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Three books serve up appetizer-sized bites of history that are just perfect for parties—or put-downs.
BY BILL HUDGINS
**Different strokes**

In the May/June issue of *American Spirit*, I was stunned to find an article on Paula Zahn. Choosing to feature her and CNN, after the seditious coverage they gave the war, is appalling. Ms. Zahn and her comrades at CNN are the most anti-American, anti-President Bush, anti-military and anti-patriotic network on television! She is a patronizing, self-absorbed elitist, who, with CNN, is pro-United Nations and promotes the undermining of the sovereignty of the United States—views that should be the antithesis of the DAR. She was an incredibly poor choice in this time of military conflict! I will not be renewing my subscription.

Cynthia Lee Cutler Carinda Marstons Mills, Mass.

In the March/April issue, you glorified Condoleezza Rice as one of the first women to “break through the barriers to better themselves and generations to come.” Take her off your list. She has turned out to be a self-serving servant of the Bush administration, who, like the president, is not above lying to start an unjustified war.

Rice, who continues to lie in her own best interests, is a willing participant in the Bush administration’s “crimes of the ego.” She has done nothing to better the generations to come, unless it is to open future eyes to the truth of lies at top government levels and how perilous it can be. Rice, who was a willing collaborator in a pre-emptive war, is a disgrace to the American woman! It is shameful even to include her name on the same page with heroes like Sally Ride.

Claudine Willis
Portland, Ore.

**Sifting the ’Net**

Thank you for your brief but incisive piece, “Internet Misadventures,” by Sharon DeBartolo Carmack, in the November/December issue. A copy should be posted on every family discussion list.

Marion Paris, Ph.D.
Tuscaloosa, Ala.

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From The President General

January is the traditional month for looking ahead to opportunities that expand our horizons and enrich our experiences. Sometimes, we open up the future by searching for the meaning of the past. This issue reveals the fascinating and unexpected joys of rediscovering family treasures as American Spirit gets the inside scoop on “The Antiques Road Show.”

“Miniature Museums” explores the rich history of buttons in America, and from where American buttons originated. An item that is often overlooked today, the details on antique buttons weave a rich portrait of style and culture in early America.

And, while some of our ancestors may have been the victims of French and Indian war parties in the years preceding America’s struggle for Independence, we do know that many tribes of the Iroquois nation supported the American Colonists in their fight for freedom, and provided valuable service during the American Revolution.

This issue’s “Historic Homes” segment features the magnificent Sam Bell Maxey House, in Paris, Texas. Sam Bell Maxey was a lawyer, who later became a Confederate general and U.S. senator. Now open to the public, the property boasts a comprehensive collection of High Victorian furnishings.

“A Museum of One’s Own” highlights the revolutionary vision of Wilhelmina Holladay, who dedicated her considerable energies to preserving the story of womankind’s contributions to the arts. The National Museum of Women in the Arts, housed in Washington, D.C., is a treasury of paintings, photographs and sculpture that is a must see for visitors. NSDAR is proud to be a partner helping to promote the role of women in our cultural heritage.

“The Deerfield Raid of 1704” documents the historic attack on Deerfield, Mass. A pivotal point in the history of North America, this article evaluates the facts of the events, and the implications thereof.

Whether we look to the past, or we anticipate the future as does the Groundhog that seeks to determine what is ahead, we can go forward with confidence and faith knowing that, as Americans, we have a rich and diverse heritage upon which to build the future.

Linda Tinker Watkins
President General, NSDAR
**AMERICA** is getting two newly designed nickels this year. One honors Thomas Jefferson and commemorates the 200th anniversary of the Louisiana Purchase, and the other marks the expedition of Lewis and Clark. The first newly designed nickel arrives this spring, and the second in the fall. The “heads” side of both coins will retain the current image of Thomas Jefferson.

The first nickel will have a rendition of the Jefferson Peace Medals, bearing the likeness of Jefferson on one side and symbols of peace and friendship on the other. These medals were presented ceremonially to Native American chiefs and other leaders. The clasped hands signified peace. The inscriptions “Louisiana Purchase” and “1803” commemorate the bicentennial of the historic land purchase in 1803.

On the second nickel, the reverse image will be an angled view of the keelboat with full sail that transported the expedition as it traveled the rivers of the Louisiana Territory. Meriwether Lewis and William Clark are in full uniform in the bow.

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**THE MONTPELIER FOUNDATION** is launching a complete restoration of Montpelier, the Virginia home of James Madison. It will return the mansion to the size, structure, form and furnishings that he and Dolley Madison knew in the 1820s. The estate of Paul Mellon is giving $20 million for the project, and the federal Save America’s Treasure program will provide $1 million. The Montpelier Foundation will raise additional funds for the project and for more furnishings.

Expected to take about four years, the restoration will remove alterations made to the mansion after Madison’s death in 1836, including wings added by the duPont family in the early 1900s. Marion duPont Scott, the last private owner of Montpelier, bequeathed the house to the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1983, with the express wish that it be restored. The restoration is grounded in a recently completed, 18-month architectural and archaeological investigation, which revealed that much of the Madison-era home survives.

Portions of the home will be open to visitors at all times during restoration, including special “hard-hat” tours, as well as new, guided walking tours of the estate’s landscape. For more information, visit www.montpelier.org.

