

A Note on Language

I HAVE QUOTED THE WORDS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY GENERATION as faithfully as possible, including their unusual spellings and surprising capitalizations. I did this because I think it puts us nearer their world, and also out of respect: I wouldn't change their words when quoting them, so why change their spellings? For some reason, I am fond of George Washington's apoplectic denunciation of an "ananominous" letter written by a mutinous officer during the Revolutionary War. Seeing this reinforces our need to understand that the past really is "a foreign country" where they did things differently, and where words sometimes carried different meanings. The one point where I nearly broke this rule is with the variant spellings of the Roman conspirator Catiline, sometimes spelled as Cataline. But I decided to preserve their variations after realizing that this is necessary to enable readers to search for a given quotation in *Founders Online*, the National Archives' wonderful digital compilation of the papers of the leaders of the early United States. Along the same lines, I have where possible quoted from the eighteenth-century editions of books that they might have used, including Greek and Roman authors in translation. The only alteration I have consistently made is to capitalize the first letter of sentences, because I found that leaving them in lowercase made their words more difficult to comprehend.

I also have chosen to use the term "First Peoples" rather than "Indian" or "Native American." In researching this issue, I was struck by a statement by a group of musicians that "We do not call ourselves 'Native American,' because our blood and people were here long before this land was called the Americas. We are older than America can ever be and do not know the borders."