American Museum, Philadelphila

The *American Museum* was published monthly in Philadelphia from January 1787 to December 1792 by Mathew Carey (1760–1839), a native of Ireland who had emigrated to Philadelphia in November 1784. Five years earlier Carey had published a pamphlet defending Irish Catholics against their British rulers and went to France to avoid prosecution. There he worked, as a printer, for Benjamin Franklin and he met Lafayette. Carey soon returned to Ireland, where he again attacked the British and was jailed. Upon release, he left for America to avoid any further prosecution. When he arrived in America, Lafayette, who was visiting, gave him some money; and in January 1785 Carey began publishing the *Pennsylvania Evening Herald*. He established a reputation for his excellent reports of the debates in the Pennsylvania General Assembly. In October 1786 Carey and several partners commenced publication of the monthly *Columbian Magazine*, but he withdrew almost at once and started the *American Museum*.

The *American Museum* was antedated and was usually published during the first week of the subsequent month—e.g., the January 1787 issue was published on 1 February and the March 1787 issue on 4 April. In 1787 and 1788 each monthly *Museum* averaged about 90 to 100 pages. The magazine sold for eighteen shillings per annum or for twenty-five cents a copy. When its first issue appeared, "there were not twenty subscribers" and by June 1787 about 500 people had subscribed. In October 1788 Carey stated that he had about 1,000 subscribers and that he printed 2,500 copies monthly as he was able to "dispose of a considerable number singly." Subscribers included George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, John Dickinson, Don Diego de Gardoqui, Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, Thomas Jefferson, William Samuel Johnson, Rufus King, Henry Knox, William Livingston, James Madison, George Mason, Gouverneur Morris, Robert Morris, the Comte de Moustier, Charles Pinckney, David Ramsay, Edmund Randolph, Benjamin Rush, and Sir John Temple. Carey's agents, usually newspaper printers and booksellers, accepted subscriptions in such towns as: New Haven, New York, Elizabeth Town, New Brunswick, Trenton, Philadelphia, Lancaster, Baltimore, Annapolis, Talbotton (Easton), Chestertown, Richmond, Norfolk, Petersburg, Alexandria, Charleston, and Savannah. The *Museum* circulated throughout the United States and parts of Europe and the West Indies.

The *Museum* was filled with pieces dealing with politics, economics, medicine, agriculture, patriotism, satire and humor, religion, morality, and poetry. The bulk of the items was either reprinted from newspapers or excerpted from pamphlets. Carey himself stated: "This work lays little or no claim to originality. Humbler—perhaps not less useful—is its design. To *preserve* for posterity—as well as to *disseminate* among the present generation—valuable fugitive publications, hastening to oblivion—are its primary objects. Original writings, however, are by no means excluded." Carey contributed an original piece of his own now and then.

During the first year and a half, the *Museum* concentrated heavily on political matters, consistently supporting a strengthened central government. For example, two of the five lead articles in the first issue of the *Museum* advocated a strong central government. Carey quickly sold 1,000 copies of this issue and regretted that he had not printed more. Carey maintained his Federalist bias by reprinting individual and serialized Federalist essays, proceedings of town and county meetings supporting the Constitution, speeches by leading Federalists, and the forms of ratification by state conventions.

No Antifederalist material was published in the *Museum* before November 1787—a fact lamented by a correspondent in the Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*, 20 October, who accused Carey of reprinting items that were "all evidently on *one side of the question*." Beginning with the October 1787 issue—published on 3 November—the *Museum* began reprinting Antifederalist statements, such as those by Elbridge Gerry, Richard Henry Lee, George Mason, Robert Yates and John Lansing, Jr., the minorities of the Pennsylvania General Assembly and the Pennsylvania Convention, and "An Officer of the Late Continental Army."

Carey defended his selection policy in the preface to his January 1788 issue, where he declared himself to be a Federalist. New Yorker Nathaniel Hazard agreed, stating that "Carey is a Federalist to Enthusiasm." Carey said that he had published "valuable pieces on each side" even though "zealots of both parties" found that policy objectionable. He admitted that he had "lost a few subscribers" after publishing certain Federalist and Antifederalist items. Six months later, in the preface to the July issue, Carey reiterated his position and expressed the hope that his *Museum* did not merit "the title of *federal*—or *antifederal*—but *impartial*."

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