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**DATES TO REMEMBER**

**January 1,** 1892: Ellis Island opens. In 62 years, it receives more than 12 million immigrants.

**January 3,** 1793: Anti-slavery and women’s rights leader Lucretia Coffin Mott born in Nantucket, Mass.

**January 5,** 1643: First recorded divorce in the Colonies; Anne Clarke is granted a divorce from Denis Clarke in the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

**January 8,** 1815: Andrew Jackson defeats British forces at the Battle of New Orleans—two weeks after the War of 1812 officially ends.

**January 11,** 1885: Birth date of Alice Paul, a leader of the women’s suffrage movement and author of the Equal Rights Amendment.

**January 12,** 1932: Ophelia Wyatt Caraway (D-Ark.), becomes first freely elected woman U.S. senator.


**January 15,** 1929: Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. born.

**January 23,** 1849: Elizabeth Blackwell becomes first woman to receive a medical degree; from Geneva College in New York.

**January 29,** 1820: King George III dies.

**February 1,** 1790: First session of the U.S. Supreme Court, held at the Royal Exchange Building in New York City.

**February 4,** 1789: George Washington unanimously elected president of the United States.

**February 6,** 1778: France signs the Treaty of Amity and Commerce and the Treaty of Alliance, pledging to support the Colonies against England.

**February 9,** 1825: House of Representatives elects John Quincy Adams as president over Andrew Jackson, who won the popular vote.

**February 17,** 1801: House of Representatives gives Thomas Jefferson victory over incumbent John Adams in presidential election of 1800.

**February 22,** 1732: George Washington born.

**February 25,** 1779: British commander Henry Hamilton surrenders Ft. Sackville in Vincennes, Ind., to George Rogers Clark.
BOYCE THOMPSON ARBORETUM STATE PARK SPRAWLS LIKE A SAGUARO-STUDDED EDEN ALONG THE EDGE OF THE SONORAN DESERT IN CENTRAL ARIZONA. BUT THIS 323-ACRE DRYLAND TRACT ALSO HAS ITS OASES: A RIPPLING CREEK, A SHIMMERING BLUE LAKE THAT MIRRORS THE CLOUDLESS COBALT SKY, AND ONE OF THE LARGEST STANDS OF MASSIVE, SHADE-PROVIDING EUCALYPTUS TREES OUTSIDE OF AUSTRALIA.

Scenic Ayer Lake, a man-made reservoir, supplies irrigation water. It is home to several species of migratory waterfowl and has been stocked with two species of endangered native fish, the Gila Topminnow and the Desert Pupfish.
Situated about an hour from Phoenix at the base of the 4,400-foot-high Picketpost Mountain, this National Historic District is the largest and oldest botanical garden in the U.S. Southwest. While the arboretum isn’t technically in a desert—its annual rainfall of 16 to 17 inches qualifies it only to be an arid region—some 3,266 kinds of plants from the driest regions of six continents can be seen from its walking trails. The largest collections are from the Chihuahuan and Sonoran Deserts of the Southwest and Mexico, the Outback of Australia, and the Monte Scrub Desert and Gran Chaco Plain of South America, but even plants from Africa’s Kalahari and Sahara Deserts are represented. Both the Sahara’s argan tree and the Kalahari’s camel thorn tree thrive at the arboretum.

J.M. “Pete” Petrie, a Horticultural Specialist with the arboretum, provides his own list of reasons to come to the park. “After visiting back East and returning to Arizona, I was struck by what I didn’t realize I had missed: The ability to see the horizon 360 degrees all around; the ability to see a distant mountain range appear so close that you could easily walk to it; and 60-, 70- or even 100-mile visibility in all directions.”

Mining magnate William Boyce Thompson founded the arboretum in 1925 to fulfill his dream of building a garden where desert plants could be studied and appreciated. The idea of an arid land arboretum came to him in 1917 while leading a Red Cross humanitarian expedition across the arid parts of Asia to deliver medical supplies and assistance to St. Petersburg. (The far shorter route across the Atlantic was considered too risky because of German U-boat attacks, so Thompson conceived a “backdoor” route from the Pacific.) Along the way, he became impressed by the many ways people in the region made use of the scant number of plants available to them.

Boyce intended for the arboretum to display plants from all the world’s arid regions, and for them to be studied and inventoried and their seeds distributed. The arboretum’s work on soil retention influenced the creation of the U.S. Soil Conservation Service. During World War II, when the world’s cork supply was threatened, the garden distributed young cork oaks in the Southwest. Now the arboretum is attempting to systematically collect and study desert legumes, which has never been done before. Some of the species are in danger of becoming extinct before they or their value is fully understood.

Because of the extremes of heat and drought, desert plants “have evolved in directions that have resulted in a myriad of bizarre and interesting forms and physiological adaptations. This kind of diversity is not found anywhere else I have seen or studied,” says Petrie. Those same stresses have led desert plants to produce a variety of self-protective substances such as alkaloids, which help them survive the harsh climate. Many of these substances can be extremely useful to humans for medical, industrial and other practical purposes.

Two examples are the aloes from the desert parts of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, and the jojoba bush from the U.S. Southwest. In a cooperative study with the University of Arizona, the arboretum’s horticulturists found that jojoba contains a liquid wax that can substitute for oil from the endangered sperm whale. Jojoba is used to make plastics, floor wax, car finishes, cosmetics and machine lubricants.

