WHEN the Reverend Charles Nisbet, president-elect of Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, first set foot in America in June 1785, he was pleased with what he found. He wrote home to a Scottish friend and patron that he had been "waited on since my coming here by many people of property and influence in this State, from whom I have received every mark of respect and attention, and the republicans here, I am assured, never deign to bestow these where they are not in earnest. . . ." Hospitably entertained by Benjamin Rush, Nisbet and his family received the cordial greetings of ministers of most every Protestant denomination, and when he took stock of his first impressions, he found they were sanguine: "Party Spirit is beginning to subside, and commerce appears to flourish. . . . Every thing seems quiet and orderly, and those in office are respected by all parties."1

Nisbet was prepared to like America. In Scotland, by the mid-1780s, he had become a well-established minister known for his great erudition. An Edinburgh graduate, he had risen through the Scottish Church, held a good-sized pastorate at Montrose on the northeast coast, and had been prominent in the affairs of the General Assembly. During the 1760s and 1770s, he had surprised many of his brethren by supporting the American colonists in their disputes with Great Britain. The colonial independence movement heightened his admiration for America, and it was perhaps this positive preconception combined with his sense of mission that led Nisbet to uproot his family so as to take charge of the new Pennsylvania college. When he left Scotland he assured friends he was heading for a land of "Liberty & Plenty," one where men's minds were "free from the shackles of authority."2

Nisbet's delight in things American did not last. It was not long before
he became an acerbic critic of early national culture, expressing displeasure at the manners and morals of his adopted countrymen, and the way they conducted themselves in religion and politics, in education and commerce, and every other facet of their lives. Although Nisbet maintained that his verbal attacks on the American way of life did not stem from “Malevolence to America, nor to mankind in general,” nor could it “be attributed to a Temper soured by Disappointment,” in fact he became progressively alienated from his surroundings and remained so until his death in 1804. He shunned his fellow Americans. By 1790, he wrote to a Scottish acquaintance, he was paying no visits and receiving no visitors. He had not, he said, one friend on the whole continent. To a Bucks County doctor he confided in 1793 that “I carefully avoid the profanum vulgus, who can hear nothing with Patience, except their own Praises, & such Prejudices as are infused into them by their Leaders.”

Nisbet avoided not only personal contact, but took little active part in the larger public arena. Despite his eminence in Scotland, he did not participate in the counsels of the American Presbyterian Church. Nor, despite his extended critique of local and national political affairs, did he enter party politics. His world consisted of his college (of which he despised), his family (for which he was extremely solicitous), and his correspondence (into which he poured out his disillusionment). To an active temperament these were not enough. In October 1794 Nisbet summed up the situation in which he found himself: “I am shut out from Conversation, & neither pay nor receive Visits. I go to no public Meetings, except to Church. I have many cold well-wishers, but few or no friends. I seem like the Native of another Planet, dropped by Misfortune in this, & make no part of the People among whom I live."

The sources of Nisbet’s alienation were varied. In part he reacted against the disappointment produced when American life did not live up to his inflated expectations. In part, he applied an overly pessimistic analysis to social, political, cultural, and religious developments that also produced concern in other acute observers of early national America. But in part, Nisbet’s distress was profoundly personal. In some ways, America did not treat the Nisbet family very kindly. Neither in health nor wealth did the Nisbets prosper. But no other misfortune was more shocking, upsetting, or debilitating than the fate which overtook Nisbet’s “unhappy son,” Thomas, who became an alcoholic and a terrible burden to his parents. In a remarkable series of letters written between 1795 and 1802, Nisbet recounted the young man’s
experiences, agonized over his fate, devised ingenious, yet pathetic, stratagems to reform his behavior, and occasionally gave in to the anguish and humiliation felt by himself and his family because of what was happening to them. The story of Thomas Nisbet is affecting and dramatic. To follow it properly, we should learn the details as his father revealed them.

