College Hall](#); staff and students follow; total cost of building, £11,000.

June 26 -- Third commencement, first to use new College Hall as starting point; ceremony held in St. George's Chapel; six graduating seniors



**1761** -- June 3 -- 4th commencement in St. George's Chapel; 3 graduating seniors

**1762** -- [Archbishop of Canterbury](#) recommended Oxford-trained 25-year-old Rev. [Myles Cooper](#) as a professor and possible successor to President Johnson; appointment approved by College governors; Cooper to NYC as Professor of Moral Philosophy and president-designate;

[Robert Harpur](#) becomes Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy in Treadwell's place; £80 salary at outset; taught until he resigned in 1767.

June 10 -- King's College's 5th commencement; 7 graduating seniors; held in St. George's Chapel; [Sir Jeffrey Amherst](#) in attendance

King's College opened a Grammar School to prepare students for admission to King's College

**1763** -- March 1 -- Revised [Statutes for King's College](#) prepared by [Myles Cooper](#) and adopted by the Governors; marks the start of the "Oxfordizing" of King's College by Cooper

April 12 -- Sixty-seven year-old [Samuel Johnson](#) resigned as president; returned to Stratford, Connecticut as Anglican rector; died in 1772. [Myles Cooper](#) (1737-1785) appointed 2<sup>nd</sup> president of King's College; served until May 1775

May 17 -- King's College's 6th commencement, first presided over by Myles Cooper; held in St. George's Chapel; only 2 graduating seniors

**1764** -- May 22 --Future statesman [John Jay](#) among 6 graduates at 7th Commencement of King's College; ceremonies in St. George's Chapel.

**1765** -- Dr. [Samuel Clossy](#) appointed Tutor and Professor of Natural Philosophy; salary set at £180; [Robert Harpur](#) now only Professor of Mathematics

March -- Parliament passes Stamp Act as means of exacting financial support of imperial presence in American colonies

May 21 -- King's College's 8th Commencement; 5 graduating seniors, including future diplomatist [Robert R. Livingston](#); the first to be held in Trinity Church

July -- News of Stamp Act produces violent protests throughout American colonies; New York City mob led by Sons of Liberty threatens life of Lt. Governor Cadwallader Colden

Rhode Island College (later, [Brown](#)) chartered in Providence as the 8th college in British North America

College of Philadelphia opens a medical school; first to be established in British North America

November -- NYC mobs, led by the Sons of Liberty, including [Isaac Sears](#) and [Alexander MacDougal](#), oppose imposition of Stamp Act with violent assaults on provincial leaders; NYC house of Lt. Governor [Cadwallader Colden](#) house demolished

**1766** -- March -- NYC's leading Presbyterians petition crown for royal charter for First Presbyterian Church; Crown rejects petition as undercutting the favored position of the Church of England

March -- Parliament repeals Stamp Act in face of widespread opposition in the colonies

May 20 -- King's College's 9th Commencement; 7 graduating seniors; ceremonies held in Trinity Church

Dutch Reformed community opposed to King's College establishes its own college in New Brunswick, New Jersey, in 1766 (later, Rutgers), became the eighth college founded in British North America.

June -- Literary Society organized to instill scholarly competition among the students of King's College by awarding medals and books. Society folded in 1772.

August -- Opposition to Quartering Act in New York City, where British army was headquartered, by Sons of Liberty led by Isaac Sears results in direct clash with British troops.

**1767** -- May 19 -- King's College 10th Commencement; 2 graduates; first to be held in new St. Paul's Chapel

November 2nd -- Drs. [Samuel Bard](#) (KC 1759), [Peter Middleton](#) and [John Jones](#), along with [Samuel Clossy](#), open Medical College within King's College; the second (to Penn) medical school to open in the colonies

Governor [Henry Moore](#) ceded King's College 24,000 acres of rural property for future income (later ceded to Vermont)

College Governors request of NYC access to [water lots](#) along edge of Hudson bordering on College; plan to lease them out for rental income

**1768** -- May 15 -- [Gouverneur Morris](#) and [Benjamin Moore](#) among 8 graduates at 11th Commencement; held in St. Paul's Chapel

Recent King's College graduates organize exclusive Thursday Evening Debating Society; among them [John Jay](#), [Gouverneur Morris](#), [Egbert Benson](#), [Robert R. Livingston](#)

August -- Leading merchants organize New York Chamber of Commerce, the first in America; several King's College Governors prominent among founders; they reluctantly adopt non-importation agreement pressed by Sons of Liberty

November 10 -- New Jersey Governor William Franklin granted charter to Dutch Reformed clergy to open Queen's College (later, [Rutgers](#)); the 8th college founded prior to the Revolution

**1769** -- [William Livingston](#) joins with other critics of Crown to form Society of Dissenters; seek repeal of Ministry Act of 1693 that favored Anglicans in lower New York

"New Side" New England Congregationalists led by [Eleazar Wheelock](#) founded ( later [Dartmouth College](#)) in Hanover, New Hampshire; the 9th and college founded in Britain's American colonies.

May 16th -- King's College's 12th Commencement; 3 graduates, including the first two recipients of medical degrees in British North America; ceremony held in Trinity Church

**1770** -- January 19 -- Sons of Liberty clash with British troops in "Battle of Golden Hill;" many injuries and one fatality

February -- Sons of Liberty and sailors erect a Liberty Pole across from Commons

May 15th -- King's College's 13th Commencement; 8 graduates; held in Trinity Church

College began leasing water lots adjacent to the College

Charter granted for establishment of New York Hospital

**1771** -- President Cooper adapted Oxford tradition of "The Black Book," or "Book of Misdemeanors," to record disciplinary actions taken against King's College students

May 21st -- King's College's 14th Commencement; 8 graduating seniors; ceremonies held in Trinity Church

September 30 -- Governors approve request for new royal charter; would make King's College the premier college in America; President Cooper to England to advance cause; Trinity Assistant Rector Rev. [Charles Inglis](#) as Acting President

**1772** -- Princeton's President [John Witherspoon](#)'s "Address to the Inhabitants of Jamaica," in which he criticized parents sending their sons to colleges located in cities, prompted a spirited response from King's College Tutor [John Vardill](#) (KC, 1766), who, in his "[Candid Remarks on Dr. Witherspoon's Address](#)", championed the College's urban locale, small enrollments and high cost.