Arid regions cover nearly a quarter of the Earth’s land area, but very little is produced in them because of poor agricultural techniques, overgrazing and inadequate conservation, says Petrie. Arboretum horticulturists believe the garden could play a key role both in learning how to make arid and semi-arid land more productive and saving its ecosystems. “Many species of plants worldwide are extinct in the wild and
exist only in collections,” he says. “These ‘Noah’s Arks’ are our last chance to propagate and study ways to re-establish some of these plants back into the places where they have been lost. And given the pace of human development, especially in the Third World, the conservation value of collections like ours will only increase.”

**BLOOMIN’ BUSY**

The arboretum gives tourists plenty of reasons to visit, keeping its calendar loaded with events year around. Upcoming celebrations include Australia Day in January; the Language of Flowers Show and Chocolate Tasting, and the World Desert Fair, both in February; a spring plant sale and Welcome Back Buzzards party in March; and an Herb Festival in April. But even without festivities, there’s plenty to do and admire in the garden.

Spring wildflowers and temperate weather make March and April the most popular months for visiting. However, the arboretum is often described as a garden for all seasons because something is always blooming, especially in the Demonstration Garden and Hummingbird-Butterfly collections. Many South American cacti, for instance, bloom in seasons opposite their North American cousins, according to Paul Wolterbeek, the arboretum’s Volunteer Program Coordinator. It takes about two hours to walk the 1.5-mile main loop hiking trail, which begins in the Visitor Center with a brief video history of the park.

Downhill is the historic Smith Interpretive Center, listed on the National Registry of Historic Places and built in 1925 out of rhyolite, a native volcanic rock quarried from across U.S. Highway 60. The original visitor center, this building also has two greenhouses for cacti and other succulents that might not otherwise survive winter cold at the arboretum’s 2,400-foot elevation. Freezing temperatures occasionally affect the area in December and January, sometimes dusting the Picketpost peak with snow, says Wolterbeek.

Next is the Heritage Rose Garden, which has a large selection of heritage roses, as well as clones of the Tombstone Rose and Yellow Rose of Texas. Roses might seem unexpected in a desert garden, but Horticulturist Kim Stone says he and other arboretum staff found abandoned, flowering roses growing at Williams Air Force Base in Mesa, Ariz., five years after the base had closed. The plants had received no supplemental irrigation in an area that receives 6 to 8 inches of rain a year.

Most of the arboretum’s heritage roses are full-bodied shrubs, says Stone, adding that “what they lack in vivid, electric flower colors, they make up in fragrance, diversity of flower types, and sheer numbers of flowers.”

Continuing along the trail, visitors arrive at man-made Ayer Lake, a nearly 3.7-million gallon reservoir supplying irrigation water for the arboretum. Entering the Magma Ridge area, visitors can opt for a more strenuous workout by taking the half-mile High Trail along the ridge, which provides beautiful vistas of the landscape.

The main trail descends to parallel Queen Creek and is dwarfed by sheer canyon walls. Both the lake and the creek are good places to watch for wildlife, including the endangered Gila Topminnow and Desert Pupfish.

In the Wing Memorial Herb Garden, beds are divided by use, such as...
cultural, medicinal and cosmetics. The hike ends at the Eucalyptus Forest, although visitors can take another trail to the 2.5-acre Demonstration Garden. Functional displays, including one with patios, walls, vine arbors and walkways, offer tips for and examples of xeriscaping or water-efficient landscaping.

There’s also the Curandero/Sonoran Desert Trail that describes traditional herbal medicines of the Sonoran Desert. (Curanderos are traditional healers in Mexican culture.) One featured plant is ocotillo, a root used by the Cahuilla Indians of California as cough medicine, whose outer bark is made into an extract for tea to treat everything from varicose veins to hemorrhoids. Another is triangle-leaf bursage, used as a digestive stimulant and anti-inflammatory sinus and allergy medication.

The arboretum also features a Hummingbird-Butterfly Garden, a Mediterranean display with several native-Israeli plants mentioned in the Bible (date palm, olive tree, carob, rock rose and pomegranate), and the Taylor Family Desert Legume Garden of legume trees, shrubs and herbs, including the palo verde tree. Arizona’s state tree, the palo verde drops its leaves in the dry season to conserve water; its photosynthesizing green bark compensates for the leaves.

At least half of the arboretum’s entire 2-plus-mile trail system is handicap-accessible. Wheelchairs can easily make it to Ayer Lake and the Demonstration Garden, as well as to the herb garden and a beautiful grove of 40-foot ornamental pistachio trees that turn brilliant colors in mid- to late November, according to Wolterbeek.

WHERE TO STAY:

If you aren’t making a day trip from Tucson or Phoenix, consider staying at El Wolterbeek.