Charles Nisbet first indicated that something was amiss in Thomas’ life in 1795, when the young man was twenty-seven or twenty-eight. He wrote to his friend Alexander Addison, a Washington County attorney and judge, in August: “I know not what to say with Respect to my Son. He seems to be sunk into a sullen Despair & Taedium Vitae.” He reported that Tom would not talk to him, and expressed no views or expectations. Nisbet could not discover if he was engaged in any business, he wrote no one, and people from Lewistown (where Tom had lived until recently) would not say anything about him. That Nisbet would describe Tom’s distress was unusual, for he generally confined his familial observations to pleasantries, even when writing close friends. It must have been clear to Addison that Tom was ill and that his father was upset, but what should he make of the situation? Was Tom physically ill or just depressed? How serious was it? Had his condition forced Tom home from Lewistown?

The mystery remained, because for two years Nisbet mentioned nothing more about Tom although he wrote often to Addison and other friends. Then, in August 1797, the western Pennsylvania lawyer received a startling letter, for Nisbet’s reticence ended and the dam burst: “It may seem astonishing that a young Man, of good Understanding and Education, should fall into a State of Insanity without any bodily Disorder and continue in it for ten or twelve years without Intermission;—But alas! so it is, to my unspeakable Sorrow and Loss.” Tom, it turns out, was a drunkard. He could not start to drink without becoming totally intoxicated and he had been that way for a long time. The frustrated minister could not understand why Tom had not been able to replace one habit with another without “supernatural Assistance or heroic Resolution.” But Tom had refused to try abstinence and for him it was either that or drunkenness; there was no middle ground.

Nisbet confided all this to Addison because he had reached the end of his patience and was taking the drastic step of committing Tom to the lawyer’s care. Tom had always respected Addison, so perhaps he would listen to his advice. “Represent to him,” Nisbet urged, “how mean a Thing it is, for one who was born a Man, to chuse rather to be a Brute, & an Object of Scorn and Contempt to every Creature, as he has been by
his own Choice for some Years past. Labor to excite in him a lively Idea of the Baseness of Drunkenness and the Destruction it brings to a Man's Health, Life, Character, and Circumstances." Not only had Nisbet's patience been exhausted, but so had his purse. He had sent Tom off with enough money to get by for a while but he must reform and earn his own way. Addison should tell Tom he should be ashamed to subsist on “his aged Parents, whose Affection he has forfeited, & whose Feelings he has tortured by his disgraceful Conduct, so that both of us, & especially his Mother, are brought almost to the Grave with Sorrow.” Nisbet would supply more money only when assured by Addison that Tom was abstaining from liquor and living a sober, industrious life.9

Nisbet’s despair must have been great to impose such a burden on even so close a friend as Addison. Together, they apparently hoped that the humiliation of being farmed out would bring Tom to his senses. They were wrong. Over the ensuing fourteen months Tom moved about in an alcoholic fog, succeeding only in accumulating an impressive number of debts. His father, with Addison’s help, thought up and implemented schemes to bring Tom back to the real world, enmeshed himself in his son’s financial affairs despite his vow to the contrary, and finally resigned himself to defeat, all the while acknowledging a growing sense of anxiety and embarrassment.

When Tom first arrived in Washington, he stayed with the Addisons, and the judge tried gentle persuasion while his father sent money in letters that proclaimed his refusal to support his son until he reformed.10 Quickly deciding that mild reproof was getting them nowhere, Nisbet began urging ploys to induce Tom to stop drinking. He first suggested that since Tom “boggled” at proclaiming himself a water drinker, Addison should do it for him, announcing the fact to every assemblage of friends. Surely Tom would not dare to repudiate his host and his better class of companions.11 But Tom did dare, although to Addison he maintained he was only going to indulge as far as cider. (Nisbet thought this was a cover for brandy drinking.) Whatever it was that Tom consumed, its effects were to make him sufficiently obnoxious by early November that the Addisons asked him to leave their home. With this action Nisbet agreed, suggesting that the shock of being on his own might do Tom some good. Yet, harsh as he tried to sound, Nisbet was ever the anxious parent, asking in the same letter that Addison help Tom obtain new lodgings, keep an eye on him from a distance, and offer advice from time to time.12