May 19 -- King's College's 15th commencement; 12 graduating seniors (the 2nd largest graduating class in the history of the College); held in Trinity Church

October -- President Cooper back at College after a year in England

**1773** -- [George Washington](#)'s stepson, [John Parke Custis](#), spent three months as King's College student; accompanied by his slave; left after running up bills and planning an elopement

[John Vardill](#) (KC 1766) elected Professor of Natural Law and sent to England for training and ordination as Anglican minister; actively solicited King George III for a crown-funded Regius Professorship of Divinity and a new royal charter redesignating King's College as "The American University"

May 18th -- King's College's 16th Commencement; 6 graduating seniors; ceremonies held in Trinity Church

December 16 -- A Boston mob spilled tea in Boston Harbor in defiance of new British taxing policies

**1774** -- 17-year-old orphan from the West Indies, [Alexander Hamilton](#), admitted as a student with advanced standing after first considering the College of New Jersey

March -- Departing Governor [William Tryon](#) bestowed on King's College 10,000 acres (later declared part of Vermont) to support a professorship in municipal law

April 22 -- A NYC mob led by Sons of Liberty dumped cargo of tea into New York Harbor, in support of Boston resistance efforts

May 17 -- King's College's 17th Commencement; 13 graduating seniors (the College's largest graduating class); held in Trinity Church; the last public commencement for King's College

May 19 -- Conservative forces in NYC secure the political ascendance over Sons of Liberty in Committee of 51 to seek redress from Crown; elect five delegates to the Continental Congress; John Jay (KC 1764) and college governor James Duane among them.

August 4 -- King's College Governors approve draft of proposed royal charter for "American University in the Province of New York," which would have made King's College comparable to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge and their respective colleges, with the other American colleges looking to it for its degrees.

September 5 -- October 26 -- 5-person NY delegation to 1st Continental Congress in Philadelphia included King's College governor [James Duane](#) and graduate [John Jay](#) (KC 1764); both align with moderate delegates against those calling for total break with England

**1775** -- March -- [John Jay](#) elected by Tory-controlled Assembly to represent New York at Second Continental Congress;

April 19 -- British and American forces clash at Lexington and Concord; British casualties high

April 25 -- [President Cooper](#) and four other NYC Tories publicly warned by Patriots in a Philadelphia broadside "to fly for your lives, or anticipate your doom" for their anonymous pamphleteering efforts opposing colonial resistance to English policies

May -- [Harvard College](#) suspended operations following the Battle of Lexington-Concord; reopened in April 1776 following British evacuation of Boston

May 10 -- President [Cooper](#) fled College Hall just ahead of a "murderous band" of Patriots to the safety of the British ship [HMS Kingfisher](#); escape aided by an undergraduate, sometimes thought to have been [Alexander Hamilton](#); Cooper shortly thereafter sailed to England, never to return to America

May 16 -- College affairs placed in the hands of Rev. [Benjamin Moore](#) (KC, 1768), an assistant minister of Trinity Church, as interim president; continued in this position and that of British Army chaplain throughout the Revolutionary War; No public commencement "on account of the absence of Dr. Cooper," but 7 seniors listed as graduates

September -- Conservatives at Continental Congress, among them Jay and Duane, support "Plan of a Proposed Union between Great Britain and America"; plan narrowly defeated by delegates committed to resistance..

**1776** -- April 6 -- College closed on orders of Revolutionary Committee of Safety; building confiscated for use by Continental Army as hospital; its library scattered; General [George Washington](#) appropriated College telescopes for military use; no public commencement for second straight year, but six students designated as graduates

July 4 -- Continental Congress approved Declaration of Independence, as written by Thomas Jefferson; New York delegation abstained on orders of NY Provincial Congress

#### IV. Collegiate Operations Suspended, 1776-1783

**1776** -- September 15 -- Revolutionary forces depart NYC after successful defensive engagement in [Battle of Harlem Heights](#) (current site of Columbia University); City in hands of the British Army for the duration of the war; King's College building to be used as a military hospital,

September 21 -- Fire, possibly set by departing revolutionary sympathizers, burned most of west side of [lower Manhattan](#), including Trinity Church; fire stopped at southern fence of King's College

**1777** --New York legislature meeting in Poughkeepsie adopts a state constitution eliminating privileges provided Anglicans under British

rule; [George Clinton](#) elected first governor of New York State; held office until 1795

June -- Abortive attempt by six King's College Governors, led by Treasurer [Leonard Lispenard](#), to restart college in his Wall Street home

**1778** -- New York legislature passed Law of Attainder, which called for the deportation and confiscation of property of 53 NY Loyalists, a quarter of them affiliated with King's College

**1779** -- [College of Philadelphia](#) reopens with state charter as University of Pennsylvania

**1781** -- October --Combined American and French force defeat British at Yorktown; surrender of General Cornwallis effectively ends military phase of Revolutionary War

**1783** -- November 25 -- British evacuate NYC upon signing of the peace treaty; General George Washington enters in triumph; thousands of Loyalists depart for Canada and England; among them dozens of New Yorkers affiliated with King's College.

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