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Contents

Features

Midwifery 16
The first Colonists brought the essentials with them—and midwives were among the most important
BY MARDY FONES

First Thanks 18
From Texas to Virginia to Massachusetts, communities still debate who can claim the “first Thanksgiving”
BY STACEY EVERS

The Nectar of the Divine 24
For such a civilized beverage, tea stirred up a Revolution
BY GEOFFREY D. WITHAM

Timeless Toys 30
Evolving from primitive learning tools to objects of delight, toys signalled changing views of childhood
BY JEANMARIE ANDREWS

The Silver Age 34
Inexpensive yet desired by Native Americans, trade silver helped build early commerce in the New World
BY JEANMARIE ANDREWS

Battle On! 38
Revolutionary War reenactors find pride, family values and a whole lot of fun on the battlefield
BY LAURA THIGPEN

Children and Genealogy 42
Spur your children’s interest in family history with these simple techniques
BY MAUREEN TAYLOR

Photographic Memories 44
Some careful sleuthing and attention to details in your family photos can help you identify ancestors
BY MAUREEN TAYLOR

American Spirit • November/December 2003
Volume 137, No. 6
{Letters to the Editor}

Spirited Comments From Readers 3

{Message From the President General}

Teaching Democracy 4
A new report on teaching history and democratic values calls for reform—and affirms the DAR stance

{Whatnot}

Miscellany 5
The Rotunda of the National Archives reopens with a brilliant new exhibition; Dates to Remember

BY THE AMERICAN SPIRIT STAFF

{Tech Tools}

Virtual Genealogy 6
Online genealogy classes bring the classroom to your home computer

BY TAMARA HOLMES

{Historic Homes}

200 Years of Grouseland 10
The Vincennes, Ind., home of William Henry Harrison celebrates its bicentennial in grand style

BY JANE ROY BROWN

{Bookshelf}

Monster Behind the Door 15
The Speckled Monster explores early 18th-century victories against smallpox—and ponders its lingering threat as a weapon

BY BILL HUDGINS

{Personal History}

New Branches on the Family Tree 41
Diligent research and a chance encounter reunite long-separated branches of a family

BY KARLA ZIMMERMAN

ABOUT THE COVER:
Tea proved a flashpoint of Independence. © CORBIS 2003
**Spirited comments from our readers**

**Eureka Moment**

*Eureka!* And all because of *American Spirit!* As I took a look through the January/February issue, there to my total surprise was “The Peck House” in Attleboro, Mass. This was about my ancestor, Hezekiah Peck! My approved DAR supplements were on Hezekiah and his son, Henry. I had used Joseph and his son, Nicholas, as ancestors for Colonial Dames XVII Century membership and Coat of Arms. Hezekiah will also be used for my two grandchildren’s applications in the new NSCAR Chapter the Havasu Chapter is sponsoring.

I contacted the Regent of the Attleboro Chapter. Jane Nerney was so gracious and helpful in my quest. She sent pictures of the inside of the house, including a picture of the family crest, information on the house and family, and photos of the cemeteries where many of the family are buried. This was also a “Eureka” for the opportunity to get acquainted with a wonderful DAR Sister! Many thanks to Jane for her help and to all of you at the magazine headquarters for publishing such a wonderful, interesting magazine!

*Connie Lautenbach*

*Havasu Chapter*

*Lake Havasu City, Ariz.*

**Cadet Nurse Corps**

The May/June issue of *American Spirit* mentions Frances Payne Bolton, who bought land to save Mount Vernon’s pristine view. Before she was Vice Regent, she was a congresswoman from Ohio. During World War II, she introduced the bill that created the Cadet Nurse Corps, which played a role the equal of Rosie the Riveter.

Hospitals were stripped of nursing staff when many nurses left for duty with the armed forces, causing a nursing shortage. The Cadet Nurse Corps bill paid for the students’ education and provided uniforms and a small stipend. I was a Cadet Nurse from September 1943 to December 1946 at the University of Michigan. Many girls who could not have afforded a nursing education were able to have one, and the hospitals could still accept patients, thanks to Frances Payne Bolton.

*Marjory Hubbell*

*El Dorado Chapter*

*Placerville, Calif.*

In 1982, I received a phone call from my son, “Mom, I think you have a Revolutionary War ancestor!” I pooh-poohed this, as no one in our family had ever been connected to the American Revolution. My daughter-in-law had been researching in the National Archives and for some reason put in the name Benjamin Chapman, who was on my very sketchy list of ancestors. Up popped a Revolutionary War pension application for him.

Subsequently, I received a copy of the pension application and also the muster receipts for Pvt. Benjamin Chapman. I determined where he had been born in 1760. I wrote the town clerk in Ashford, Conn., and got copies of his birth certificate and his parents’ marriage certificate. His pension application detailed his military service from Fort Ticonderoga to Valley Forge. I wrote a book, *Muster to the Drum*, about his life and military service. (It’s in the NSDAR library.)

Naturally I joined DAR and became active at the chapter, state and national level. Our chapter journeyed to Grafton, Vt. where we marked Benjamin’s grave. It’s been a fascinating adventure.

*Glenna Shanahan*

*Jane McCrea Chapter*

*Queensbury, N.Y.*

**Corrections and Clarifications**

The article on history films in the July/August issue incorrectly stated that Dr. Samuel Mudd was a Virginian; he was a native of Maryland. “Whatnot” in the same issue incorrectly listed the year of the first Women’s Rights Convention in Seneca Falls; the correct year was 1848. And the 1864 death date for William Hutchings/Hutchins in “Ghosts of the Revolution” was incorrect. The correct death date is May 2, 1866. *American Spirit* is happy to set the record straight.

Please send us your questions and comments. We encourage e-mailing them to the editor at americanspirit@dar.org. Alternatively, mail them to DAR Magazine Office, 1776 D St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20006-5303

Please limit letters to 200 words.
From The President General

Do your children know what it means to be an American? That provocative question—and how well America’s schools perform in helping children answer it—lies at the heart of a remarkable recent assessment of public education in America.

In early September, the Albert Shanker Institute released a statement called Education for Democracy that found many schools lacking in how they teach American history, institutions and democratic values. What is noteworthy is that the Albert Shanker Institute was founded as a non-partisan policy organization by the American Federation of Teachers. It is a clear call for the millions of AFT members to take the lead in bringing American values back into the classroom.

The statement calls for an end to the often-negative depiction of America found in many textbooks, to be replaced by a more objective and neutral accounting of our history and that of other nations and peoples.

A press release announcing the release of Education for Democracy said, “The statement argues that we must also reject moral relativism—an I’m OK, you’re OK version of history in which every idea is deemed equally worthy and the universal longing for democracy is dismissed as an American plot. It argues for a study of history in which objectivity and neutrality should not be confused.”

The press release added: “Education for Democracy calls on our schools ‘to purposefully impart to their students the learning necessary for an informed, reasoned allegiance to the ideals of a free society, and notes that efforts to reach that goal have been undercut by textbooks tilted toward a negative depiction of American history. Education for Democracy cites a 2000 report by the American Textbook Council and a 2003 study by the historian, Diane Ravitch, both of which conclude that textbooks present an unduly harsh version of the American story.”

The Institute’s findings are no surprise to DAR. Since its inception, DAR has labored tirelessly to improve and promote the teaching of American history and democratic values in our schools, in our communities and among immigrants. We have deplored the negativity and, yes, bias that has shadowed many curricula in recent years—at all levels of education, both public and private. The Shanker Institute report is a hopeful sign that the educational establishment may begin to reverse this trend, to become, as a popular news network might say, more fair and balanced in its approach.

This will not happen overnight, and the process will be contentious and hotly debated—and that is one sign of a healthy democracy. Rest assured, however, that DAR will remain vigilantly in the vanguard, working to raise informed and thoughtful generations of patriotic citizens. (Education for Democracy is available online at www.shankerinstitute.org. An earlier Institute-sponsored study, Educating Democracy, State Standards to Ensure a Civic Core by historian Paul Gagnon, demonstrated that many states relegate history and civics standards to a secondary status. Rankings by state are available online at www.shankerinstitute.org/Downloads/gagnon/table.pdf)
Coffing the renocn, the Archives (archives.gov) launched a
new exhibition, The Charters of Freedom: A New World is at
Hand, chronicling the creation of the Charters and their impact on our history and the rest of world. On
display are documents such as King George III’s proclamation of August 23,
1775, branding rebellious
Colonists as traitors; the October 4, 1783, petition by 500 Quakers calling
for an end to slavery; and Susan B. Anthony’s testimony after her arrest for
illegally voting in the 1872 election.

You Decide: What Are Our 100 Most
Important Documents?
What are the most important documents that shaped our history? It’s your
call, thanks to The People’s Vote: 100 Docu-
ments That Shaped America, co-sponsored by the National Archives, National History
Day and U.S. News & World Report maga-
azine. Launched September 17 and run-
ing through December 15, the event lets
you vote your top 10 picks from a list of
100 documents. They range from the Lee
Resolution of 1776 to the 1965 Voting
Rights Act.
For more information on the docu-
ments, visit ourdocuments.gov. You can
also access a list of the documents, with
to more information about each, and
vote at usnews.com/vote. Results will be
announced in the Rotunda for the
Charters of Freedom on December 15—
Bill of Rights Day.

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If you’ve considered taking a course to learn about genealogy or brush up on your skills but couldn’t fit classroom time into your schedule, don’t despair. With a computer and Internet access, you can enter a virtual world of genealogy courses, thanks to a number of associations and universities that offer online classes.

Convenience is one of the biggest attractions of online classes. Unlike traditional institutions of learning, Internet classrooms are as close as your home computer. Not only that, most online classes don’t require students to “attend class” at a set time. Rather, students complete assignments and study at their leisure.

Instructors and students can communicate in several ways. Some online classes take place primarily via e-mail, with instructors e-mailing lessons and assignments and students completing work and e-mailing it back. Other online classes use private chat rooms. Students
and instructors can meet in these chat rooms to discuss lessons, address problems and complete group assignments. Chat rooms also enable students to become acquainted and bond as they would in a real-world classroom setting.

Message boards provide another way for students to communicate with instructors and one another. Unlike chat rooms, which require all participants to be online at the same time, message boards allow students and instructors to post questions and comments at their convenience, which can be read anytime.

While high-speed Internet access can make any online task easier and less time-consuming, Web-based classes typically don’t require much bandwidth, that is, high-speed connections. Much of the work consists of downloading text files or reading text from the Web. Chat-room discussions and message board posting can be done just as effectively with a dial-up Internet connection as with a high-speed cable hookup, so slow Internet equipment shouldn’t hinder your studies.

**Paths to Accreditation**

It takes more than online courses to qualify you as an accredited professional genealogist, but they can help you prepare for certification.

For example, The International Commission for the Accreditation of Professional Genealogists (ICAPG), gives applicants an examination to test their knowledge of genealogy, and also conducts background checks to determine how much practical experience they have.

In order to be recognized as a certified genealogist by the Board for Certification of Genealogists (NGS), three to four judges review applications to determine whether applicants are familiar with the types of problems that genealogists may run into. Like the ICAPG, the Board does not require a specific amount of educational experience for certification. However, completing courses that teach fundamental skills and requiring students to do the legwork associated with genealogical research can go a long way toward preparing for certification.

**Strictly Online**

There are many options for online genealogy classes. Professional genealogists and genealogical associations offer courses, as do colleges and universities. Some courses are free, while others charge tuition. There are courses for beginners, as well as those for more advanced students who would like to increase their skills and knowledge. There are other variables, too, such as the amount of time students are expected to spend on course work, and whether there is special instruction for people of specific ethnic groups.

One of the best places to start is About.com’s Guide to Genealogy at genealogy.about.com/cs/freeclasses. The site features suggestions and Web addresses for sites offering free instruction.

About.com has its own free course taught by genealogist Kimberly Powell at genealogy.about.com/library. The six-lesson course is geared primarily toward budding genealogists and, as such, is packed with research basics and tips for obtaining information from sources such as birth, death and divorce records. Students can proceed at their own pace, although Ms. Powell recommends everyone should spend about a week on each lesson.

Classroom message boards allow students to post questions and leave messages, adding a social component to the experience. Ms. Powell also gives quizzes and assignments after each lesson to help students gauge whether they’ve mastered the content of each lesson.

Another good site is Genealogy.com, which has an entire online learning center designed to improve family research skills, at genealogy.com/university.html. It offers three, free online classes designed by Genealogy Research Associates and Online Pioneers, two organizations founded by genealogists.

“Beginning Genealogy” is a 14-lesson course that covers basics such as discovering the best places to find different types of records. An “Internet Genealogy” course specifically addresses the skills and knowledge necessary to make the most of Internet genealogical research. With so much information now accessible from online databases, even those who consider themselves to be advanced students may benefit from this 31-lesson course. Among the topics covered are search engine tips, the use of newsgroups for genealogical research and suggestions for creating a genealogy mailing list to help you search for new family information.

The third course offered is “Tracing Immigrant Origins.” This 40-lesson course covers different waves of immigration to the United States. It teaches students how to tap into immigration and foreign and military databases to expand the scope of their familial search.

