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PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION

U.S. to 1830

Fall 1994

DIRECTIONS: Answer one question in each section, citing bibliographical references whenever possible.

I. A. Perry Miller, the dean of American Puritan studies, once said that colonial New England's history could be strung on the thread of an idea. To what extent has his intellectual history of colonial New England been challenged by more recent historians?

B. Jack P. Greene argues that "the central assumptions that have informed the analysis of colonial British American history over the past two generations...have emphasized the preeminence or normative character of the experience of the orthodox puritan colonies of New England in the process of modern British colonial social development and the formation of American culture." Discuss, considering how those viewpoints have been rethought.

II. A. One of the delegates at the Constitutional Convention said that the Convention should be guided by the "lamp of experience." To what extent were the delegates guided by their experience with earlier forms of government -- specifically, the colony systems of government, the British system of government, and recently adopted state governments?

B. Oscar and Mary Handlin argued in 1950 that "The status of Negroes [in Virginia] was that of servants; and so they were identified and treated down to the 1660's." How have recent historians changed or modified this view and how have they reinterpreted the relationship between slave and free labor in the Chesapeake?

III. A. America's first one-term President was John Adams. The second was his son, John Quincy Adams. Explain why each Adams failed to be re-elected, and why each lost to a more "democratic" opponent.

B. When Thomas Jefferson became president he tried to conciliate the nation with the statement "We are all Republicans, we are all Federalists." To what extent was this statement true? Did Jefferson's election make a difference and to what extent? How did it affect development of the American political system?

Department of History . University of Illinois  
Early America to 1830 . Written Preliminary Exam for  
September 9, 1994

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I

A. Perry Miller, the dean of American Puritan studies, once said that colonial New England's history could be strung on the thread of an idea. To what extent has his intellectual history of colonial New England been challenged by more recent historians?

B. Discuss the economic transformation of the British colonies of North America in the half-century, 1700 to 1750.

II

A. One of the delegates at the Constitutional Convention said that the Convention should be guided by the "lamp of experience." To what extent were the delegates guided by their experience with earlier forms of government, the British system of government, and recently created state governments?

B. In the Seventeenth Century, a few leaders in the British colonies of North America had formal legal training and experience, but most judicial cases were heard by gentlemen who learned by doing, while defendants and plaintiffs represented themselves as best they could. How do you account for the rapid rise of the legal profession in the Eighteenth Century, and for the leading roles taken by attorneys in the American Revolution? How did colonial practices both require and colonists manage to afford this new class of professionals? What sort of cases normally sustained them? Did this differ from one region to another?

III

A. America's first one-term President was John Adams. the second was his son, John Quincy Adams. Explain why each Adams failed to be re-elected, and why each lost to a more "democratic" opponent.

B. What were the foreign and domestic goals of Presidents Jefferson and Madison? How many of these did they realize, or live to see realized? Which goals, if any, permanently eluded them? Why?