Tom’s first weeks in Washington were hard on the Nisbets, even though they were sure that Addison was looking after him. The minister
revealed family sorrows that were to plague them for years. His wife, Ann, was “declining apace” because of worry over her son who was never out of her thoughts despite the fact that no one at home ever mentioned him. When, as winter approached, Tom failed to write home for his heavy clothing, she became convinced that he was “regardless of Life.” Even the presence of other children and grandchildren failed to cheer her; she could only contrast their thriving state with his languor. As for Tom’s father, “I try to forget my Sorrows, but all in vain.” He was afraid that Tom would come home, for he knew he could not face him. Ashamed of that, he apologized to Addison for troubling him and prayed “that you may never know what it is to mourn for a living Child.”

Throughout the winter Tom continued to give his father cause to mourn. He drank more and more heavily and began to run up debts. Nisbet could not figure out how Tom obtained what money he did have, yet despite his earlier resolves about sobriety, he occasionally sent Tom funds, saying the money was for food and lodging only. He continued to despair of Tom’s recovery, noting in an uncharacteristically garbled sentence, “I can have little Joy in the Comforts of Life, when I know not whether he, who however ruined and degenerated, is my own Flesh and Blood, may not be in danger of perishing for Want by his own Madness.”

In spite of his alarm and grief, Nisbet continued to conjure up ways to stimulate Tom toward sobriety. During one week in February 1798, he advanced to Addison two related plans. First Nisbet asked the lawyer to persuade a Miss McFarquhar, who was the young daughter of a mutual friend and who was then visiting in Washington, to see Tom in order to “remonstrate with him on the Indecency of his Conduct,” and obtain a promise that he would not drink again, but would seek to regain his lost business and character. Nisbet justified this scheme by the belief that a man who is almost a brute might pay attention to a virtuous young woman even when he would ignore a wise man. Almost before the ink was dry on this letter, Nisbet had come up with an alternative plan in case Miss McFarquhar refused or was unsuccessful. Recalling that John Bunyan, the author of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, had first been prompted to consider his religious state by the reproof of a woman of unsavory character, Nisbet urged Addison to seek out the worst woman he could find and hire her “to abuse [Tom] with all the Rudeness, Contempt, and Asperity she can muster.” Nisbet would gladly pay for the experiment—“It is necessary that bad People should know what
others think of them." Once again exasperated at Tom, the clergyman vowed no more money until the prodigal straightened out his life.16

Miss McFarquhar's gambit failed, and one hopes that Addison had more sense than to try Nisbet's other suggestion. The combination of a bad woman and an intoxicated Tom might have led to disastrous results. By early March, Nisbet had concluded that nothing more could be done for Tom in Washington. He also thought he had imposed on Addison long enough. But he did not want Tom to come home for he had no future there. His alternative? Tom should run away while he still had the power to do so. His father proposed to cover his debts for lodging and his horse, but would pay nothing to gamblers or tavern keepers: "... I wish we had a Law that would inflict five hundred Lashes on each of them, as often as they furnish Drink to a Drunkard that is unable to pay for it..." If Tom was not successful in absconding, "I suppose he must be left naked & bare, if his Creditors take legal Methods."17

Presumably, the lawyer in Addison viewed this idea of Nisbet's with little enthusiasm, for Tom did not run away. Nothing much transpired with respect to Tom through the spring and summer, except that Nisbet broke down at least once to send him money. Finally, in November, a crisis occurred. Nisbet acknowledged Addison's report that Tom had drunk himself almost to death and that his creditors were treating him with prison. He thanked the lawyer for averting that catastrophe, noted that Tom had sent him a list of his debts, and proposed a plan to resolving the difficulties. Nisbet had sent his son $180 for paying his obligations (which amounted to $160). He asked Addison to insure that all the bills were paid in one day and then see to it that Tom left for home the next morning before he had time to squander the rest of his money on drink.18 Frightening as it was, the prospect of Tom at home was by this time less worrisome than Tom away.