The National Genealogical Society (NGS), at ngsgenealogy.org/edu.htm, offers a varying curriculum. Unlike the ones offered by About.com and Genealogy.com, these courses are not free. NGS members can take courses for $35, while non-members pay $50. Course offerings change throughout the year. Recent offerings include “Introduction to Genealogy,” “Federal Population Census Schedules” and “Special Federal Census Schedules.”

The NGS also offers a home-study course called “American Genealogy: A Basic Course,” which takes about 18 months to complete. In the process, students are required to visit local libraries, courthouses, churches and cemeteries to complete assignments—and research their roots at the same time. This course is accredited by the Distance Education and Training Council, and costs $295 for society members and $375 for non-members.

**“Bricks and Mortar” Online**

Some colleges and universities often offer online classes about genealogy through their distance learning programs.
Internet Misadventures:
John Barnett's True Revolutionary War Service

Internet is the electronic equivalent of a false prophet. I've found that the Internet easily leads beginning and inexperienced genealogists astray with promising, but oftentimes inaccurate or false information. True, there is a lot of good and helpful data online, but a growing number of genealogical errors are showing up as more people use the Internet to research family trees and post their findings. One should always double check information from the Internet against original sources.

Information about the Revolutionary War service of John Barnett of Harrison County, Ind., provides a good example.

A Web page listed Revolutionary War soldiers buried in Harrison County (jerry.vigo.lib.in.us/revoluti/harrison.htm). It claimed John Barnett was born probably in Virginia, and that he died in 1816. He was married to an O'Connell, and the children mentioned in John's will were James P., born 1762 in Virginia, and died 3-31-1834; John; Jesse; Alexander married Mary Faith; Jennie married William Lawrence; Mary married Elisha Hall; Ann married Joseph Hall; Joseph; Polly married Elisha Moore. This Web site at least published its source: page 15 of Roster of Soldiers and Patriots of the American Revolution Buried in Indiana, 1966.

Another reference source. Revolutionary Soldiers Buried in Indiana (1949) with Supplement (1954), (compiled by Margaret R. Waters, two volumes in one. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1970), gave more detailed information than what had been posted on the Web site. The foreword to that book reads:

In 1938 the Indiana Daughters of the American Revolution published the Roster of Soldiers and Patriots of the American Revolution Buried in Indiana, edited by Mrs. Roscoe C. O'Byrne.

Since that time, I have been collecting names of Revolutionary Soldiers who died, or were buried, in Indiana and whose names were not listed in the above book. This compilation is in no way intended as a supplement to the Roster... There are 300 names in this list.

John Barnett was listed on page 4.

Barnett, John, Harrison Co. d. 1816 (will wr. 3-22-1815; pr. 10-25-1816); m. — O'Connell (liv. 1815); chn. — James P., b. 1762, Amherst Co., Va., (liv. 1832 Lincoln Co., Ky.), d. 3-31-1834; John; Jesse; Alexander m. Mary Faith; Jennie m. William Lawrence (or had chn. Rachel or Samuel); Rachel m. Samuel Lawrence; Mary ("Polly") m. Elisha Hall; Ann m. Joseph Hall. Fam. Moved to Guildford Co., N.C., when son James was young; there during Rev. John Barnett qualifies as a Patriot because his son James P. served as a substitute for him.

One final word of caution: There are errors in the information on John's children and their spouses, too. But that's also a subject for another article.

Sharon DeBartolo Carmack is a Certified Genealogist, the author of numerous books and articles, including Your Guide to Cemetery Research, and a former regent of Zebulon Pike Chapter, NSDAR, Colorado Springs, Colo. Her Web site is SharonCarmack.com.

Kennesaw State University offers less structured online courses. The school's $129 "Genealogy Basics" course lasts six weeks and has set start and finish dates. Students can work on assignments whenever they want, as long as they complete all course work by the end date.

Like real-world institutions of learning, virtual schools differ in requirements, approaches and costs. As you sift through the many online offerings, you'll find some that fit your lifestyle and preferred way of learning and many that don't.

If you're unsure whether the online learning environment is right for you, try it out by taking one of the free courses mentioned above to see if you're comfortable with the self-regulated pace of Internet learning.

Ultimately, your lifestyle and your expectations will dictate which, if any, online classes you choose to further develop your family research skills. With so many options available, you have nothing to lose and a potential world of knowledge to gain.

by Sharon DeBartolo Carmack, CG
WHERE TO SEARCH FOR
Family Records

If you’ve already tapped the major genealogical sites such as familysearch.org, Ancestry.com, Genealogy.com and Rootsweb.com for information but haven’t found all you need, be adventurous and try some of the 20 sites listed below. Each one offers something a little different, from photographs to cemetery records, that might help you locate that missing ancestor or discover some new clues. **Go ahead—take a chance. Who knows what gems you’ll find.**

—Maureen Taylor

AfriGeneas
afrigeneas.com
Connect with other researchers exploring African-American roots.

American Family Immigration History Center
(Ellis Island)
ellisisland.org
Search for ancestors in arrival records from 1892–1924, or build a family scrapbook.

Association of Professional Genealogists
apgen.org
If you need professional help with your research, then hire a member of APG by consulting its online membership directory.

Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System
www.itd.nps.gov/cwss
This database of information on soldiers and mariners who served on both sides of the conflict is part of a multiphase project.

Daughters of the American Revolution
dar.org
The DAR site’s resources include the Patriot Index Lookup service and the ability to search the Library’s holdings through the online catalog.

Family History Radio
familyhistoryradio.com
Listen to interviews with nationally known genealogists via your computer.

Federation of Genealogical Societies
fgs.org
Find a genealogical society in your area through the membership directory and information on the group’s annual conference.

Genealogy Portal.com
genealogyportal.com
Stephen Wood (The Genealogy Home Page) and Matthew Helm (Helm’s Genealogy Toolbox) created this free site to assist in finding genealogical material not usually found in other search engines.

Genealogical Software Springboard
gensoftsb.com
Check out the reviews on this site written by actual customers before you buy a genealogical software package.

Genforum
genforum.genealogy.com
Connect with distant relatives by posting a query on this extensive message board or respond to one already posted.

Immigrant Ships Transcribers Guild
immigrantships.net
Take a group of dedicated volunteers with a sense of purpose and look what they can accomplish—online transcriptions of passenger lists from 4,000 ships, searchable and free.

Cemetery Transcription Library
interment.net
Browse almost 3 million cemetery records from around the world or add transcriptions to this growing database.

Newspaper Abstracts
newspaperabstracts.com
This resource offers a variety of newspaper abstracts from the United States, Ireland and Canada.

Your Past Connections
pastconnect.com
Search this site for lost family documents and then purchase what you find.

United States Army Military History Institute
Locate photos of ancestors who served in the military, from the Mexican War to today.

United States GenWeb Project
usgenweb.com
This volunteer project establishes genealogical Web sites for every county in the United States.

For links to more sites, check out the “sites of the week” picked by *Family Tree Magazine*
familytreemagazine.com
{Home of William Henry Harrison}
VINCENNES, INDIANA, CIRCA 1803

GROUSELAND

BY JANE ROY BROWN

Photography by Bernie Schmitt
This cherry Hepplewhite drop-leaf table, a part of a three-piece banquet set, enhances a view of the east grounds. The crystal wine decanters on silver coasters are set alongside the crystal chafing dish, necessary to keep foods warm.
Loosely modeled on Harrison’s elegant Virginia family seat, Berkeley, his 17-room mansion was finished in 1804. Borrowing from both Federal and Georgian architectural styles, it was the first brick house in the Indiana Territory, which encompassed today’s states of Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin and part of Minnesota. Harrison called his home Grouseland, after the abundant prairie chickens, or grouse, on the property. Harrison, Anna, and their four children moved in, and four more children were later born in the house.

According to Harrison’s correspondence, he designed the house himself. The mansion features a hipped roof and a two-story porch, or portico, capped by a triangular pediment and supported by white columns with Ionic capitals. Over the prominent white front door is a semicircular fanlight. The west wall bows outward, a feature of great architectural distinction on the rough-hewn Western frontier.

Since the 1930s, the house has undergone several periods of restoration, during which the Francis Vigo Chapter of DAR in Vincennes, guided by a consultant, oversaw some reconstruction as well as decorating and furnishing. All of the work was based on historical records and archaeological excavation on the property. The restoration is accurate to the period in which the Harrisons lived at Grouseland, between 1804 and 1812. A few pieces of furniture belonged to the Harrison family, and the rest all date from the period.

Grouseland actually comprises two buildings connected by an enclosed gallery that runs between the second stories. Ten fireplaces once heated the complex. The main building, known as the Great House, stands two-and-a-half stories high. On the first floor are two large rooms—a parlor now known as the Council Chamber and the formal dining room—separated by an entrance hall with a freestanding cherry staircase. The hallway is wallpapered in a bold pattern of black and rich yellow. Although none of the mansion’s original wallcoverings survived, restoration consultants thought it likely that wallpaper would have adorned the house. Hand-screened paper typical of the period covers the walls of the house today.

In the Council Chamber, Harrison signed five treaties with Native Americans, acquiring about 3 million acres of their land for the United States during his term as governor. (Long before they met in battle in 1813, Harrison’s chief adversary, the Shawnee chieftain Tecumseh, visited Vincennes to try to recover some of the land. He did not enter the Council Chamber, however, but met with Harrison outdoors in a walnut grove.)

The walls of this room are papered in deep yellow with a ceiling border in a light-blue swag pattern that complements the blue window drapes. Behind a striped Sheraton sofa, the contoured west wall contributes to the room’s elegant atmosphere. A large, round cherry table in the center originally belonged to the Harrisons. Also in this room are a desk once owned by the land-office registrar of Vincennes and a piano. Above the mantel hangs a portrait of Harrison painted in 1814 by Rembrandt Peale, a well-known American artist. A Waterford crystal chandelier, a Spode china tea set and Sheffield silver candlesticks set off the furnishings.

The Harrisons, renowned for their hospitality, hosted many dinners in the dining room. This is also where Harrison was walking the floor with his infant son, John Scott Harrison, when someone fired a bullet through the shutter; the bullet hole still remains. The child grew up to father Benjamin Harrison, the 23rd president.

The dining-room walls are now covered in light-blue paper with a yellow swag-patterned ceiling border and gold drapes. The walnut sideboard was made in Cincinnati, commissioned by Anna Symmes Harrison’s father for his daughter’s new home. (He once reported in a letter, “I don’t know when it will be finished as the fellow drinks so much.”) Another sideboard that was a gift to the DAR chapter is a Hepplewhite, as are the dining table and chairs. A handsome brass chandelier hangs over the table. The table is adorned with a Sheffield silver candelabra and set in Staffordshire china in a blue-and-white pattern of the period. A cherry corner cupboard is filled with lusterware.

On the second floor of the Great House are four bedrooms, including the Harrison bedroom. The walls of this spacious chamber are covered in wallpaper decorated with hunting scenes and images of grouse against a blue background. The wallpaper was specially designed for the house. The furnishings—two canopy beds, one of which belonged to the
(Clockwise from top left) The dining room with the table beautifully set with Staffordshire china was the scene of many dinners. Famous for their hospitality, the Harrisons loved company. • The white shutter in the background shows the legendary bullet hole where Gov. Harrison was shot at while walking his infant son, John Scott, later to become the father of Benjamin Harrison, our 23rd president. • In the Council Chamber, an easy chair with a cherry Chippendale candle table beside it provides a comfortable place to enjoy the fire. • The front entry of Grouseland has a two-story porch typical of the plantation house of the time, making possible a second-floor balcony. • At lower right, the Kurz and Allison print of William Henry Harrison that hangs in the house.

VISITOR INFORMATION: Celebrating its 200th anniversary, Grouseland, at 3 West Scott St., Vincennes, Ind., is open daily except on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s Day. For hours and admission information, call the Grouseland Foundation at (812) 882-2096 or browse grouselandfoundation.org.
Harrisons, a blanket chest that also originated in the family, a candle stand and a bamboo-style chair—were added during various periods of restoration.

The large west bedroom, which also contains a canopy bed, served as a guest room. The smaller west bedroom features a coverlet dated 1793, and the fourth room is decorated as a nursery with miniature furniture samples once carried by salesmen. A spacious attic occupies the uppermost half-story.

The mansion’s second building, called the dependency, is a story-and-a-half high, with two rooms and a hall on the first floor and two bedrooms upstairs. This building is simpler and more rustic than the Great House. The first floor probably contained Harrison’s farm office and Mrs. Harrison’s morning room, where she dressed and got ready for the day. Upstairs are two small, rustic bedrooms that likely were used by the Harrison children. The dependency’s random-width flooring is original.

The reconstructed gallery connecting the Great House and the dependency displays two paintings depicting Harrison’s victorious battles with Native Americans at Tippecanoe (near the Tippecanoe River in what is now Ohio) in 1811, and with the British and the Native Americans at the Battle of the Thames in 1813, which made him a national hero. Harrison led an army of 3,500 against 700 British soldiers and 1,000 of Tecumseh’s warriors beside the Thames River in Ontario, Canada. Tecumseh was killed, and the fight marked a major turning point in the fate of the Native Americans in this part of the country.