ARBORETUM HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- **MR. BIG (Señor Grande)**, a red gum eucalyptus that was planted as a sapling in 1926. It now measures more than 8 feet in diameter and stands more than 140 feet tall.
- More than 200 bird and 72 mammal, reptile and amphibian species comprise the garden’s permanent and migratory residents.
- The unusual **BOOJUM TREES** of Baja California that look like green, skyscraping spears and were named after an imaginary character in Lewis Carroll’s poem, “The Hunting of the Snark.”
- **MAGMA RIDGE**, a massive volcanic rock formation in the center of the park. Turkey vultures, also known as buzzards, sun themselves on the cliffs.
- **SHADE**. Even though the arboretum sits in the middle of Arizona along the Sonoran Desert, native cottonwoods, an immense Arizona sycamore, several large athel trees, the Eucalyptus Forest and other species of trees protect visitors from the sun’s unrelenting rays.
- And, of course, **CACTI**. Boyce Thompson has 625 kinds, including towering saguaros, neon-flowered prickly pears, pincushions, barrels, twisted chollas and squat hedgehogs.
SAM BELL MAXEY HOUSE

PARIS, TEXAS

(circa 1867)
Flanked by the first national flag of the Confederacy (left) and the Texas state flag, Old Glory waves from the second floor portico at the Sam Bell Maxey House.
In 1867, Mr. Maxey began building the fine house that still stands at 812 South Church St. At the time, the hip-roofed, wood-frame home with its two-story portico was the height of fashion. Two wide chimneys flank a balustrade that crowns the roof, and Corinthian capitals adorn the four columns on each story of the portico. A triangular pediment and columns on the portico’s upper story extend above the roofline of the house, creating an impressive formal entrance. Prominent carved brackets beneath the eaves, a double front door with a transom light, and elaborately detailed hoods and brackets on the first-floor windows also mark the house as high style.

Typical of Italianate homes in this period, the Maxey House was nearly square, divided by a central hallway. In addition to a hallway on each floor, the two-story main house contains 12 rooms. The Maxeys added a single-story rear ell some time after the main house was finished and used it primarily as a service wing. Along with a stable and chicken coop, a small outbuilding known as the Book House stood behind the home, which Mr. Maxey used as an office. (It now houses a gift shop.)

The compound spread out over five acres, which also supported an orchard, vegetable gardens and a formal flower garden maintained by Mrs. Maxey. This garden, on the north side of the house, showcased plants she brought from Kentucky, including crepe myrtles, irises, day lilies and roses.

In 1874, Mr. Maxey won the first of two terms as a U.S. senator. By this time his household had grown to include an adopted daughter, Dora; a niece, Mary Susan Long; and her son, Sam Bell Maxey Long. It was Long who, with his wife, Lala, inherited the house with all its original furnishings after Mrs. Maxey’s death in 1908.

When the Longs came to the house as newlyweds in 1894, they made the first of several alterations, adding a second floor over most of the rear ell and creating a breakfast room in the south-facing porch. The Longs remodeled the house more extensively in 1911, removing partitions and fireplaces, adding bathrooms and steam heat, and replacing some of the old pine floors with maple and oak. On the grounds, they replaced an iron fence with a boxwood hedge and relaid the brick walk. Despite these changes, which remain the only significant ones ever made to this house, the Longs retained almost all of the family’s original furnishings.

After 98 years, the house left the Maxeys’ extended family in 1967, when a cousin of Lala’s donated it—with most of its contents—to the county historical society. The house was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1971, and the city acquired the house and began restoring it the following year. In 1976, the city of Paris transferred the property to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, which completed the restoration and collections inventory, and began operating the property as a historic house museum.

Today, more than 10,000 artifacts of daily life, including furnishings, are on display in the Sam Bell Maxey House. Some pieces date from as early as 1870, when Marilda picked out her furniture.
(Top left): Grounds view of the Sam Bell Maxey House. (Top right): Pressed and punched metal porch lanterns light the National Register of Historic Places and the Texas State Historical Survey Committee plaques. (Center left): Corinthian capitals and Tuscan shafts adorn the front pillars. (Center right): Mr. Maxey’s letterbox sits atop his writing table in the library. (Bottom right): Portrait of General Sam Bell Maxey in his Confederate uniform hangs above the library fireplace.

VISITOR INFORMATION: The Sam Bell Maxey House State Historic Site is open to the public for guided tours Fridays and Sundays at 1:30, 2:30 and 3:30 p.m., and Saturday at 9:30 and 10:30 a.m., and 1:30, 2:30 and 3:30 p.m. Admission is $2 for adults, $1 for children 6 to 12, and free for children under 6. Tour guides include Lucille Bledsoe, Patsy Davis Lenore Nichol and Carroll Starnes, all members of the Joseph Ligon Chapter, NSDAR, which was founded in 1903. For special tour times and more information, call the park superintendent at (903) 785–5716.
the wallpaper throughout the house is reproduction Victorian. In the hallways and downstairs, the pattern features a tan leaf design on a cream-colored background.

Downstairs, the library remains much as it was in 1895 when Mr. Maxey died. The Longs replaced his freestanding bookshelves with built-in shelves of walnut. Mr. Maxey’s walnut secretary still stands in this room, along with a round table and a writing desk with burled-walnut inlay. An Eastlake rocker and settee round out the library’s main furnishings.

In the front hall, Mrs. Maxey’s sofa with two side chairs upholstered in a beige floral print now welcome visitors, but originally they sat in the parlor. A wooden hall stand that was used for the coats and hats of family guests is also located in the front hall. A locally made press board—a writing table with wooden cubbyholes on top—belonged to Mr. Maxey, who filed his correspondence in the compartments, Brummett says.