That Addison accomplished the task we learn from Nisbet's letter to him in late December. The anxious father first inquired whether the lawyer would ascertain which of Tom's debts were legal and which were not, a clear indication that $160 would not be the extent of Nisbet's financial involvement in his son's affairs. Then he turned to the young man's health. Tom had arrived on December 3, having several times been stopped along the way by a severe bleeding at the nose. But since then he had improved. He had "abstained from all spiritous Liquors, taking only two Glasses of Wine, & sometimes Cyder only, at Meals." And he was reading law books [this was the first indication Nisbet had given of Tom's profession] whereas when he was home before he had
read only “romance Novels and the history of the Turks.” Tom had recovered his health, “but his Mind seems to be in a strange Palsy, tho’ sometimes he seems to be uneasy and vexed and almost incapable of hearing any Discourse on his Misconduct & wretched Condition.”

Whatever the bounds of Charles Nisbet’s compassion for his son, the minister in him apparently could not resist sermonizing, and he knew little of the psychology of parent-child relations.

With Tom home, his father said little about him during the next few months, but allusions to him suggest that he could not maintain his sobriety for any length of time. Yet in a May letter to Addison that touched once more on the irritant of Tom’s debts, an optimistic Nisbet expressed the hope that he could be cured “as he has come under an Engagement to abstain from strong Liquors and observed it for more than six Weeks, & has appeared in two Causes here, one in the Court of Oyer and Terminer, & another in the Supreme Court now sitting.”

There was no shortage of attorneys in Carlisle, so Tom’s participation in these proceedings indicates either a remarkably friendly community attitude toward the Nisbets, or a great willingness to overlook and forgive drunken behavior. Still, Nesbit wrote with “trembling Hand, when I reflect on the Corruption and Infirmity of Human Nature.”

Nisbet’s forebodings were well-conceived, for within a few months Tom had embarked on an adventure that signalled a new low for irresponsibility. The episode came to light in a long letter of October 24, 1799, written to Jedediah Morse, the famous American geographer and high Federalist Congregational clergyman. Nisbet had not previously corresponded with Morse, but his letter makes clear that Tom’s folly had plunged this stranger into the family’s most intimate affairs. The Pennsylvanian’s gratitude for the act of a good samaritan suggests that Morse had saved Tom from some danger. Just what Morse had done does not emerge, but Nisbet thought his services merited some explanation of how Tom had become the poor specimen he was. For the first time, Nisbet confided the story of Tom’s early life to another. He did so out of a sense of profound desolation: “No Words can express the Sorrows that I have endured from this unworthy Creature for these twelve Years past. His Misbehaviour & Disobedience has been one great Cause (though I have not wanted other Troubles) that I have lived in Sorrow, & almost estranged from Society, during the fourteen Years that I have resided in this Country."

Tom was once a promising young man. He had graduated from the University of Edinburgh, where he had done very well, earning the praise of all his professors. He not only had excelled in the normal
studies, but had also demonstrated skill in French, Italian, anatomy, chemistry, and mathematics. The principal, the famous historian and divine Dr. William Robertson, had called Tom the best prepared master’s candidate in his many years at the university. This early promise had continued when the Nisbets immigrated to America. Tom decided that law was the most likely profession in the new country and studied diligently to become a good attorney. Then a profound change had taken place in Tom, which Nisbet traced to a single event. When the yough was old enough for militia service, he had turned out instead of paying his fine and had fallen among low companions. He “was initiated in Intemperance before we were aware of it.” Tom had tried to conceal his weakness for some time, but was unable to hide it completely. Concluding his law studies, he had settled first in Harrisburg, then had moved to Lewistown in Mifflin County where he might have succeeded, “but being among a mean and drunken Society, he adopted their Habits, and neglected his Business.” He fell into debt and came home.

At this point in the letter Nisbet related the saga of Tom’s sojourn with the Addisons, adding nothing new except that it was his wife who had persuaded the clergyman to take Tom back into their home. Once returned, the son drifted in and out of sobriety, become more and more unhappy. He said he wanted to forsake the law and go to sea. After several months his parents gave in to his pleas and sent Tom off to Halifax bearing letters from the British Counsel in Philadelphia to the admiral on the Halifax station. Either Tom had refused to enter the navy or had been rejected, and thus he had ended up in Morse’s care.