A basement with six rooms extends under both buildings. One basement room contained the warming kitchen, where servants brought food from the main kitchen to warm in the large fireplace before being served upstairs. (The original main kitchen, housed in a separate building, has long since vanished and, despite extensive archaeological excavations on the property, has never been found.) In the basement craft room, domestic crafts such as spinning, weaving and candle-making took place.

When the War of 1812 began, Harrison resigned as governor to serve as a general in the Army, and his family decamped for their original log home in Ohio. The deteriorated mansion was slated for demolition when, in 1909, the Francis Vigo Chapter acquired it with the intention of preserving it. The chapter, named for a Sardinian-born patriot who died in Vincennes in 1836, had formed only a year earlier. In 1935, members began the first of several ambitious restoration projects, and Grouseland was dedicated as a National Historic Landmark in 1961. It has been open to the public since 1911. The chapter created the Grouseland Foundation in 1999 to facilitate the ongoing fund-raising needed to preserve and restore the home.

Although the chapter originally met at Grouseland and members still form the essential core of volunteers at the mansion, in 1978 the chapter acquired a building adjacent to the property, where it holds meetings and most of its functions. The exception is the annual December program, which includes a Christmas tour of the house. Chapter Regent Jane Campbell describes this as a very special time at Grouseland, when the foundation decks out the mansion in authentic period Christmas decorations, such as fruit and evergreen boughs, and candlelight illuminates the rooms.
Despite today’s alarms about its potential as a terrorist weapon, we can scarcely imagine the terror smallpox cast over earlier centuries. Always lurking, especially in crowded, fetid cities, “the speckled monster” periodically broke loose into lethal rampages. Those who survived the ordeal were scarred and sometimes blinded, but rose from their sickbeds with a precious gift—permanent immunity to another attack.

Experts estimate the disease historically killed at least 30 percent of its victims. The Small Pox (so named to differentiate it from The Great Pox, or syphilis) respected no person—it scythed down kings, queens and emperors as well as beggars. It came in several varieties, and physicians developed an oddly sensual jargon to diagnose them.

It seemed an unstoppable, unpredictable force of nature—but there were those who were determined to oppose it. The Speckled Monster: A Historical Tale of Battling Smallpox by Jennifer Lee Carrell brings to vivid life the heroic efforts of two of those warriors in the 1720s—Lady Mary Wortley Montagu of London, and Zabdiel Boylston of Boston.

They were unlikely heroes. Lady Mary was an aristocrat, the intelligent, stubbornly independent daughter of a powerful British nobleman who had defied convention to educate herself. Boylston was a general surgeon and apothecary by training although not by formal education.

Unknown to each other, they heard tales of a means to prevent smallpox practiced in the Ottoman Empire and in Africa. These peoples had for years immunized themselves by introducing a tiny bit of smallpox “matter” from a victim’s sores into a healthy person’s skin. “Inoculation,” as it was called, induced a relatively mild case of the disease and conferred permanent immunity, according to the tales. The mortality could be one in 100 or more, but still far less dangerous than the disease itself.

These folk tales flew in the face of conventional early 18th-century medical wisdom, which was just beginning to feel the influence of the Enlightenment. Further, the notion of purposely giving someone smallpox aroused fears of spreading an epidemic and provoked accusations of murder against its adherents. (It was not until the 1790s that Edward Jenner championed vaccination with cowpox—also called vaccinia, Latin for cow—which was a far milder cousin of smallpox. Less risky than inoculation and conferring only partial temporary immunity, vaccination nevertheless marked the beginning of smallpox’s demise.)

The tale focuses on smallpox epidemics in the early 1720s in London and in Boston. Having endured smallpox themselves and lost loved ones to its ravages, Lady Mary and Boylston each determined to try this anecdotal preventive to protect other family and friends. When word of their experiments leaked, they became targets of public ridicule, mob violence, political pressure, and threats of arrest and imprisonment.

The Speckled Monster reads like a historical novel laced with Stephen King. Ms. Carrell acknowledges expanding on the historical record to create a credible fuller human dimension. There is graphic detail about smallpox’s depredations. The companion Web site, speckledmonster.com, links to a site with photos of victims. The link warns, “Not for the faint of heart.” Writing with hindsight, Ms. Carrell often ridicules inoculation’s foes. This is rather unfair—the procedure defied medical understanding and carried real risks of harm. It took a brave person to undergo inoculation and even greater courage to submit one’s children to it.

Inoculation played a definite role in the American Revolution. A number of our Founding Fathers (and Mothers and Children) underwent the procedure, including many members of the Continental Congress. Washington had his soldiers inoculated in 1777, after reports the British were using contaminated blankets and infected prisoners to try to spark epidemics.

Smallpox was eradicated in 1977, but we may be only somewhat better off than 18th-century London or Boston. Its potential as a bioweapon has dogged the world since before September 11. Quantities of the virus remain under maximum security in the United States and the former Soviet Union, and experts fear other countries hoard undeclared stocks. Because vaccination provides only partial, relatively short-lived protection, untold millions of people may be vulnerable. No one knows how rapidly a mass vaccination program could be deployed, or how many would sicken and die in the meantime.

Ms. Carrell’s latent sense of horror infuses the book with the question: Could anyone seriously consider unleashing smallpox again on a largely unprotected world? She only briefly refers to it, but sadly, we know the answer is, “Yes.” This inescapable conclusion evokes that classic moment in horror movies when a hapless character reaches tentatively to open a door. We want to scream: “Don’t! There’s a Speckled Monster on the other side!”
Fundamentally, a midwife is a woman who attends another woman who is giving birth. Technically, the term could be applied to any of a host of women who surrounded the mother-to-be in the days and hours before birth.

“In settlling America, the English brought their birthing customs with them,” says Dorothy Wertz, Ph.D., who, with her late husband, Richard, wrote Lying-in: A History of Childbirth in America (Yale University Press, 1989). “Women helped each other, and birth was almost always the exclusive province of women.”

That’s because giving birth in Colonial New England was regarded as a social affair for women, according to Dr. Wertz. “People were less mobile and communities [were] interdependent, so when a woman went into labor her family, her friends and her neighbors, along with the midwife, gathered around her,” she says. “They brought food and assistance to the woman’s family. They were her moral support and encouragement.”

Families who could afford to do so bought “childbirth linen” that was used in successive births. These materials were so valuable that women bequeathed them in their wills and also gave them as wedding presents.

“Training to be a midwife in the Colonies was on-the-job,” she says. “Most midwives had given birth themselves. They used knowledge that had been passed down through the generations. In general, women made most of the medical decisions for their families, and they did a lot of treatment at home themselves.”

So it was only natural that as a woman’s labor advanced, the midwife might put the women gathered for the birth to work. This could include grinding herbs and preparing concoctions designed to ease the birth process under the midwife’s direction, or even administering red wine. Among the affluent, when birth was imminent the women likely moved to a “borning room.” This was usually a small space behind the chimney reserved for just this purpose. In middle-class homes, the bedroom was used. On the frontier and among the poor, where people lived, ate and slept in one room, the men and children were displaced and the space converted to a birthing room.

“For the actual birth, most women preferred to be propped up by pillows in bed, and there might be a rope attached at the corners so the woman could bear down during contractions,” explains Dr. Wertz. “On the frontier, the woman might sit in a chair with someone behind her to be her support. Some women gave birth on their hands and knees.”

In addition, there were birthing stools. Their design and use varied. Usually, it was a low stool with a cutout seat and a reclining back. Collapsible styles were designed for easy transport. “Really, they were allowed to take whatever position was comfortable,” she says.

Go Get Mrs. Ballard!

The most intimate view of birth and midwifery in the Colonies comes from the pen of Martha Moore Ballard. A midwife and caregiver for communities along the Kennebec River in Maine, she kept scrupulous, albeit terse, accounts of her midwifery practice.

The mother of nine, she delivered nearly 40 babies a year and concurrently recorded day-to-day events—planting of seeds, town meetings, weaving of cloth. Her life is detailed in the Pulitzer Prize-winning book, A Midwife’s Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard — Based on her Diary 1785–1812 (Alfred A. Knopf, 1990) by Laurel Ulrich Thatcher.

Her midwifery career commenced at about the same time as her own childbearing years faded. Mrs. Ballard prepared remedies from roots she dug and herbs she grew or gathered. Her techniques were based in Old-World traditions—a jaundiced baby was treated with saffron, a man with a cold got hot tea and a bed by the fire. Her objectives were simple, direct and immediate—make the patient feel better while adhering to the Hippocratic oath’s injunction to “do no harm.” The role of faith and God in the
health and well-being of those around her was a daily occurrence in her diary.

In her community, one of Mrs. Ballard’s essential roles was affirming a child’s legitimacy. Although the community was tolerant of out-of-wedlock pregnancy, it was expected to lead to marriage. Where the father was in question, part of Mrs. Ballard’s responsibility was to ask the mother, while she was in labor, to name the baby’s father.

Mrs. Ballard’s dedication to her work is clear, as she routinely spent nights away from home, crossed frozen rivers and attended the births and deaths of her neighbors. However, the impact of her care was constrained by the vast gap in understanding of disease that hampered all Colonial-era medicine.

The concept of germs and the importance of hand washing were many years off. Childbirth fever (today, puerperal fever) could kill a woman who had an otherwise uneventful pregnancy and birth. Diphtheria or whooping cough could snatch all of a family’s children. A minor cut could lead to tetanus and death. Dangers were many and truly effective interventions few, even if a physician lived in the vicinity.

In Europe, midwives of the same era employed elements of magic or charms during pregnancy and delivery. But in the Colonies, with their fundamentally Protestant roots, childbirth was a religious occasion. “Protestantism not only removed [magic as a] means to control destiny, but also made magic a dangerous social practice,” explains Dr. Wertz. “In childbirth, the laboring woman could only throw herself on the mercy of God.”

Enter the Doctor

The usurping of midwifery by the emerging male-dominated medical community represented a confluence of several factors. Until the late Colonial period, a physician was called to a birth only when hope was lost. His job was to intervene, sometimes brutally, to try to save either the mother or child. It’s little wonder Colonists left delivering babies to women, since involving a physician usually meant death was imminent.

By the mid-1700s, the first American medical school had opened and medical education became more widely accessible. The availability of forceps by the early 1700s was another step forward: Forceps enabled physicians to bring some risky births to successful conclusion. However, the unsterilized forceps also often spread disease, as did the men’s unwashed hands.

“Doctors refused to wash their hands because a gentleman’s hands were clean by definition,” Dr. Wertz observes. “Midwives also disappeared because they had not been organized and had never developed any leadership,” she says. “Medicine in America may have had minimal scientific authority, but it was beginning to develop social and professional organization. Midwives were an easy competitive target.”

With growing affluence and the emergence of major cities, Americans sought to emulate their European cousins where the attendance of a physician at a birth was a symbol of affluence and modernity. Families wanted a doctor seen leaving the house after a birth.

At the same time, physicians came to see successful deliveries as an entree to caring for the whole family’s other needs, according to Dr. Wertz. There was also the simple fact that “95 percent of the time, a birth goes fine if you just stand around. It’ll go fine, and you’ll be showered with praise.”

A Rebirth of Midwifery

Midwifery has enjoyed a resurgence since the 1960s when women began to demand more control and involvement in the birthing process. In 2000, there were around 8,000 nurse-midwives in the United States, who attended about 9 percent of normal births, most in hospitals and birthing centers. There are also about 830 certified direct-entry midwives, who are specifically trained to act as midwives, but are not registered nurses.

While all 50 states allow nurse-midwives to practice, they also require the midwives to work under the supervision of a physician, says Susan Hodges, president of Citizens for Midwifery (cfmidwifery.org). Twenty-one states allow certified direct-entry midwives to attend deliveries.

She notes that while the number of midwife-attended births is enjoying a modest resurgence, the actual numbers of birthing centers and clinics providing the services has decreased substantially since the 1980s. “The difficulty midwifery experiences in growth is primarily due to the legal and political systems that regulate it,” says Ms. Hodges. “In many cases, this reflects their ignorance of the benefits of midwifery and the downside of birth in a hospital.”
Localities and cultures across the United States lay claim to the earliest Thanksgiving.
The victors write history. If they didn’t, Americans might be eating chili-spiced dishes at Thanksgiving instead of turkey. But some U.S. localities want to amend the record books, each arguing that it was the original host of a holiday many Americans consider to be rooted exclusively in New England.

BY STACEY EVERS
ew competitions in the centuries-long rivalry between Massachusetts and Virginia are as heated as the one over who hosted the “First Thanksgiving.” The Plymouth event is famous, right down to the details of cranberry sauce, but the events in Virginia are less well-known. One event involves Jamestown and the other, nearby Berkeley Plantation.

Jamestown’s story is less familiar to us for a couple of good reasons. The first is that there was little reason for celebration. In 1610, the surviving Jamestown settlers, verging on death from starvation and malnutrition, were living under newly imposed martial law on an island they had just tried to abandon. Three years earlier, 104 men settled Jamestown Island intending to extend the reach of the English Crown; turn a profit for the sponsoring Virginia Company of London, a business enterprise; and honor God. The Pilgrims wouldn’t land at Plymouth for 13 more years.

Jamestown settlers built houses such as this, which is part of the Jamestown Settlement, a living-history museum of 17th-century Virginia history and culture operated by the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation.