The spacious downstairs parlor originally consisted of a formal front room adjoining a more intimate family room. The Longs removed the wall and created a single parlor. Today a Milton grand piano, which belonged to Mrs. Long as a child, graces the room. A rococo settee upholstered in burgundy velvet faces the fireplace. At the opposite end of the parlor, a camelback sofa upholstered in a burgundy floral design faces the piano; a matching chair stands beside the fireplace. The firescreen, purchased by Lala Long, dates to the 1890s.

In the dining room, the place settings are of Mrs. Maxey’s original china, a Haviland “Moss Rose” pattern, imported from Limoges, France. Also on the table are some oyster plates made in upstate New York in 1875, from a set of 12 given to Mr. Maxey by the mayor of Galveston. A silver water service sits on a burled-walnut cellarette, and a silver coffee and tea service is set out on a marble-topped sideboard, both purchased by Mrs. Maxey. The walnut dining table and chairs with ball-and-claw feet are not original to the home, but they date from the Victorian period. Burgundy-and-white paisley velvet covers the seats of the dining chairs.

The sunroom, on the west end of the main house, contains white wicker furniture bought by the Longs in the 1920s. Reproductions of the Longs’ breakfast table and chairs also stand in the center of the room, as they were shown in a 1915 photo. But the dominant feature of this room is a set of longhorns mounted on the wall, a gift to Sam Bell Maxey from Captain Richard King, owner of the King Ranch in south Texas, who had supplied beef to both armies during the Civil War. (Legend holds that Mrs. Maxey veiled the horns with trailing ivy, Brummett says.) A band of blue tiles on the sunroom fireplace contains a stanza written from “The Golden Mile-Stone,” by Longfellow, one of Mr. Maxey’s favorite poets. It reads: “In his farthest wanderings still he sees it; Hears the talking flame, the answering night wind, As he heard them when he sat those who were, but are not.” A Seth Thomas clock and three 18th-century pewter plates decorate the mantel.

The kitchen, at the rear of the house, has seen the most change, but its beadboard ceiling and walls remain intact. The room also still holds two original cabinets, both with glass-front upper sections for dishes and storage beneath.
kitchen, a door opens to the butler’s pantry, a closet-sized room lined with shelves and cupboards.

Upstairs, two bedrooms and a hallway have been restored and are open to the public. The other bedrooms and the ironing and sewing room upstairs, which are used for collections storage and office space, might be restored in the future if the site adds an office and facility to store collections. The hallway holds two traveling trunks that belonged to the Maxeys, a burled-walnut chifforobe (a combination wardrobe and chest of drawers), and Mr. Maxey’s foot locker from his year at West Point in 1842.

The front bedroom was occupied most recently by the Maxeys’ granddaughter, Sallie Lee Lightfoot, who lived here with the Longs. The room, like the other bedrooms on this floor, is covered in reproduction wallpaper in a Victorian rose print. A maple sewing table, a bird’s-eye maple chifforobe and a reproduction brass bed like the one Sallie Lee used are in the bedroom, which is decorated with a blue carpet and curtains.

Mrs. Long’s bedroom has the bird’s-eye maple secretary she brought with her from her childhood home. The mantel in this bedroom was redone with bird’s-eye maple in 1894, when the Longs were newly married. The same year, they added the adjoining bathroom with tub, toilet and sink—reputed to be the first indoor bathroom in town.

The large formal garden is still maintained in the Victorian style, with roses, coneflowers, hydrangeas, foxgloves, rudbeckia and other old-fashioned perennials typical of the period.

(Left) Formal dining room set with Mrs. Maxey’s crystal and silver. (Top right) Bird’s-eye maple fireplace mantel in Sam and Lala Long’s bedroom. (Bottom right) Oyster plate from set given to the Maxeys in the late 1870s.
History as Hors d’oeuvres

Got no time (or desire) to explore history deeply? No matter—there are plenty of fascinating books out there that serve the subject up as tasty hors d’oeuvres. These are just the thing to load up on before a party or other gathering, where your command of the obscure, racy or humorous anecdote will dazzle everyone. Be warned, though: Like their edible counterparts, these serendipitous snacks are hard to put down—you can’t have just one.

Serving up the heavy hors d’oeuvres is Don’t Know Much About History: Everything You Need to Know About American History But Never Learned by Kenneth C. Davis (HarperCollins, 2003, $26.95). The book created a publishing phenomenon after it debuted in 1990. This revised and updated edition not only includes events since 1990, but also takes new looks at subjects as diverse as Columbus and the Cold War. Davis’ lively, straightforward style breathes life into the staggering amount of detail about U.S. history.

After finishing Don’t Know Much, an average reader would know quite a lot more about the sweep of our history and the forces that have shaped it. In a foreword to the new edition, Davis notes that he’s been criticized as liberal and conservative, which may indicate he’s done a good job of being fair.

Those who want lighter fare should sample One Night Stands With American History, by Richard Shenkman and Kurt Reiger (Perennial, 2003, $12.95). Originally published in 1980, it has also been updated into the 21st century.

Although arranged in chronological order like Don’t Know Much, One Night Stands is a collection of short anecdotes and light historical trivia. Just a couple of examples: Colonial Connecticut allowed the death penalty for children, aged 15 or older, who hit or cursed a parent; the story about the Liberty Bell being rung to celebrate American Independence was fabricated in 1847.