Nisbet wrote all this to Morse to show that he had tried to serve his son well and that he had only suffered by him as a result. What was extremely embarrassing and difficult were the problems Tom’s condition had raised for Nisbet “in the Office of an Instructor of Youth.” The Dickinson College president could not but lament what might have been: “He might have attained such a Condition, as to have done Honour to my Family, & to have been by this Time a Friend & Protector to me in a strange Country, but the low Passion for Drink has rendered him my greatest Disgrace & Misfortune.” Just as Nisbet was closing this remarkably revealing letter, Tom arrived home from his exploits after leaving Morse. His father was aghast: “He is worn to a Shadow by a frequent Bleeding at the Nose. His Limbs quiver as if in a Palsy & Sleep has in a great Measure fled from him. I fear he may become insane....”

To Addison, in the course of a letter still trying to straighten out
Tom’s debts, Nisbet detailed the involvement of Morse in his son's affairs. When Tom prevailed on them to go to sea, the Nisbets entrusted him to their son-in-law William Turnbull, a Philadelphia merchant. Turnbull obtained the recommendation from the British Consul, bought Tom some proper clothes, and accompanied him to New York where he was to catch the packet ship for Nova Scotia. The night before departure Turnbull became ill; the unsupervised Tom became drunk. The next morning Turnbull deposited the still intoxicated man on the packet and left. Before the ship could sail, Tom fell backward through the hatches and into the hold, striking his head on some bottles. He was taken up for dead and “it cost the Surgeon of the Packet eleven Hours Labour, before he could stop the Bleeding.” Tom had three large wounds in his head and one in his back when he arrived in Halifax, “and presenting his Letters to the Admiral, probably in a State of Intoxication, it appears that he was refused,” although Tom claimed he declined to enter because he learned that he would have to serve six years before being promoted. He stayed five days in Halifax, probably drinking all the while, then took ship for Boston, where Morse encountered him, nursed his wounds, and gave him enough money to reach New York. Even then Tom was not through, for in New York he walked off from a friend leaving no word and disappeared for several weeks. He came home very ill, having trekked through western New York and possibly into Canada, and he subsequently endured a late October canoe trip down the Susquehanna River. Wrote his father, “He is no wiser by his Misfortunes & Disappointments & the Hardships he has suffered on his needless Journey. God knows what will become of him.”

Nisbet, for all his grief and despair, was reluctant to give up hope. Soon after the new year, he wrote Morse to say that Tom had fallen into excesses on his return, but that lately he had kept sober and studious for four weeks. But even in his lucid intervals he would make no promises about the future.

After this, Nisbet was silent about Tom for over two years. Presumably, things went on as they had before, when Tom moving in and out of sobriety and his parents offering worried support, punctuated by reproofs from an exasperated father. The last word about Tom came in a note to the faithful Addison and it indicated a drastic decline in Tom’s health. Nisbet wrote to plot a strategy with the attorney to avoid being sued by an irate creditor of Tom’s. The cleric did not understand how he could be pressed for a claim now three years old. “As to my unhappy Son,” he wrote, “he is now in the Pennsylvania Hospital, where no
Action, I suppose, can reach him." And there he stayed. Nisbet, by this time a rapidly aging sixty-six, lived out his sorrow for only eighteen more months before succumbing to a brief but violent illness in January 1804. Tom, evidently now fallen into the state of insanity his father had anticipated for so long, within a few months followed him into the grave.