The Jamestown organization survived in spite of itself. It suffered from a lack of strong leadership. The Powhatan Indians repeatedly provided food when the Europeans were starving. The men bickered with and stole from each other. In the summer of 1609, an additional 400 inexperienced settlers arrived with damaged supplies and disease. The brutal winter of 1609–10, dubbed by historians as “the starving time,” brought more sickness, food shortages and Indian attacks. By spring, only about 90 sickly settlers remained from the previous year’s 500. Many settlers died or were killed by Indians, and others returned to England in the fall and winter.

In May 1610, acting governor Sir Thomas Gates arrived with two ships. Hoping to save Jamestown, he imposed martial law and distributed insufficient supplies. In less than a month, he decided to abandon the settlement. As the departing Colonists sailed down the James River, a small craft approached from the other direction carrying a messenger from Lord De La Warr, the first governor of
Virginia. The emissary advised Gates to turn back, saying His Lordship had reached Point Comfort (near modern-day Hampton Roads) and was on his way with three ships of men and supplies. A few days later, Lord De La Warr, for whom Delaware is named, came ashore. The Rev. Richard Buck gave a sermon, and His Lordship’s ensign, Anthony Scott, read his commission as governor. Presumably, this is the Jamestown thanksgiving referred to by the Library of Congress in its online article, “Who Celebrated the ‘First Thanksgiving?’”

The Jamestown Society does not list “Thanksgiving” in its online chronology of the settlement, nor does the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation (historyisfun.org). Perhaps this points to the real reason most Americans don’t think of Jamestown at Thanksgiving: The celebratory event likely never happened. There is no documented evidence of a Thanksgiving celebration as we think of it today in Jamestown. “Thanksgiving isn’t talked about at the Jamestown Settlement living-history museum, at least not as the holiday we know today,” says Nancy Egloff, Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation historian. “The settlers did not celebrate it.”

The only record of a Thanksgiving in the vicinity involves a nearby but separate settlement called Berkeley Plantation or Berkeley Hundred. In February 1619, the Virginia Company of London gave five men, including Richard Berkeley, the authority to set up a plantation in Virginia. Believed to have landed in late November or early December, about 35 men selected an 8,000-acre site north of the James River and about 30 miles from Jamestown, near present-day Charles City, Va.

Before leaving England, Capt. John Woodleefe (sometimes spelled “Woodlief” or “Woodleaf”) received these directions: “Wee ordaine that the day of our ships arrivall at the place assigned for plantacon in the land of Virginia shall be yearly and perputualy keept holy as a day of thanksgiving to Almighty god [sic].” The order is the only primary document of the landing that has survived, Ms. Egloff says. But even Berkeley’s claim to hosting the first Thanksgiving “is shaky,” she adds. “We only know they received an instruction saying they should annually give thanks. Whether they actually did that once they arrived, we don’t know.”

President John F. Kennedy, himself a Massachusetts native, in 1963 hoped to give the final word on the holiday by making a presidential decree that acknowledged Berkeley Plantation’s Thanksgiving as America’s official first such celebration. His act didn’t end the debate, however. Since that time, in fact, the number of first Thanksgiving claims has grown, primarily in areas initially colonized by Spain.

Well before the English arrived, conquistadores arrived in North America, claiming the land for Spain and thanking God for safe passage. Leaders of this type of Thanksgiving include Florida explorers Juan Ponce de León in 1513, Hernando de Soto in 1529, Father Luis Cánco de Barbastro in 1549 and Tristán de Luna in 1559. In the present-day Texas Panhandle, gold-seeking Francisco Vásquez de Coronado and about 1,500 men gave thanks in May 1541 at the Palo Duro Canyon. The Texas Society Daughters commemorated the site in 1959 with a “first Thanksgiving” plaque.

The practice of offering thanks when discovering a new shore was customary for European explorers, according to Ms. Egloff. Celebrating after a long journey wasn’t exclusive to the Spanish. Another Thanksgiving claimant is near Jacksonville, Fla., where French Huguenots offered prayers of thanks to God in 1564 at the St. Johns River.

Two of the leading non-English claimants are St. Augustine, Fla., and El Paso County, Texas. In September
1565, Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, Spain’s most experienced admiral, and about 800 Spanish settlers founded the settlement of St. Augustine and celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving with the native Seloy tribe, says Dr. Michael Gannon, Distinguished Service Professor of History at the University of Florida. He speculates that the celebrants ate *cocido*, a garlicky stew of salted pork and garbanzo beans, with hardtack, or hard biscuits, and red wine. If the Seloy also brought food, they may have contributed wild turkey, venison, corn, beans, squash, gopher, tortoise and sea catfish.

On April 30, 1598, the procession of wagons and carts purportedly stretched for four miles. To save time, Oñate cut through the desert instead of following the Rio Conchos to the Rio Grande, a route that would have assured access to water. About four days before reaching the Rio Grande, the travelers ran out of water.

In April 1598, they finally arrived at the riverbanks near present-day San Elizario, Texas, about 30 miles southeast of El Paso. After four days without water, some horses drowned and others drank so much water their bellies split, according to Lynn Russell, executive director of the El Paso County Historical Society, who was quoting from *El Paso Chronicles* by Leon Metz. The group rested, hunted and fished at the site for several days; some historians believe the respite was actually weeks long.

On April 30, Oñate performed an elaborate ceremony called *La Toma*, or the formal declaration of possession of the land in the name of Spain's King Philip II. After *La Toma*, the colonizers rejoiced with a Mass, a feast and a play about the conquest of New Mexico. Within days, they crossed the Rio Grande toward their final destination, the Indian pueblos near present-day Santa Fe, N.M.

San Elizario hosts Thanksgiving festivities each April that include an academic history conference and a re-enactment of *La Toma*. Some scholars have discounted San Elizario’s claim, saying it occurred before Oñate crossed the Rio Grande, which placed the celebration on the south side of the river in what was then Mexico. But other scholars say the celebration did take place in what is now the United States. And, over time, the river’s course has altered so that San Elizario is now on the American side. “It doesn’t matter,” says Benjamin Sanchez, curator and director of Los Portales Museum and Information Center in San Elizario. “There were no boundaries then—it was all Spain’s.”

Determining who hosted the first Thanksgiving depends on how a person defines the event, says Ms. Egloff. “It’s plausible that every time a ship pulled up, [the settlers] gave thanks for their safety.”

Ships and Europeans don’t figure into all possible sources of today’s favorite feast day, either. American Indians have a long tradition of celebrating harvests with feasts and giving thanks. In the Jamestown area, the coastal Virginia Powhatan Indians hosted an annual community-wide celebration when the first corn crop ripened. Historians don’t know for sure whether they gave thanks to *Ahone*, the Powhatan name for one of their gods, but chances are good that they did. According to Ms. Egloff, the Powhatans came together to sing, dance, eat and give thanks—which sounds quite a bit like how many Americans celebrate the holiday.

All the concern over who hosted the First Thanksgiving may be beside the holiday’s point. Whichever culture you hark back to—American Indian, English, French or Spanish—the basic elements are the same as those we cherish now: food, community and gratitude.
One of the standout features of Thanksgiving, making it unlike any other American holiday, is its location on the calendar. How did America’s great harvest festival and national expression of gratitude wind up on Thursday?

The modern celebration stems from the Calvinist tradition of mid-week lecture-sermon days as well as English harvest festivals. The Pilgrims and Puritans didn’t recognize Christmas, Easter or saints’ days as true Christian holidays. Instead, they observed the Sabbath, Days of Fasting and Days of Thanksgiving, for which they could find New Testament support.

To avoid conflicting with the Sabbath, they scheduled Fasting and Thanksgiving days during the week, on Wednesdays in Connecticut and Thursdays in Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay. Fasting and Thanksgiving days were never assigned specific calendar dates, but instead were scheduled on a contingency basis, often only a few weeks before they were to be celebrated.

Fasting days were usually held in the spring, when there was less food, and Thanksgiving in the fall when food was plentiful. Puritans and Pilgrims also wanted a way to bring the community together at the year’s end to celebrate its blessings, a function that was served by Christmas in England and in the other Colonies.

In 1777, the Continental Congress proclaimed the first national Thanksgiving, a religious day devoted to recognizing God’s Providence. Congress declared national Thanksgivings every year from then until 1783, although all of the holidays except the one in 1782 were celebrated in December. The next Thanksgiving was in 1789, and the holiday was observed irregularly after that; none of these were celebrated in the autumn.

By the mid-1800s, most states celebrated their own days of Thanksgiving. However, as America became increasingly industrialized, the media promoted Thanksgiving as a symbol of home life and family values.

Leading the charge for a national Thanksgiving was Sarah Josepha Hale, editor of Godey’s Lady’s Book, who relentlessly lobbied public officials and printed an editorial on the subject every November from 1846 until 1863. President Lincoln’s second Thanksgiving declaration in 1863 is believed to have been a nod to Mrs. Hale’s tireless efforts.

After that, the holiday was held annually the last Thursday in November (except in 1865 and 1869, when it was celebrated on December 7 and November 18, respectively), but it had to be re-declared yearly.

In 1939, President Franklin Roosevelt changed it to the second-to-last Thursday in order to extend the Christmas season. But after some outraged states refused to celebrate then—and began calling the holiday “Franksgiving”—FDR signed a bill in 1941 establishing the fourth Thursday in November as the official national Thanksgiving Day. —S.E.
Although it is widely agreed that the Boston Tea Party on December 16, 1773, was among the first in a series of events that moved the Colonies from resistance to revolution, the residents of Boston were not the first to oppose the 1773 Tea Act. In a proud display of economic disobedience, American merchants in Philadelphia and New York had long sold smuggled tea, which was both politically correct and cheaper. The new Tea Act threatened to enforce the duty and also granted the East India Company the right to ship directly to America. East India tea would be sold for less than smuggled tea, and only through handpicked consignees, that is, merchants who were loyal to the King.

In November 1773, smugglers and their merchant collaborators posted handbills, spoke out at town meetings and led angry rallies with great success. In New York, citizens threatened to burn any store selling dutied tea. In Philadelphia, mobs warned that any pilot who led an East India Company ship up the Delaware would be tarred and feathered. In both cities, the meaning was the same and abundantly clear: Any tea that made it to port would not make it to land.

Residents of Boston heard of their countrymen’s actions with some embarrassment. Several merchants, including John Hancock, had been selling dutied tea for years. However, by early December, as Boston town meetings drew upwards of 5,000 citizens, Hancock and others publicly apologized for their previous practices. A volunteer watch group was established to ensure that no tea would be unloaded from the Dartmouth, the Eleanor and the Beaver, all of which had arrived in Boston Harbor.
But Massachusetts Gov. Thomas Hutchinson believed time was on his side. He assumed the many property owners among the opposition would never take any action that would risk the penalties of sedition, and the movement would fade. When citizens ran out of their current supplies of the beloved drink, merchants would have no choice but to claim their freight, whether from the ship or from customs storage.

When the ships had set sail from England in late September and early October, their captains assumed the only dangers they faced were from bad winds, drunken sailors and fabled sea monsters. A few town meetings in Boston soon convinced them otherwise. Faced with numerous threats, they petitioned the governor to give them a pass to leave the harbor, but Hutchinson would not issue the pass until they produced the standard customs receipt showing the duties had been paid.

This left the ships’ captains in a quandary. A ship without the appropriate pass could be seized at the next British port. Besides, the English Navy had set up a perimeter to ensure that no tea ships would escape. After a final town meeting at which it became obvious that the governor would not send the tea back to England. Hancock and Samuel Adams led a large group of men, many of them dressed as “Mohawks,” to the ships, where they warned crew members to stand back. In the words of Alexander Hodgdon, the Dartmouth’s mate, the “whooping Indians” carried every chest of tea up from the hold onto the deck, where they “cut the chests to pieces, and hove the tea all overboard.”

The movement spread quickly. In New York, Charleston and Philadelphia, tea shipments were turned back, dumped out or left to rot. When it was discovered that tea had been secretly unloaded in Greenwich, N.J., another band of “Mohawks” captured and burned it in the town’s Market Square. The following October, citizens of Annapolis learned that a local merchant had on board his ship a ton of tea that he had privately purchased in England. They set up a gallows on his front lawn and issued an ultimatum: Either watch as they burned his ship or be hanged. He made the obvious choice and then fled the continent.

So what was it about the Tea Act that incited such rage?

The issue of taxation was not new, and this particular tax was not very large—3 pence per pound. No, what seemed to galvanize the Colonists was not the duty itself, but the item it taxed. Unlike legal documents, lead, glass and even paper, tea was purchased frequently by nearly every household. Tea was a beverage variously referred to as the nectar of the divine, the body’s best physician, the drink of life and the masterpiece of every meal. Tea was enjoyed by men and women, by the rich and the poor, by farmers and city folk, and by people of all ethnic backgrounds.

Tea was perhaps the one item that could culturally unite the disparate subcultures of Americans. And if there was one culture that should have understood the importance of tea, it was the British themselves.

Tea Conquers The West

The first known mention of tea in Europe was written by Venetian Giambattista Ramusio in 1559. Foreshadowing a debate that continues today, the description contained unsubstantiated health claims: “One or two cups of this decoction taken on an empty stomach removes fever, headache, stomachache, pain in the sid [sic] or in the joints, and it should be taken as hot as you can bear it.” (See article on page 28.) In the latter half of the 16th century, the Italians and French sampled tea but largely rejected it before its use spread steadily among the Dutch and then the British during the 1600s.