If you’re looking for spicier fare, dig into Great American Scandals: Tantalizing True Tales of Historic Misbehavior by the Founding Fathers and Others Who Let Freedom Swing, by Michael Farquhar (Penguin U.S.A., 2003, $14). This is one of those books that send people to the library to learn more, or to verify its accuracy, or both.

Scandal covers a wide range of misdeeds, affairs of the heart, days of dishonor and potent family strife, such as Ben Franklin’s shameful treatment of his Tory son. Contrary to the demagoguery one hears these days, human nature wasn’t really any better, or worse, a few centuries ago. ♠
On February 2, we wait with frosted breath as a fat little rodent emerges from his burrow to make a brief foray into weather prognostication. As (bad) luck would have it, he usually sees his shadow—he’s predicted only 14 early springs since record-keeping began in 1886. (No matter that a National Geographic Society study says he misses the mark two out of three times—we still want to know what he sees, hoping for nothing.)

The legends surrounding Groundhog Day were brought to America by Pennsylvania’s German settlers, the same folks who gave us the Christmas tree and the Easter Bunny. Like most modern holiday traditions, this one traces its history back for centuries, to the Christian feast of Candlemas, whose roots stretch back to pagan rituals. The Romans burned candles in honor of the goddess Feb’rua, the mother of Mars, to ward off evil spirits; an early pope incorporated burning candles into the worship of the Virgin Mary and proclaimed it a feast day. In Greek, Roman and Anglican churches, Candlemas commemorated the ritualistic purification of Mary 40 days after Christ’s birth and his presentation in the temple at Jerusalem as her first-born. A candlelight procession preceded Mass, and the clergy blessed candles to be used for the coming year.

Candlemas also has roots in Imbolc, a Celtic festival celebrating the warming of the earth and the revival of vegetation in the spring. Worshippers lit every lamp in the house or candles in every room to honor the sun’s rebirth. Imbolc came at the midpoint between the winter solstice and the spring equinox, and the superstition was that if the weather was fair, the second half of winter would be stormy and cold. In Scotland, the saying went, “If Candlemas Day is bright and clear/There’ll be two winters in a year.” Similarly, in England, “If Candlemas be fair and bright/Winter has another flight./If Candlemas brings clouds and rain/Winter will not come again.”

The Teutons absorbed the Candlemas tradition from their Roman conquerors and added their own twist. They concluded that if the sun shone on Candlemas Day, an
When they settled in Pennsylvania, the Germans found not badgers or hedgehogs but groundhogs in abundance. Deeming this member of the squirrel family an intelligent and sensible creature akin to the hedgehog, the Germans watched it check for its shadow on Candlemas Day.

animal—variously a bear, badger or hedgehog—would cast a shadow upon emerging from hibernation, thus predicting six more weeks of bad weather, or a second winter. One German sentiment was, “A shepherd would rather see a wolf enter his stable on Candlemas Day than see the sun shine.”

When they settled in Pennsylvania, the Germans found not badgers or hedgehogs, but groundhogs in abundance. Deeming this member of the squirrel family—*Marmota monax*, also called the woodchuck—an intelligent and sensible creature akin to the hedgehog, the Germans watched it check for its shadow on Candlemas Day. The earliest known written reference to Groundhog Day comes from Berks County, Pa., in the February 4, 1841, entry in storekeeper James Morris’s diary: “Last Tuesday, the 2nd, was Candlemas Day; the day on which, according to the Germans, the Groundhog peeps out of his winter quarters and if he sees his shadow, pops back for another six-week nap, but if the day be cloudy, he remains out, as the weather is to be moderate.”

As it happens, the groundhog was also sacred to the Delaware tribe in Pennsylvania. The name “woodchuck” is taken from the legend of Wojak the groundhog, considered the Indians’ ancestral grandfather. According to their creation myth, the Delawares’ forebears began life as wild animals in Mother Earth. In 1723, members of the tribe settled an area halfway between the Susquehanna and Allegheny Rivers, which they named *ponkad-uteney*, the town of sandflies.

To white settlers in the 19th century, the town became Punxsutawney, where men hunted and ate groundhogs, prompting the editor of the local newspaper to dub them “The Punxsutawney Groundhog Club.” The editor also recalled the German legend about the groundhog and his shadow, whereupon club members declared that the groundhog residing on Gobbler’s Knob would be the chief weather prophet.

Groundhog Day was born, with the first official celebration on February 2, 1886. “Today is groundhog day,” proclaimed the editor of the *Punxsutawney Spirit*, “and up to the time of going to press, the beast has not seen its shadow.” Punxsutawney Phil, the “Seer of Seers, Sage of Sages, Prognosticator of Prognosticators, and Weather Prophet Extraordinary,” never did that day. “We should be so lucky this year!”

Although his track record leaves much to be desired, Punxsutawney Phil and local residents see eye-to-eye on preserving the ancient, and fun, practice of prognostication.
Buttons—small, seemingly humble and practical items—are things most of us ignore unless one breaks or vanishes. Yet buttons possess a glamorous past. Reflecting trends in fashion and the decorative arts, they serve as microcosms of history and culture, and have often been coveted as luxury items denoting wealth and status. Prized by collectors as portable, miniature works of art, buttons have been commented on by the famous, from Charles Dickens to Martha Stewart.