The Nisbets were anxious that Tom's story not be broadcast, both for his sake and theirs. Charles Nisbet's principal biographer, who knew the family, did not reveal the truth when he wrote in 1840. For almost two hundred years it has been buried in the Nisbet correspondence. Still, there were hundreds of other stories like Tom's. Recent studies of early American drinking patterns by W. A. Rorabaugh, Lender and Martin, and Ian Tyrrell have shown that during the Federalist era our forbears were heavy drinkers. They estimate that in 1790 the average American over fifteen imbibed almost six gallons of absolute alcohol yearly. The thirty-four gallons of cider and beer he drank accounted for some of this, but the bulk of the alcohol went down neat, or slightly diluted, as distilled spirits. The ensuing decade saw even this astonishing rate of consumption increase. By Jefferson's election, Americans were drinking a higher proportion of distilled liquor and had raised their annual intake to over six and one-half gallons. Even these figures understate consumption by heavy drinkers, since many Americans did not drink at all. By contrast, Americans in 1970 based their well-publicized problems with alcoholism on an average consumption of a little less than two gallons apiece. It seems evident that drunkenness was a problem for many Americans in the 1790s.

The new scholarship argues that some members of the post-Revolutionary elite thought so, perceiving excessive inebriation as a threat to public order. The activities of a few Pennsylvanians illustrate the existence of a campaign against drinking, although it was too small, ill-organized, and localized to be called a temperance movement. The Philadelphia physician Benjamin Rush argued against the immoderate consumption of alcohol as early as 1772. During the Revolution he was joined by the Quaker merchant and reformer Anthony Benezet. Both described alcohol as dangerous to the health if consumed either continually or in great quantities. By the 1780s Benezet had persuaded the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to place some restrictions on the use of alcohol, and among Quakers generally there was growing antipathy to strong drink. Meanwhile, Rush had greatly advanced the medical argument through his essay, "An Inquiry into the Effects of Spiritous Liquors," first published in 1784 in the Philadelphia newspapers, and
later as a pamphlet that sold thousands of copies in several editions. Over the rest of the decade Rush continued to speak and write in the anti-liquor cause, achieving perhaps his most spectacular effect on July 4, 1788, when he persuaded 17,000 Independence Day celebrants to walk out to a suburban estate where they drank no distilled spirits, settling rather for beer and cider. By this time Rush had even enlisted republican ideology in the cause of temperance. He called cider and beer “federal” beverages, in contrast to distilled liquors which were “anti-federal” because they were the companions of “all those vices that are calculated to dishonor and enslave our country.”

The mixing of politics and the anti-liquor movement extended to the arena of public policy making. The Quaker George Logan unsuccessfully tried to persuade the Pennsylvania legislature to levy an excise tax on distilled liquors. The logic of taxing the sale of distilled alcohol to cut down on its consumption even formed part of the rationale for the federal excise enacted as part of Alexander Hamilton’s revenue program. Westerners, especially Pennsylvanians, understood this. Not only did they object to the tax because it fell disproportionately on their region, they also alleged that the excise was an upper class attempt to legislate morality. As such, it should be resisted as an infringement on individual liberty. The Whiskey Rebellion in part embodied this resistance, and while the government’s armed force stifled the rebellion, it did not make the tax any easier to collect. Pennsylvanians, and other Americans, produced ever more distilled liquor. And they drank it. Post-1800 per capita consumption of alcohol increased still further.

The new scholarship clearly demonstrates the larger ramifications of the perception by the post-Revolutionary elite, both Federalist and Republican, that drinking was a national problem, and that the misuse of alcohol by the American people boded a threat to the future of the republic. Had Tom’s story and others like it become known, as would hundreds of such dramas some forty years later, the unorganized temperance activities of the Federalist era might have had more impact. There was much in Nisbet’s account, and in his person, that would have served their purposes. Tom’s story documented the elite’s concern about the disorderly consequences of drinking: it focused on the unruly militia; it showed that drinking made mockery of the law at the same time catching up the victims in the law’s coils; and most of all it demonstrated symbolically the deleterious effects of alcoholism on the nation by portraying so vividly the poisoning of the relationship between son and father. All this came from the pen of the socially conservative Nisbet,
opponent of the Whiskey Rebellion, Calvinist foe of the French Revolution, and critic of rampant democracy in America.\textsuperscript{31}