For some time, its use was not universally endorsed. A 1737 issue of The Gentleman’s Magazine warned that by sipping “warm water in an effeminate manner … the bold and brave become dastardly, the strong become weak, the women become barren.” Despite such scattered objections, by the early 18th century, British high society was very fond of tea, as it was of many imports from the Orient.

The people of the American Colonies often mirrored the trends of their Old World cousins, so it is widely assumed that tea was first drunk in mid-17th century New Amsterdam. Boston merchants first sold tea in 1690; the leaves were such an oddity that there are several records that they were boiled and eaten with salt and butter. These bitter first experiences were not enough to derail the growing popularity of the properly prepared drink. By the middle of the 18th century, nearly every home owned a tea set, at least for special occasions. Boston merchants sold “Bohea Tea, Congou Tea, Pekoe Tea, Green Tea, Imperial Tea” and others. In New York, vendors made rounds with spring water from specially designated pumps, calling out “Tea Water! Come out and get your Tea Water!”

The taking of tea at home became a social custom with a detailed, widely followed code of manners and distinctive furnishings, and families took pride in their fashionable tea tables. Wine was often served with afternoon tea, along with cakes, cold pastries, sweetmeats, preserved fruits, plates of cracked nuts.
Universal Appeal

"Universal Appeal" income on tea and sugar. The average laborer spent between 5 and 10 percent of his annual income on tea and sugar.

Univer sal Appeal

What was so revolutionary about tea as a social drink was that, unlike coffee and alcohol, men and women enjoyed it in mixed company. Even well into the 19th century, Englishmen (both in Britain and in the Colonies) preferred to drink at coffeehouses only with other men, but drank tea at breakfast with their families and regularly attended afternoon tea parties with both sexes. The advent of the tea garden in the 18th century brought public tea drinking to women, and also influenced the increasing elaborateness of the tea party at home.

In fact, while the tea party offered the lady of the house a greater role in the social affairs of her family, it also foisted many new expectations upon her. Husbands may have earned the money for the tea service, but the presentation was the domain of what tea historian William Ukers calls “socially-correct dames.” Among her many jobs, the mistress of the household had to stock the ingredients, prepare the food, fill the cups and arrange the wares in a pleasing fashion, often in ovals or rectangles to mirror the shape of the table. A woman’s reputation could be sullied by weak tea, chipped china or the wrong tongs.

This is not to say that afternoon tea was a simple event for guests. If the mistress went through great trouble to prepare an elegant table, the guest was expected to make appropriate conversation; dullards and brutes simply were not invited back. Much could be conveyed in the graceful manipulation of the teaspoon, and a spill would have assured everybody in the room that one was ill-bred. Lemons, if present, were strictly for punch, an alcoholic drink (alcohol, such as punch, beer or wine, was almost always served with tea, usually for the men). When finished, a guest was expected to set the empty cup upside down on the saucer and place the spoon over it.

This final custom eluded many European visitors. One guest gulped 12 cups before the French ambassador mercifully informed him of the practice; another placed the empty cup in his pocket rather than drink another. Indeed, while Europeans usually found American coffee weak, they found the tea very strong and the tea party “scene” surprisingly vibrant. Joseph Bennett, an English visitor to Boston, wrote, “The ladies here visit, drink tea and indulge every little piece of gentility to the height of the mode … with as good grace as the finest ladies of London.”

So it is a wonder the ladies of London did not warn their husbands in Parliament that tea was precisely the item to leave alone. Tea’s ubiquity and cultural prominence also indicate it was truly a sacrifice when women pledged to boycott the drink to support the Colonial cause.

Some went public with their pledges. A poem entitled “A Lady’s Adieu to Her Tea-Table” was printed in several American newspapers, containing the lines:

No more shall my teapot so generous be
In filling the cups with this pernicious tea,
For I’ll fill it with water and drink out the same,
Before I’ll lose LIBERTY that dearest name.

Fifty-one women in Edenton, N.C., many with family or social connections in England, sent a letter that was printed in London newspapers. In it they swore not to drink tea “until such time as all Acts which tend to enslave our Native Country be repealed.” They received much derision in England for their pledge, but overwhelmingly, they kept their word.

Anyone with a mother can attest it is graver to offend the lady rather than the man of the house, and the Tea Act of 1773 offended both. As protests continued, tea consumption plummeted. Some homes substituted dried domestic herbs, including raspberry leaves sometimes sold under the name “Liberty Tea,” which was widely agreed to be among the foulest-tasting beverages ever brewed. The chief substitute for tea turned out to be coffee, and even after newly independent American merchants could deal directly with Far East tea sellers, the formerly patriotic gesture of drinking coffee had become a national preference. Tea, like England, never regained the ground it lost here.
Since its arrival in England and the Colonies, tea has inspired much heated debate regarding its use. A 1660 broadside posted by Thomas Garraway in his London coffeehouse in 1660—about 30 years before tea was first offered for sale in Boston—elaborated upon tea’s healing powers, including: “It removeth lasiitude, and cleanseth and purifieth adult humours and hot liv-ers ... It vanquith heavy dreams, easeth the brain, and strength-eth the memory ... It taketh away the difficulty of breathing ... [and] maketh the body active and lusty.” Mr. Garraway gave no scientific bases for his claims, which comprised one of the first known “publications” in English regarding tea’s effects on health. But a purported collection of “writings from the best physicians” published in 1682 made many of the same assertions, concluding that “every Drinker of it cannot but be sensible.” By the end of the century, J. Ovington, Chaplain to His Majesty, had weighed in, proclaiming tea to be “an Acid that coagulates the Blood,” with which the suffering wives of drunken husbands could “counter-charm the enchanted Cup, and change the Beast into a Man.”

The use of tea among women was a hotly contested issue among 18th-century authors. In 1722, James Lacy warned that tea consumption would produce in “the tender sex, a diminuation of their prolific energy, a proneness to miscarry, and an insufficiency to nourish the child.” On the contrary, an anonymous “Gentleman of Cambridge,” a proud employee of the East India Company, published a book in 1750 assuring “the FAIRSEX” that they would find tea “so conducive to Health.” In healthy individuals, the Gentleman claimed, tea “helps the Stomach, sweetens the Blood, revives the Heart, refreshes the Spirits,

“French ladies, especially, should avoid this drink, which occasions them painful spasms, whilst it merely shakes off moderately the indolence of the London ladies.”

By Geoffrey D. Witham
relieves the Brain, quickens Apprehension, strengthens Memory, and preserves the just Temperance of Body and Mind.” Among the illnesses relieved or cured by tea were “Rheumatisms, Dropsies, Hectic Inflammations, Megrim” and that almost Epedemical Distemper, the SCURVY.

Also in 1750, Dr. Thomas Short of London supported “the moderate, seasonable, and discreet use of proper Tea.” In sparkling mental activity, “Green Tea ... is a good Diluter, for the Water thins; the Salts separate the sluggish Lymph, stimulate and invigorate the Vessels, encrease the Blood’s Motion; its Earth and Oil, brace up the lax unspringy Vessels, and dispose the slimy Matter to be thrown back into the circulating Mass, there by widen the narrow’d, and open the half shut Cells of the Brain.” All of this action, Dr. Short believed, was too much for most women, who could easily become overstimulated, given “how faint, pale, relaxed, low-spirited, and leucophlegmatic they are.”

Across the English Channel in 1846, French doctor A. Saint-Arroman claimed moderate tea use “removes the heaviness and affections of the head, excites the action of the stomach, and sharpens the appetite.” However, he believed tea’s stimulating properties to be much harsher than coffee and recommended it only for individuals in whom digestion was “deranged,” those with “nervous affections of the eyes”—and the English.

The Frenchman, explained Dr. Saint-Arroman, “is naturally sober, and vegetables form the principal basis of his nourishment; digestion is performed without difficulty, especially being hastened by the use of wine.” On the other hand, “the Englishman is naturally lymphatic, stuffed with beefsteaks and plum-pudding, he remains for two hours almost annihilated by the painful elaboration of the stomach; one might call him a boa quasi-asphyxied by a gazelle that he has just swallowed. Tea alone can draw him from this lethargic sleep.” To which he added, “French ladies, especially, should avoid this drink, which occasions them painful spasms, whilst it merely shakes off moderately the indolence of the London ladies.”

The dawn of the 20th century brought widespread agreement that moderate use of tea was harmless, but fanciful claims persisted. In his accurately titled 1935 book, All About Tea, William Ukers listed the findings of recent tea experiments, many of them conducted at prestigious universities. Among them: “Tea destroys the typhoid germ, purifies the body, induces tranquility; promotes slenderness and acts as ‘the great consoler.’” “Many a poor woman has been saved from suicide by a timely cup of tea,” wrote Sir James Crichton-Browne, M.D., in 1927.

Doctors in the late 20th century agreed on some basics: ‘Tea contains caffeine, about half the amount in coffee. Too much caffeine can cause palpitations, rapid breathing and anxiety attacks, but moderate intake provides a harmless pick-me-up for most people.’

But what of today’s infusion of claims? A 2000 reference book of “nutritional healing” claims green tea “fights tooth decay.” A 2002 guide to medicinal herbs says tea can “prevent lung cancer.” And one tea seller’s Web site asserts green tea can sterilize poisonous bacteria in food, treat all manner of skin diseases and fight the influenza virus and HIV.

In fact, it is striking how similar some of today’s assertions are to those of the past, including poorly substantiated claims regarding liver regeneration, cancer cures and wrinkle prevention. When Better Nutrition reported in 2002 a study showing that tea “prevents blood from clumping,” it sounded like a simplified version of Dr. Short’s explanation in 1750. The Ceylon Tea Co.’s Web site declares, “The overwhelming surge of scientific research is substantiating the ancient proclamations that tea as [sic] the most potent health beverage ever!” That would fit right into the book by the Gentleman of Cambridge—who was employed by the East India Company.

So what is a consumer to believe? There is a reason doctors insist on a large body of evidence. A self-report survey from one culture may not be properly controlled and does not necessarily generalize to other people. The interaction of two isolated compounds in a test tube may not represent what happens when ingested in food. And a laboratory mouse injected with concentrated tea may react differently than a middle-aged woman sipping Oolong. As always, be wary of those who want to sell you something.

This doesn’t mean tea may not be good for you. Recent research is practically unanimous that tea contains a high concentration of antioxidants. While there is considerable debate about the ability of tea’s particular antioxidants to fight diseases, antioxidants in general are thought to offer some protection from various types of cancer, heart disease and stroke.

Much research remains to be done, and it is wise to recall the words of Dr. Short: “But view [tea] in a medicinal Light, there is scarce any Distemper for which Nature provides us not with infinitely better and surer Help from other Vegetables.” There are effective medications for most ills that tea’s fans claim it can heal. But in addition to proper medical care, tea, like good luck and better friends, may help you live a longer, happier life.

**TEA—helps the Stomach, sweetens the Blood, revives the Heart, refreshes the Spirits, relieves the Brain, quickens Apprehension, strengthens Memory, and preserves the just Temperance of Body and Mind.**

—ANONYMOUS “GENTLEMAN OF CAMBRIDGE”
Many of the simple gifts that delight children on Christmas (and every other day)—a treasured doll or a platoon of soldiers under the tree, a bag of marbles or a deck of cards tucked in the toe of a Christmas stocking—have their roots in antiquity. A board game played in Babylonia in 4000 B.C. was a likely precursor to chess and checkers. A thousand years later, Sumerians were playing something resembling backgammon. Evidence of games, balls, dolls, marbles, hoops, tops, yo-yos and kites have been found in documentary records or archaeological excavations in Greece, Rome, Egypt and China. Engravings from the Middle Ages frequently depict hobbyhorses and windmills—the ancestors of those carnival souvenir wind toys.

BY JEANMARIE ANDREWS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK GULEZIAN

(COURTESY OF DAR MUSEUM)
Doll house: English, ca. 1800–25; dolls, mid-19th century; furnishings, 1850–80. Although nearly all dollhouses were imported until the late 1800s, there is one documented American-made house ca. 1744 in the collections at Van Cortlandt Manor, in New York’s Historic Hudson Valley. It reflects the prevailing Colonial architecture.
Toys were more than simple amusements: Designed, produced and purchased by adults, they reflect the mores and technological advances of the society that made them, such as the finely detailed metal trains, automobiles and airplanes that trace the evolution of transportation in our own time. This progression—from few toys of any kind to those designed as educational tools to those made solely for entertainment—shows society’s changing attitudes toward childhood and children.

Winterthur Museum in Delaware examined the history of youth in its recent exhibition, *KiDS! 200 Years of Childhood*. According to the accompanying catalog, childhood was viewed as a dangerous time in the 17th century because of high infant mortality rates. Therefore, adults “encouraged children to move rapidly from the dependency and vulnerability of childhood to the self-sufficiency and stability of adulthood.” Adults and children shared common pastimes such as cards, dice and dominoes. Those few toys made specifically for children were designed to hasten their transition to adulthood.