Buttons have commemorated events like George Washington’s presidency, the French Revolution and world fairs. They have been decorated with a mind-boggling array of subjects—rural landscapes and seascapes; characters from world literature; opera and theater scenes; classical and mythological figures; pets and wild animals; exotic destinations; hat and costume styles; foods; transportation modes from railroads to hot-air balloons; portraits of the well-known and loved ones; the moon and stars; and floral and geometric designs, to name but a few.

They have been crafted in virtually every material, including porcelain, enamel, gold, silver, precious gems, bone, fabric, horn, ivory, mother-of-pearl, tortoise shell, paper, wood and plastic. Artisans from Josiah Wedgwood to Rene Lalique have applied their talents to this lilliputian art form. Techniques such as painting, carving, engraving, decoupage, needlework, inlays and mosaics have reflected styles from Rococo, Colonial, Romantic and Art Nouveau to Art Deco.

In Household Words, Charles Dickens wrote, “There is surely something charming in seeing the smallest thing done thoroughly, as if to remind the careless that whatever is worth doing is worth doing well.”

The earliest buttons, made of stone, bone and pottery, date to about 2000 B.C., and have been discovered in excavations in Egypt, Iran and Greece. Although made with shank-like openings, probably they were worn not as fasteners, but as ornaments or badges on cords or chains.

But the 18th century is "without doubt, the golden age of the button," known for exquisite handicraft, according to button scholars Millicent Safro and the late Diana Epstein, co-owners of Tender Buttons, a shop with locations in New York and Chicago that also display their extraordinary private collection. The majority of 18th-century buttons found and cat-
aloged are from England and France—Europe’s two major centers of button-making—and America.

Flamboyance was the operative word in Europe. Buttons “increased in size, number, variety and importance as European fashion copied the French,” Safro writes in *Buttons* (Diana Epstein and Millicent Safro, New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991). Tiny Rococo paintings mimicked the style of Watteau or Boucher. Button makers experimented with many techniques. Passementerie buttons were made with gold and silver threads, often adorned with pearls, sequins or imitation gems. Some mounted flowers and insects under glass or used decoupage and reverse paintings—designs painted on the underside of the glass, often against a colored background, which lent a sense of depth. Others devised delicate paintings on porcelain or ivory. Jasperware cameos became fashionable as well. The hard, white stoneware was stained in five colors, most famously sky-blue by Wedgwood, often in Neoclassical designs, with cut-steel settings faceted to resemble gems.

A typical 18th-century coat featured buttons down most of the front, sleeves and pockets, while at least 10 buttons were used on waistcoats and eight on breeches. New closer-fitting and double-breasted clothing styles demanded more buttons, and the taste for rich and embroidered fabrics among nobility called for buttons to match.

Made in sets of five to 35 during the 18th century—with bigger sets for nobility and special occasions—buttons often portrayed a series in the same theme, such as historical events, landscapes and seascapes, classical and mythical motifs, or insects. Men’s 18th-century fashions outshone women’s in ostentation, so much so that a French cartoon in 1777 lampooned a dandy...
wearing giant steel buttons, whose shining brilliance bedazzles a woman.

In contrast, early American buttons were simple at first, both in reaction to European excess and as suited the settlers’ clothing. New England Pilgrims, Puritans and Quakers disdained fancy ornaments, but the Dutch in New York (then New Amsterdam) favored big silver, but otherwise unadorned buttons, choosing quality over frivolity. Virginia and Maryland aristocrats imported luxury items from Europe and stayed in tune with its fashions.

Because of British trade restrictions and the country’s infancy, most American buttons were imported from Europe until the Revolution. In early 18th-century Boston, then America’s fashion center, a bride burst into tears when her groom surpassed her in finery, Epstein wrote. He was resplendent in a rose-pink waistcoat with dark pink shell buttons set in silver, topped by a silver-gray velvet coat with shell buttons.

Brilliants, steel, cut steel, foil and gold mesh embellish these mother-of-pearl buttons that probably adorned men’s court outfits.

Metal buttons were an exception. In the Colonies, they were molded or cast by silversmiths, coin makers and jewelers as a sideline, while in New England in the early 1700s, they were made at home in molds. Pewter household objects from Europe were often melted down and recycled into buttons, since pewter melts at a relatively low temperature. Paul Revere, a silversmith and goldsmith, made buttons as well as tableware and flatware, while master...
cabinetmaker Benjamin Randolph crafted buttons from apple and laurel wood in the 1770s. Before the American Revolution, to reduce English imports, the Congress in Massachusetts urged the Colonists to make their own papier-mâché buttons.

Manufacturing brass buttons in the Colonies has been attributed to either John Allen of Waterbury, Conn., or Casper Wistar of Philadelphia, around 1740–50. The brass buttons made by Wistar’s son, Richard, even came with a seven-year guarantee. Most early American pewter buttons were Connecticut-made; in Waterbury, the Grilley brothers, Henry, Samuel and Silas, opened a pewter button factory in 1790. Silas later joined with Abel Porter. Daniel Clark and Levi Porter to form Abel Porter & Co., which made brass buttons in Waterbury from 1802 to 1811, when the company was sold and renamed Leavenworth, Hayden & Scovill. The firm would evolve into Scovill Manufacturing Co., one of Waterbury’s “Big Three” brass companies of the early 20th century.