But Tom's decline took place during the 1790s, not the 1830s or 1840s. No one sought out the Nisbets to say that their son's story would bolster the temperance crusade, for there was no temperance crusade. The massive publicity given to the lives of the intoxicated at the height of the temperance movement was the product of significant changes in the organization and purpose of reform movements, in the technology of communication, and in the public's attitude toward alcoholism. It would take the emergence of the nationally headquartered voluntary societies, the acceptance of the belief that man was perfectible, the rise of the cheap book and the special interest newspaper, and the adoption of the conviction that alcoholism inhibited individual and social progress—it would take all of these developments before the narratives of America's inebriates became popular reading.\textsuperscript{32}

Even then, the stories that appeared were not like Tom's. For, as William Breitenbach has recently shown, those narratives focused on the havoc that drunken fathers wreaked on their sons' lives, not the other way around. The temperance reformers of the nineteenth century, seeking to live up to and surpass the glory of their Revolutionary fathers, had to attack them, symbolically at least. Their mission was not to restore an old social order, but to reject it, to replace it with the idea of progress in which the sons would complete a revolution their fathers had left unfinished.\textsuperscript{33}

In the 1830s Tom's story would have been an anachronism. In the 1790s it was not. But no one, outside a small circle of Nisbet family members, friends, and fellow townspeople, knew it. There was no publicity. Its time had not yet come. Most of our knowledge about drinking in Federalist America will continue to focus on its large-scale, national impact, for only rarely will there appear a glimpse into the tragic personal world of the drunkard and his family.

\textbf{Notes}

2. Ibid., pp. 15–19, 29–30, 74–78.
4. Charles Nisbet to the Earl of Buchan, Jan. 10, 1792, to Dr. Jonathan Ingham, Jan. 14,
1793 (Dickinson College Archives [hereafter DCA]); Charles Nisbet to Charles Wallace, Sept. 8, 1790 (New York Public Library).


6. Miller, *Memoir of Nisbet*, p. 24, indicates that Nisbet married Ann Tweedie in June 1766. Thomas, the oldest child, could not have been born before 1767, but must have been born about then, for the Nisbets emigrated to America in 1785, after Thomas had graduated M.A. from the University of Edinburgh. Consequently, in 1795 Thomas should have been twenty-seven or twenty-eight.

7. Nisbet met Addison on the voyage from Scotland to America and developed a close friendship with the young man who at that time was also travelling to the new world to pursue a new career, and who was also a Presbyterian minister; Charles Nisbet to Jedediah Morse, Oct. 24, 1799 (Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia [hereafter HSP]). Addison's American career may be followed in John R. Wagner, “The Public Career of Alexander Addison” (M.A. Thesis, University of Pittsburgh, 1951), and G. S. Rowe, “Alexander Addison: The Disillusionment of a 'Republican Schoolmaster’,” *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, 62 (1979), pp. 221-50.

8. Charles Nisbet to Alexander Addison, Aug. 6, 1795 (Special Collections, University of Pittsburgh Library [All Nisbet letters to Addison cited in this article are from this repository]).

9. Charles Nisbet to Alexander Addison, Aug. 12, 1797.

10. Charles Nisbet to Alexander Addison, Aug. 31, 1797.

11. Charles Nisbet to Alexander Addison, Sept. 9, 1797.


13. Ibid.


15. Ibid.


17. Charles Nisbet to Alexander Addison, Mar. 4, 1798.


19. Charles Nisbet to Alexander Addison, Dec. 15/29, 1798. This letter was begun on the former and finished on the latter date.


22. Charles Nisbet to Jedediah Morse, Oct. 24, 1799 (HSP). This and the succeeding three paragraphs all treat this letter.

23. Rorabaugh notes that militia musters were renowned for their inclusion of alcohol in the exercises and that the election of officers was accompanied by the treating of the men; *Alcoholic Republic*, pp. 19-20. Lender and Martin paint an even larger picture of the involvement of alcohol in the affairs of the militia; *Drinking in America*, pp. 12-16.

24. Charles Nisbet to Alexander Addison, Nov. 9, 1799.

25. Charles Nisbet to Jedediah Morse, Jan. 4, 1800 (HSP).