Toy horses and soldiers were indispensable for teaching boys to ride and fostering leadership skills. Horses evolved from a stick with a crude animal head to a three-dimensional equine mounted on rockers or springs to simulate lifelike motion. In 1785, William Long, a New York cabinetmaker and carver, advertised “Rocking Horses in the neatest and best manner, to teach children to ride and to give them wholesome and pleasing exercise.” The earliest miniature soldiers were made of paper or wood and were employed by kings and generals to plan battles, as well as for toys. In the 18th century, the military achievements of Frederick the Great inspired the production of *flats*, lead figures cast in shallow molds, throughout Germany. (For export, they were painted with the appropriate country’s uniforms.) Three-dimensional *solids* were also made, but proved too expensive to compete with flats. Lifelike yet inexpensive hollow-cast figures were not introduced until the late 1800s.

While boys learned to become leaders, girls learned to manage households by playing with dolls and doll houses. Dolls are among the earliest of all toys, evolving from crude wooden peg forms to 18th-century carved wooden figures with pegged joints named for England’s Queen Anne. Native Americans made theirs of bone and leather; frontiersmen used cornhusks.

Dolls had become crucial to the European fashion trade by the 1600s, when French fashion houses began sending figures called *Pandoras* to England, Germany, Spain and Italy to promote not only the latest apparel but also coiffures. French as well as English fashion dolls had made their way to America by the late 18th century. At that same time, English manufacturers introduced paper dolls, cutout figures with changeable costumes. More so than even the French dolls, these mass-produced paper figures reflected the most current fashions or a particular actor, dancer or singer whose talents were in vogue.
Beginning in the 19th century, parents began to recognize the value of toys that squeaked and whistled and whirled and served no purpose other than simply to delight children.

The earliest doll houses, called cabinet houses, were being produced in Germany and Holland by the 1600s as collectors’ showcases. Although they were intended to be furnished and displayed by adults, their value as an instructional tool for young girls was recognized early. Beginning in 1700, English architects such as Robert Adam were making baby houses that mimicked the splendor of Palladian architecture. Equally renowned cabinetmakers—such as Thomas Chippendale and Thomas Sheraton—helped equip them. These houses were designed to match real-life counterparts, so furnishings often numbered in the hundreds and included everything from tin and iron kitchen utensils to finely carved wooden or metal filigree furniture to rugs and tapestries—even miniature decks of playing cards.

Attitudes toward the use of toys and games began to change with the publication of English philosopher John Locke’s 1693 treatise, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*. As the Age of Enlightenment progressed in the mid-1700s, childhood came to be viewed as a natural stage of development, and the notion of combining education (including proper behavior) with play was generally accepted.

Enterprising publishers began printing small illustrated books especially for children. In 1759, English geographer John Jeffreys adapted the ancient traveling game of “Goose” into a race game using a map of Europe. A few years later, another Englishman, John Spilsbury, was offering prototypes of jigsaw puzzles, called dissected maps, made by pasting engraved maps on wood and cutting them along political boundaries. Playing cards evolved from games of chance to decks of instruction on topics ranging from ancient history to the New Testament to the sovereigns of England.

By the 19th century, the view of childhood had shifted to the romantic notion that it was an age of purity and innocence. Children were protected from the corruption of the adult world with their own space (nurseries), child-size furnishings and appropriate amusements. Many were still instructional: Outdoor games and toys were designed to teach boys strength and control, while fragile paper dolls and tea sets encouraged girls in quiet, indoor play. Wooden Noah’s arks circumvented the taboo against play on the Sabbath because they taught two fundamental religious tenets: God protects the good, and He values all creatures. But parents also began to recognize the value of toys that squeaked and whistled and whirled and served no purpose other than to delight children.

Until the Industrial Revolution expanded the availability and lowered the cost of toys, only wealthy families could afford to import playthings from Europe. Most American children had only what a clever parent could fashion from the materials at hand—a barrel hoop to roll; scraps of cloth stitched together for a doll; a block of wood whittled to resemble a horse. Toy manufacturing did not gain a foothold in America until the mid-19th century.

Connecticut tinsmiths were the pioneers of American toy-making, starting with simple whistles and bubble pipes in the 1820s and later collaborating with nearby clockmakers to create small-scale, mechanized versions of carriages and carousels. The 1837 reprint, in book form, of Clement C. Moore’s poem, *A Visit from St. Nicholas*, firmly established Christmas as a holiday and further spurred America’s toy industry. One of the most prominent early American toy makers, S.B. Ives of Salem, Mass., (“Ives Toys Make Happy Boys” was its slogan), developed “The Mansion of Happiness,” the first board game printed in the United States, in 1843. By 1850, the U.S. Census listed 47 toy makers.

The earliest categories of toys—dolls, pull-toys, military figures, board games and sports equipment—still encompass the majority of today’s modern playthings. As William C. Ketchum Jr. concludes in *Toys & Games* (Smithsonian Institution, 1981), “the very longevity of certain items, such as hobbyhorses and marbles, indicates that the tastes and desires of children and their parents have changed surprisingly little over the years.”

Montage of blocks and books: 19th-century educational toys and books; puzzle, 1830s; blocks, late 19th century; letter tiles ca. 1830; books 1830s–70s.
Trade silver fostered early commerce in North America

By Jeanmarie Andrews

In the century between the time Columbus landed in the New World and the first permanent settlement at Jamestown, Va., as many as 100 European ships a year were fishing the waters off the east coast of North America. Sometimes coming ashore to dry their catch, French, English and Dutch fishermen began a nascent trade with the natives. As the continent was settled, this trade became a fundamental part of the Indians’ social and political traditions. It helped spur westward expansion and had a profound effect on both native and European cultures.
Hoping to discover lodes of gold and silver in the New World, sponsors of the earliest explorations sent goldsmiths, jewelers and refiners to America with the first settlers. Although they failed to find precious metals, they did find a use for their skills—turning silver coins into plate as a means of identifying and preserving the Colonists’ wealth.

Smiths also made ornamental tokens of peace for presentation to the Indians—silver covenant chains (a pledge of friendship initiated by the Dutch, symbolized by a ship tied to a tree); medals made from coins of the realm; and gorgets (protective throat plates worn by military officers that represented the last vestiges of medieval armor).

In exchange, the Indians offered deerskins and other furs, which they also traded among themselves. “Trade and peace,” an Iroquois spokesman is reported to have explained in 1735, “we take to be one thing.” The natives happily exchanged the yield of their traps to Europeans for clothing, jewelry, cooking pots, guns and other manufactured goods. Hiram Chittenden, author of the 1902 History of the American Fur Trade of the Far West, observed, “the Indian and trader each felt a keen contempt for the stupid taste of the other.”

Silver items the Europeans considered mere “trinkets”—initially simple pieces of personal jewelry and later numerous objects fashioned exclusively for trade—held great religious significance for the Indians. According to Martha Wilson Hamilton, author of Silver in the Fur Trade: 1680–1820 (Martha Hamilton Publishing, 1995), Indians believed the metal’s luminosity warded off evil spirits of the underworld and radiated the benevolent spirits of the sun and moon in the upper world. The circle was a powerful symbol, signifying eternity, the circle of life and the sequence of the seasons.

As it was a native custom to wear one’s wealth as a mark of status, Indians are depicted in period engravings and paintings with rows of ring brooches fastened in their hair, on clothing and headdresses, and even on infants’ swaddling bands. They also wore ear bobs, nose bobs, finger rings, gorgets, pendants and hair pipes, as well as bands around their hats, arms and legs. These items were copies of adornments in bone, shell and polished stone that Indians had made for themselves for centuries. The few European symbols popular among the Indians represented something quite different to them: Crosses, introduced by French missionaries, signified North, South, East and West; Masonic symbols resembled council fires; the Luckenbooth brooch, a Scottish love token with heart(s) and crown, resembled the owl.

Beaver pelts, commonplace to the Indians but in great demand in Europe for the manufacture of gentlemen’s hats, were so valuable they served as currency. A “standard of trade” list from 1725 elaborated the items that could be purchased for one beaver pelt: two silver crosses, six small silver brooches, 24 hawkbells, two ostrich feathers, one small brass kettle, eight knives or two hatchet heads. Furs were also key to the lucrative China trade: By 1806, Americans were shipping more than $5 million a year worth of ginseng and furs to China in exchange for tea, spices, porcelain and other imports.

By the late 18th century, French voyageurs of the North West Company and English traders of the Hudson’s Bay Company were waging a fierce competition for furs, which increased the demand for trade silver and forced the exploration of northern and western rivers as animal populations were depleted in the East.

In 1786, Congress established a superintendency system to manage the Indian trade, ordering official trade silver through its Georgetown headquarters from silversmiths in Georgetown, Alexandria, Baltimore and Philadelphia, and later, as the trade moved west, from smiths in Detroit, Vincennes, Ind., Chicago and St. Louis.

In The Covenant Chain, a 1980 exhibition catalog that looks at the fur trade from the Canadian perspective, author N. Jaye Fredrickson writes that the making of trade silver was the primary source of income for Colonial silversmiths, especially in Quebec and Montreal. In her history, Ms. Hamilton estimates that silver comprised about a quarter of the items traded for furs; the remainder were staples such as guns and powder, lead, knives, blankets and shirts. She identifies nearly 300 trade silver makers based on their marks, from England and Canada to Albany and Buffalo, N.Y., as far south as Charleston, S.C., and Mobile, Ala.

Traders placed orders for thousands of items at a time, requesting that they have as large a surface as possible and be highly polished but thin. In 1768, Baynton, Wharton & Morgan, a large Philadelphia merchant firm that supplied both Spanish silver dollars and finished objects, invoiced a trader for 8,928 pieces of “Silver Truck.” The order
included nearly 60 dozen armbands in various widths, 50 dozen narrow wristbands, 50 dozen each of ear bobs and nose bobs, 100 dozen crosses in two different patterns and 300 dozen round brooches.

Although made from the least amount of metal possible to keep costs reasonable, these trade items were silver, with content ranging from 60 to 95 percent (the sterling standard employed by British guilds mandated 92.5 percent). Most raw material came from coins, usually Spanish piastres (pieces of eight). Smiths melted the silver to remove any impurities, then alloyed it with copper, which increased its hardness and durability. The silver was hammered or rolled in a mill into thin sheets, cut into different shapes, filed, polished and engraved. Savvy customers, the Indians were unwilling to settle for substitute metals or poor workmanship.

By the 1820s, the demand for trade silver had waned for several reasons. Beaver fur was replaced by more fashionable hat materials (while the animal had been trapped nearly into extinction). Competition for furs, and thus silver to obtain them, ceased with the 1821 merger of the Hudson’s Bay Company and North West Company. Finally, the U.S. Office of Indian Trade, a huge purchaser of trade silver, ended its control of the trade in 1822. “In the 1830s,” Ms. Hamilton writes, “german silver [a silvery alloy of nickel, copper and zinc] casts a cloud over trade silver forever.”

The fur trade brought significant changes to both white and native cultures. Silversmithing became one of the earliest American art forms and spread west as smiths migrated with traders. To meet the great demand for trade silver, these artisans developed techniques using rollers, steel drawplates and die striking to cut labor and material costs. Homesteaders also followed the fur trade westward, driving the Indians from their homelands. By abandoning agriculture in favor of supplying Europeans with pelts and preferring readily available manufactured goods to hand-produced items, the Indians ceased to be self-sufficient. European diseases to which they had no immunity began to decimate the native population in the 17th century. By the mid-1800s, westward expansion forced their relocation to reservations and the beginning of cultural assimilation that ended their dominance of the continent.

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**Passport Badges**

The tradition of giving Native Americans silver items began in the 1600s when the governing body ruled that Native Americans or parties of Native Americans should carry passport badges. Passport badges were given to chieftains in the surrounding area. The passport badges allowed local citizenry to identify Native Americans as friendly. Native Americans who were not carrying passport badges could be considered and treated as hostile.

**Virginia Passport Badge**

This particular badge reads “Ye King of” on one side and “Pamunkie” on the reverse side. Dated 1670, this piece was presented to the chieftain of the Pamunkie Indians of eastern Virginia.

COURTESY OF THE OWNER

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**Trade and Peace**

**We Take To Be One Thing**

**Iroquois Spokesman, 1735**
n his role as master silversmith, George Cloyed engages visitors’ interest by connecting the physical objects made in his silversmith shop to the history behind them. When Colonial Williamsburg introduced the theme “Taking Possession of the Land” in 1999 to explore the impact of westward expansion, its silversmiths added reproduction trade silver to their repertoire. Despite the importance of silver to the fur trade and the hundreds of thousands of items that were made, “it’s not a field that’s widely researched,” Mr. Cloyed says. And although most trade silver was made in the North and Northwest, there is evidence that some may have been made in Williamsburg.

Certainly the wealthy Colony of Virginia had silversmiths who made plate and presentation pieces for politicians and plantation owners. In 1661, the Virginia Legislature mandated that Indians carry silver passport badges to identify them as friendly when in white settlements. These badges, hammered from silver coin, bore the likeness of the British monarch on the obverse, tobacco plant engravings and the chief’s name on the reverse. Fines were levied on Indians who did not carry them or whites who attempted to take them.

There are three ways to talk about Indian silver, Mr. Cloyed explains—as personal adornments received in trade for furs; as gifts used to sway a tribe’s allegiance from one government to another; and as peace medals given during treaty negotiations. The majority of Indians acquired silver through the fur trade.

“The more the Indians traded with whites, the more they influenced them to produce items more appropriate to their own culture,” Mr. Cloyed says. The Indians demanded such items. The most common form was the ring brooch. Both men and women wore dozens or even hundreds in rows on breechcloths or along the yoke or hem of a shift. Also popular were ear bobs with a wire at the apex that connected to two halves of a ball, with a cone dangling from the bottom.

Independent traders bought some trade silver, but most was commissioned by the two firms that dominated the trade: the Hudson’s Bay Company and the North West Company. While it is not likely that a silversmith made objects solely for the fur trade, such pieces still comprised a large part of his business.

Once the two companies merged, there was little incentive to supply the Indians with expensive silver, so traders began substituting items made of so-called “nickel silver” or “German silver,” an inexpensive alloy of nickel, copper and zinc. Since the Indians preferred the real thing, tribal craftsmen began making their own silver ornaments to fill the void.

Considered a high-end trade, silversmithing is not common at most living history museums, Mr. Cloyed admits, although there are some individual craftsmen who make trade silver for participants in reenactments of fur trading rendezvous. Like their counterparts 200 years ago, the silversmiths at Colonial Williamsburg derive the bulk of their income from refined household objects such as coffeepots and candlesticks. In volume, however, they sell more trade silver—pendants, crosses and the animal effigies made in the later 1800s by Indian artisans—because it is less expensive.
militia unit into the tree line edging the lush, green meadow. Behind the lines of both His Majesty’s loyalists and the ragged patriots, follow the women. Clad in petticoats and bonnets and carrying wooden canteens, they tend the wounded, offering water, bandages and solace. Meanwhile, members of the fierce Scottish regiment continue their advance as the defeated militia retreat over fences, stopping occasionally to strip scarce leather boots from fallen comrades.

But when the uniformed regulars of the Continental Army march on the field, to strengthen the militia’s collapsed line, the audience for this particular battle enactment erupts into applause. Within an hour, the tide of the battle turns and the patriots leave the field in triumph, having defeated the British forces.

“As this isn’t a hobby, it’s a way of life,” says Joey Hall, a member of the 42nd Highland Regiment and a devoted reenactor since his first event in 1974. “There’s something it wakes up in you, something that comes alive inside of you that I can’t put into words.”

Fighting for the king, Mr. Hall is proud of his Scottish heritage and his regiment, which is officially recognized by the Northwest Territory Alliance (NWTA), a nonprofit volunteer educational organization. All reenactors choose the company they keep, based on ancestry, loyalty or just because their unit looks “cool.”

Mark Wedrow, a civil engineer from Warrenville, Ill., says he chose the Continental Dragoons because the uniforms “look damn good.” But that’s not the only reason he leaves a comfortable 21st-century existence to spend a hot spring afternoon in layers of period clothing, a leather helmet and knee-high boots to be shot at with smooth-bore muskets loaded with everything but lead balls. “It’s neat because I get to leave the here-and-now for a weekend. No phones, no television, no electronics, and I get to be with the people who have become my best friends.”

Mr. Wedrow has a 12-year-old son who has become intrigued with the era’s history. That’s reason enough for the single father to spend the necessary time and energy researching the Revolutionary War period so that his uniform—a dark blue wool coat with brass buttons, white breeches, black knee boots and a leather helmet adorned with braided blonde horsehair (an admitted vanity symbol)—is authentic.

“Costumes are designed to be viewed from a distance and do not hold up to close inspection,” he says. “Period clothing is copied from the originals, is made of appropriate fabric and is more than just image.”

Dressed as a poor mountain man from the edge of the frontier, Mr. Doughman’s outfit of breeches, indigo-dyed shirt, vest and leggings reflects the presumed social status of Nimrod Duncan, his 18th-century persona. With his wife and two teenage daughters, the park ranger attends events throughout the year, and he hand-sewed clothing for all of them.
After a battle, the family usually returns to camp where the girls roast “parched corn” over an open fire, and Mr. Doughman’s wife, Beverly, knits her husband a wool hat and mittens using two sets of wooden needles.

“I was the last one to start reenacting, and it rained at my first event,” she laughs. “You know Frank is the historian for the Culpepper Unit and he made me wear moccasins, and I was just miserable all weekend because my feet were wet.”

Since then, the family has graduated to black shoes, suggesting a better economic condition. Though supposedly still poor, Mrs. Doughman admits to wearing a few extra petticoats, another indication of wealth in that era.

Although the Doughman daughters are now in their teens, both girls continue to participate in what is, for them, a family affair. “It’s something different we do that no one else really does,” says Heather Doughman, 16, who has participated in the reenacting scene since the age of 3. “I enjoy it, my parents enjoy it and they like watching us be part of it. I like that it’s unique, and I think being a reenactor helped me become the person I am.”

For events like the Rendezvous or the autumn Fair of New Boston in Ohio, the younger Doughman dons a white chemise for her first layer of all-cotton clothing, adding a red skirt and a bodice or short gown over the shift-like undergarment. Whether she’s acting as a camp follower or entertaining children with period games and toys, she believes the experience has increased her poise, her confidence and above all, her values.

“Being a part of this makes me realize how much they [the patriots] did for us when they fought for freedom,” she says. “It makes me want to be able to do stuff for future generations, too.”

Though she and her older sister, Karen, 18, both admit the role of nurses was somewhat scary, they learned what women did in those days as they traveled with companies of soldiers as nurses, cooks and seamstresses.

During battle enactments—it is incorrect to call them reenactments because the events aren’t actual recreations of specific battles—the women stayed far behind the lines for protection. But when a soldier went down, they offered water from wood, tin or gourd canteens, tended wounds with limited supplies and soothed many a frightened, bleeding man with soft voices.

During the Revolutionary War, women had good reason for following soldiers into harm’s way. Often it was to be near husbands, but for some the issue was simply survival. The guarantee of half rations for themselves and quarter rations for their children might be incentive enough, according to Evansville, Ind., resident Gary Williams, a veteran reenactor who also assumes the persona of a back-country militiaman. With his wife, Liz, and daughter, Kyra, 11, Mr. Williams has spent three Memorial Day weekends at the Vincennes Rendezvous.

“The women served a vital role for the Army, and in some of George Washington’s letters, he talks about the wives of militia following the soldiers,” Mrs. Williams says, noting that the British also had women with the troops.

Most of the women who supported Continental troops likely did so out of patriotism. It was often a different story for the British troops’ women, many of whom were far from home. If one of their husbands fell in battle, many would quickly marry another soldier to ensure
survival, Mrs. Williams says. While American women often did the same, they were closer to home and more apt to follow the troops out of political loyalty.

But in those days men made the decisions, and many wives stayed home. Often the family’s finances dictated whether a woman kept home fires or campfires burning. “We acted as camp followers at events for a few years, but the truth is, we probably wouldn’t have gone,” Heather Doughman says. “It would have been up to my Dad, and women usually would have stayed home if they were OK with money.”

Though the uninitiated might be surprised by any female presence near a Revolutionary War battlefield, the presence of camp followers is historically correct. But nowadays, women are allowed to reenact as soldiers as well, according to the NWTA.

“It’s all about the experience,” says Rob Osterman, a member of the Fort St. Joseph Militia. He nods toward Brittany Worden, 16, a first-year reenactor and continues, “Right now, she’s scared to death, but this is something she really wanted to do.”

Other women have joined the military ranks of the Alliance, though for an organization intent on historical accuracy the practice has caused some dissension among the reenactors.

“We may form another Dragoon unit because our commander is against it,” says Mr. Wedrow, who says he believes women should be allowed to reenact the soldiers’ roles. “All units are autonomous as long as we follow the rules of the NWTA, so we decided to split off because we think they [the women] deserve the chance.”

A stickler for historical accuracy, Mr. Doughman doesn’t approve of women reenacting roles that would have been forbidden them in the 18th century.

“The alliance allows it and I think there are fewer than a half a dozen,” he says. “Most women can’t carry it off as regular soldiers, and it’s not likely women ever served in a ‘Rev War’ military unit.”

His wife, however, doesn’t mind women portraying soldiers because units often need reenactors or a woman may simply have a genuine interest in history and want to participate. What does bother her, she says, is women who aren’t accurate in their uniforms or don’t know the drills required during opening and closing ceremonies when units line up—“formed and correct” with left leg back, swords angled toward the ground.

But as the reenactors fought their mock battles, browsed among the booths belonging to traders and merchants, munched on smoked turkey legs and lounged in front of canvas tents, discrimination issues faded among the camaraderie of fellowshhip and fun.

“Some people try this and hate it and walk away,” says Mr. Hall. “Maybe it’s because I’m a retired schoolteacher, but we share something special when we’re sitting around a campfire at night discussing the latest books or research.”

For Mr. Hall and others like him, it’s a bond unlike any other.

For more information, contact The Vincennes/Knox County Convention and Visitors Bureau, (800) 886–6443, spiritofvincennes.org. For information about other Revolutionary War reenactments, visit revwar.com.
I have been searching for my Southern ancestors for more than 12 years. When I qualified to join DAR, I was certainly delighted, but as we all know the research doesn’t stop there. My husband and I have visited North Carolina nearly every year since, searching courthouses, halls of records, libraries and cemeteries for every bit of information we could find. And finally, I connected with newly discovered family members ...

There was a branch of my family that had not been acknowledged in any of my ancestral research. This branch was established as a result of the relationship between my great-great-grandfather James Alfred Dula (called Alfred) with a black slave woman named Harriet Harshaw.

Alfred had been married to Elizabeth Evelyn Corpening for 13 years when she died in 1846 at age 32, leaving him to raise their six children. He never remarried. There is no documented reason why Harriet was relocated to his plantation, but the speculation is that she was sent to assist him in the rearing of his six children.

Alfred and Harriet entered into a loving relationship. Ultimately, they had eight children of their own whom they raised together on his land. She brought two of her own children with her when she came to the plantation, and Alfred raised them along with their children.

A few years ago, my husband and I visited the Caldwell Historical Society in Lenoir, N.C. While there, I asked for information about the black Dula family who were descended from Alfred Dula. The museum director told me about Harold Dula who lived nearby and was a direct descendant of Alfred.

The director gave me Harold’s telephone number, and I immediately called him. What an exciting moment for me. He answered the phone and we talked. I think he was as surprised as I was. He invited us to his home, about two miles away. As we drove up to the beautiful brick house set atop a grassy slope I was full of anticipation.

Harold came out, greeted us warmly, and introduced us to his wife, Rosa Lee. We talked and established our kinship. He had been researching his black/white Dula relatives for about 15 years, but for some reason had never found me. He immediately called our cousin, Nathaniel Dula, and the two of them took us to the cemetery where our great-great-grandfather Alfred was buried.

The next day, before we left to go home to California, we visited Harold and he took us to another of the Dula cemeteries. We took many pictures and copied names and dates from headstones. Harold invited us to the next annual reunion of the black Dulas and we gladly accepted.

During the intervening 10 months, we exchanged genealogical information. I added my newly found family, along with pictures Harold had given me, to a two-volume genealogy I was writing. I also shared my finds with my white Dula relatives from the West Coast and the South, and several wanted to attend the reunion, too.

Ultimately, there was one representative from each of five white Dula families there. This was the first time white Dula families had ever attended a black Dula reunion.

About 150 people attended the dinner that was the centerpiece of the reunion. There is a section in the city of Lenoir known as Dulatown, built on land given by Alfred to his black children. The community has a population of more than 3,000, and many of the mailboxes bear the Dula name.

What lovely relatives I have found.

(Mrs. Zimmerman is a member of the Los Angeles Chapter, NSDAR.)
One of the wonderful qualities of family history is that it is intergenerational. Children, parents and grandparents can all delve into the family’s past together. In fact, most of the genealogists I’ve spoken with credit casual conversations with grandparents as sparking their interest in genealogy.

A century ago, genealogy was a hobby for adults with the patience to seek out records in dusty archives. How a century changes things! Articles on family history now appear in most magazines and on many Web sites, with at least some mention of activities for children. Over the years, I have seen large family groups working on their mutual history together, dividing the tasks and sharing information. There are so many ways to involve children in genealogy that it’s just a matter of picking a relevant activity based on their personality and age. Some require planning, while others are impromptu. Here are just a few ways to get started:

**TELL A STORY**

Start by telling stories. They don’t have to be detailed tales about lineage. Try telling children about silly things you did when you were their age. My children are simultaneously fascinated and appalled by how antiquated life was when I was a child. My son loves the idea of soft drinks in glass bottles, while life without a microwave oven is unimaginable.

Each tale can weave together genealogy and local history to create a tapestry of events that captivate the listener in the same way that oral historians from different cultural traditions maintain family history by re-telling it. My son is enraptured by the story of one ancestor who saved a town in Vermont by killing the wolves that were preying on livestock.

If your children are young enough, you might be able to make storytelling a part of your family routine. Ask each member to tell a story about something that happened to them during the week, while adults might tell stories from their family history. Such simple talks can lead to a lifelong fascination with family history.

**SHARE A RECIPE**

Are there foods you make for special occasions that you can teach your children to prepare? An ordinary recipe can transform itself into a family history lesson. An aunt of mine adored parsnips so much that as long as she lived, my mother cooked them every Thanksgiving. In my family, there are at least two special recipes passed down through the generations as an oral tradition. Relatives just recently took the time to write down the ingredients and specific measurements.

Encourage your child to interview relatives about the foods they like and compile a family cookbook with recipes and a biographical sketch of each contributor. In some families, actual cookbooks are passed down through the maternal line.
With their handwritten notes, these books offer tidbits of family history. A young girl once told me she knew nothing about her genealogy, but mentioned her great-great-grandmother’s sweet potato pie that her family still bakes today. Not only was this an important part of her genealogy, but a family tradition as well.

**LOOK AT PHOTOGRAPHS**

Take out those shoeboxes of family photographs and look through them together. Pictures fascinate even small children, who are especially good at picking out small details that can help identify photos. Older children ask more sophisticated questions—not just who is in the picture, but why it was taken. Ask pre-teens and teenagers to help organize and identify the images in your collection.

Wear clean, white-cotton gloves (available at most hardware stores) to avoid transferring dirt and oils to the surface of the photo. Buy a couple of inexpensive magnifying glasses to examine pictures for clues. Your children will have fun looking at them, creating stories and writing down their discoveries.

Don’t write on the front of an image, and never use a ballpoint pen or felt-tip marker. Ballpoint smudges and makes indentations in the photo, while the marker’s ink can be absorbed by the picture. A soft lead such as a sketching pencil is best for labeling paper photographs. Contemporary paper prints are on resin-coated paper that is hard to write on unless you use a special pen; the ink should be waterproof, fade-resistant, permanent, odorless (when dry), and quick-drying. Black is preferable, as color inks tend to fade. These pens and pencils are sold at art supply and scrapbook stores.

**WRITE A FAMILY NEWSLETTER**

Is your child full of questions? Channel that energy and curiosity into family history by having her interview relatives. Encourage children to develop a list of questions and conduct interviews in person, by phone or e-mail. They can ask about relatives’ interests, life stories and artifacts and write down the answers or record them on audio or videotape. This can yield wonderful material for a joint project like a family newsletter. If you have a scanner, children can insert photographs into their creation. Let them e-mail their publication or photocopy it on brightly colored paper and send it via regular mail.

**MAKE A FAMILY HOME PAGE**

Do you have a child who loves computers and hates history? Have them create a home page featuring family history and current events. Not only does this make use of their time and interests, it helps you share information online. In a few easy steps, they can create a family home page at sites like MyFamily.com. They can post family data, link to their favorite Web sites and add photographs.

Be aware of copyright and privacy issues, and obtain permission before sharing photographs and information on living individuals. Make sure your information is correct before you post it online. Once they’ve started, you’ll be surprised how easy it is to add a little genealogy to the page.

**PLAY GAMES**

Encourage children to learn about ancestors’ lives by having a family history treasure hunt. For instance, a simple inquiry—“Find the one item in the house that belonged to Great Aunt Mary”—helps children think about their surroundings. If you have ancestral artifacts in your house, help children discover more information about those items, such as who owned them and how they were used.

It isn’t necessary to create new games, just teach them the rules for ones you played as a child. Some board games are almost a century old; find one everyone can play together and share memories. Don’t forget outdoor games to keep children busy in the summer. Hopscotch, horseshoes and jacks can become a family history-related activity if called their old names of Scotch Hoppers, Quoits and Jacksons and played with older rules. Library research can help children find variations of games they already know, such as marbles and checkers.

**GO ONLINE TOGETHER**

Work with your children to discover new information about the family by posting messages on surname lists and searching online. There is so much data on the Web that you’ll need to focus your search. Find appropriate sites by consulting comprehensive sites such as Cyndislist.com. Online resources are varied and enable you to locate family on digitized census records, read old newspapers, find tombstone inscriptions and discover missing family photographs and documents. By communicating with new online cousins, you extend family boundaries and make the ancestor hunt an extended family affair.

**PLAN A FAMILY HISTORY VACATION**

Use the family history that you have gathered to plan a different type of vacation. By visiting ancestral homesteads, children develop a sense of family history and their place within it. Let them help plan the trip. Tracing an ancestor’s travels on a map provides an opportunity to review or learn history. Put together a few items for this family history adventure, such as photocopics of family photos to share with relatives.

On vacations, explore ethnic neighborhoods and sample exotic foods to broaden horizons. Introduce family history firsthand by visiting a living history museum or by taking part in a historic reenactment. Whatever your background, there is probably a museum that can help children gain a sense of their past through hands-on activities or costumed interpreters.

The point of these activities is not just to transmit family history but also to create a set of traditions to help your family keep in touch. Focusing on shared experiences and hobbies provides children with a sense of their place on the family tree, regardless of the composition of the family. Once this process starts, their interest can blossom and grow along with yours.
Learning some basic photo identification and dating techniques will help you add up details that can reveal the intriguing stories hidden in your ancestors’ photos. You’ll need observant eyes, some family information, research skills, patience and a good magnifying glass. There are so many clues in an image that you’ll need to keep track of them on a worksheet. The story lies in those elements.

First, find all the albums, boxes and negatives in your home. Look at each box carefully for a general sense of what events were important to your relatives. Some families own lots of wedding images; others collected school pictures or vacation pictures. Although every photograph collection is unique, there will be some elements that yours has in common with other families.

Events such as weddings or the departure and arrival of an immigrant to a new country typically were occasions when people posed for individual portraits. Use a magnifying glass to study every bit of the image while making notes of each detail. For instance, in a portrait, pay attention to accessories and props. Clothing, photographer’s imprints and even the photographic technique can help you place the picture in a time period. Look for signage and architectural details in an exterior photograph—even make note of the season. Until you’ve added up the clues, you won’t understand the significance of what you’ve collected.

Some clues are extremely subtle and easy to overlook. In one family, there was a series of pictures taken on a single day that were stored in a separate album amid a jumble of other pictures. The reason for this separate album was not immediately apparent. Only after reading the family history did the owner discover these were the last pictures ever taken of his grandfather, who had died.
suddenly one autumn. The season and the age of the children indicated when the pictures were taken.

Make copies of mystery photos and take them to family gatherings to show relatives. Bring along a magnifying glass, a pad of paper or tape recorder for keeping track of the oral history of the picture, and a good camera to make copies of any pictures owned by relatives.

Sometimes just knowing the type of photograph will help place the image in a time period. In “Preserving Photographs” in the September/October 2003 issue of *American Spirit*, there was a discussion of different photographic methods. Compare an image to the information in the article and see if your picture is a daguerreotype popular from 1839 to circa 1860 or a lovely, late 19th-century paper print.

Placing your photograph in the context of time based on photographic method is like the first sentence in a story—it introduces the plot and interests the reader in the rest of the tale, but it doesn’t tell the whole account. Here are several ways to develop the plot of your photograph’s story. You’ll be fascinated by what you discover about even the simplest portrait. So take a journey into your family history, one photograph at a time.

**INTERNAL DETAILS**

Internal details are the little things we take for granted in most pictures. Props, like the presence of a photograph in the portrait, were a way of including another relative who wasn’t available for the picture. In exterior scenes, cars, sports equipment or signs can help you date the picture. Advertisements or a business sign can be searched in a city directory from the period for clues to the picture’s date.

**OBVIOUS CLUES**

Any number of items in a photograph can help reveal a date. For instance, a calendar present in the image may pinpoint the month and year. If the year is unclear in the image but you can make out the month and order of days, use a perpetual calendar to track down possible years. A postmark on the back of a photographic postcard gives strong evidence of the date of an image.

Look for handwritten notes and dates on the backs of photos, but don’t rely completely on this kind of information as it could have been erroneously added later by relatives who thought they knew the date. Another often overlooked clue in a picture is the presence of a flag. Count the number of stars—it might indicate a date or date range for the image, if the rest of the clues agree.

**COSTUME**

Clothing provides one of the most specific ways to accurately date an image. Compare your photograph with others taken around the same time by consulting picture histories of the period. One of the best volumes of costume history is Joan Severa’s *Dressed for the Photographer: Ordinary Americans & Fashion, 1840–1900* (Kent State University Press, 1995). Here are some specific clothing clues to help you date an image:

**Men:** Throughout the 19th century, the shape of men’s jackets changed from boxy sack coats to tightly fitted ones. Details such as lapels, ties and even the style of shirt collar or presence of facial hair will help you learn something about the image.

**Women:** Pay particular attention to a woman’s accessories. Even rural women paid heed to the latest trends. Their dresses may be out-of-date, but they might be wearing a current hat style.

Don’t forget that dresses could be remade to reflect what was shown in women’s magazines. Other details to look for include the shape of a women’s bodice, sleeves and, in the 20th century, the length of her skirt.
Consult costume encyclopedias to uncover details in clothing. The author is trying to determine the date of this photo and the identities of the subjects, using their clothing as clues.

Children: While they were toddlers, boys and girls wore similar clothing, usually a type of dress. There is a quick way to tell girls and boys apart—girls wore their hair parted in the middle and boys on the side. As they grew older, their clothing mimicked what adults wore except that girl’s skirts and boy’s pants were shorter.

Military: Examine photographs for uniforms, insignia and medals. These may give clues about military rank or sometimes even a military unit. This information can lead you to military service records and more family data. A trip to a reference library will also help date the uniform and identify it as American or foreign.

Organizational images: If you have a photograph of a relative in an unusual costume, or wearing an insignia, it could be a clue to their membership in a fraternal organization or musical society.

Sports: Sports uniforms and equipment look different in older family photographs than they do today, so researching the clothing styles and equipment will also help you pinpoint a time. Also, the uniforms may represent a team no longer in existence. There can be other clues—for instance, college uniforms often bore the current year.

Occupational images: Work photographs can be found in family collections, and their content can help with the dating process. Several different types of documents can tell you what your ancestor’s occupation was, but only a photograph can show you what he or she wore or provide a glimpse of that work environment.

Photographer’s Imprint
If your photograph contains the name of the photographer, one of the first things you need to research is when the person was in business. You might be surprised to find that a particular photographer was only in business for a few years. Find working dates by consulting city directories, local historical societies or published directories of photographers.

Family Information
The most important information can be found by talking with relatives and looking at your family history. Our ancestors documented important events in their lives with photographs. Graduations, weddings, christenings, family reunions, first communions and even formal birthday portraits can be found in family collections.

What to do if you can’t identify a picture
Show the picture to as many relatives as possible. You don’t know when someone will have an identical copy.

Post it on your Web site or someone else’s. There are a number of sites that help to identify photographs or reconnect people with lost family photographs.

Look for help on a message board or in a query column. While you can’t add a photograph to your message or query, you can verbally describe the picture and ask for information or other photos.

Re-examine your genealogical data. Are you sure no relatives were living in the area where the photograph was taken?

Sample Questions to Answer About Each Picture
What do you know about the image?
Who was its previous owner?
How did it come to be in your possession?
Did any other images come with the photo?
Are there any stories associated with it?
Do you know why it was taken?
Do you know when it was taken?
Do you know any of the people in the picture?
Did a family member supply the identification?
{CASE HISTORY}

Being aware of the various ways to date a photograph really can help you fit the pieces of your family history together. For instance, Marilyn Zimmer, a member of the Mary Little Deere Chapter–Fort Armstrong Chapter NSDAR, Moline/Rock City, Ill., received an album of family photographs from her first cousin. She knows the album once belonged to their grandmother, Alice Floretta (Ware) Bolster. But whoever started the album did not fill in the index, so Mrs. Zimmer has been trying to discover the identities of the portraits.


Mrs. Zimmer initially believed this portrait was a picture of her great-grandfather, Benjamin Ware. According to family research, he was born in 1842 in Pennsylvania and died in 1879, which fits the photographer’s dates of operation.

Unfortunately, the family moved to Iowa while Mr. Ware was a child. So unless he returned to Wilkes Barre and had this portrait taken, the picture is probably not of him. Sending another photograph of the same man to a researcher in Wilkes Barre, however, brought unexpected results. The researcher thought it could be of Henry Blackman Plumb, a friend of Mrs. Zimmer’s distant relatives, the Ruggles. She is sorting through information on the Ruggles to see who might have known members of her family.

Additional identifications might be possible by determining the album’s creator. The photographic clues suggest it was someone in Wilkes Barre who collected images of family from the area. The album was patented July 31, 1863, so it was created after that date. The presence of the photograph of Mr. Plumb suggests that someone in Wilkes Barre owned the album.

It is quite common to have an album that contains images of both family and friends. In fact, people collected copies of photos and placed them in the family album to be viewed during social visits. It will take more research to deduce who actually owned the album, but it is quite possible Mary Artemesia Jackson Ruggles Wagner left the album to her granddaughter, Eveline, as part of her estate. The album then went to the family in Iowa and eventually to Mrs. Zimmer.

Photographic identification is a fascinating pursuit because of the number of clues and the mysteries waiting to be solved. In this case, it will require reviewing all the pictures in the album for evidence, as well as working with researchers in Pennsylvania to locate other images of her distant family.

Marilyn Zimmer hopes to find clues to the identity of this person, whose picture was included in an album of family photos.
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