Aaron Benedict began making brass buttons for American military uniforms in the War of 1812 by melting down brass kettles and pans. The Waterbury firm he co-founded in 1843, Benedict & Burnham, would itself be the founder of the Waterbury Button Co., created in 1849 from the button department of Benedict & Burnham. During the Civil War, this Yankee firm manufactured buttons for both Confederate and Union uniforms. The Waterbury Button Co. has made buttons for all branches of the U.S. armed forces ever since, as well as for many police and fire departments. The company even made brass buttons for the crew of the Titanic. Called the “Brass City,” Waterbury became the center of America’s metal button industry.

The most valuable buttons made in America honor George Washington’s inaugural as president in 1789 and 1793. These were hand-stamped in copper, brass or Sheffield silver plate, and worn by state delegates. Nearly two dozen different styles have been found. On one, the initials “GW” are encircled by the linked initials of the 13 colonies, very similar to the 1776 Continental dollar. On another, a smiling sunburst is surrounded by the slogan, “The Majesty of the People.” A third shows an eagle with a star or sun atop his head, and several bear the slogan, “Long Live the President.” A rare Washington inaugural button sold for $17,000 in 2003, probably the highest paid for a single button, Safro notes.

The most commonly found 18th-century buttons produced in America are large and flat, made of brass, copper, pewter, steel or silver, with engraved, chased or engine-turned geometric or flower, star or leaf designs. They were constructed in round, oval and even octagonal shapes.

Interestingly, few buttons found depict the American Revolution—in contrast to the French Revolution, which button makers in France honored with portraits of heroes and villains, events and slogans. But a rare set of diamond-trimmed and gold-mounted French buttons portrays that nation’s role in aiding the Colonies in 1778 in dramatic paintings of the Battle of Saratoga, and other events. The series was based on a book of 16 prints.
of the Revolutionary War by the Paris engravers, F. Godefroy and N. Ponce.

Gilt buttons—brass buttons with a thin coat of gold wash—were first manufactured in Birmingham, England’s button center, about 1790, and made there until the mid-1800s. They were sought-after imports in America, eventually outshining pewter in popularity. Fairly plain and flat until 1820, gilt buttons featured lovely hand-chased designs of flowers, fruits and textures from about 1820 to 1850, which collectors call the “golden age” of metal button-making. “Sporting” buttons in America and Europe were also made in the first half of the 19th century. These portrayed hunting, game animals, horses or foxhounds, and sometimes were designed for hunt clubs, including the name or insignia of the club, and an occasional “Tallyho.”

Buttons made of fabric—once seen only on the aristocracy, but later much more affordable thanks to mass production techniques—also came into vogue in the 19th century, and became more popular than metal by 1850. America’s first factory for fabric-covered buttons was founded in Easthampton, Mass., about 1833 by Samuel Williston and his wife. These buttons, signified by the back mark “S. Williston,” are rare and prized by collectors.

A limitless variety of glass buttons, from clear to colored, started to appear in the 1840s in the major glass-making centers of America, England and Europe—especially in Italy, the region later known as Czechoslovakia, Germany and France. The popularity of black glass buttons is attributed to Queen Victoria’s decades-long mourning for Prince Albert’s death in 1861, during which she wore black clothing adorned with somber buttons and jewelry made of black jet, a mineral. Black became fashionable, and the popular demand for jet buttons resulted in many imitations in black glass, often incorrectly called “jet.” Large black glass buttons that portray landscapes or figures molded in the glass, and others with gold and silver lusters are collectors’ favorites today.

By the mid-19th century, women’s decorative buttons had begun to compete with men’s. Men’s clothing, meanwhile, became simpler and more sedate, after the style set by Beau Brummell, a close friend of the English Prince Regent, in the early 1800s. “It wasn’t until the late 1800s that women’s buttons became elaborate, and then the lid just blew off,” says Susan Davis, owner of Grandmother’s Buttons in St. Francisville, La., a shop with an antique button exhibit. “In the 18th century, women often wore simple cloth-covered buttons or laced up their gowns.”
Buttons became bigger, more elaborate and pictorial, many made of porcelain, pearl and enamel. *Godey’s Lady’s Book* in the 1860s depicted cloaks buttoned “all the way down the front with large black buttons, stamped with butterflies, snakes, birds, grasshoppers,” or even “a fly so perfect that one feels almost inclined to brush it off.”

Porcelain buttons were manufactured by the 1860s in nearly every country, after the manufacturing process for porcelain buttons was invented by button maker Richard Prosser, of Birmingham. But France has always been famous as the best source of porcelain buttons, delicately adorned with paintings or transfer-printed designs—an 18th-century invention claimed by English potteries in Liverpool, Worcester and Battersea for transferring designs from copperplates to ceramics.

Rare porcelain buttons bear the symbols of renowned ceramics makers such as Limoges, Meissen, Delft and Dresden. Japanese Satsuma buttons are also prized. Made from crackle-glazed earthenware that is painted and gilded, these often display kimono-clad people and traditional motifs such as a thousand cranes, a symbol for longevity, or the chrysanthemum, symbolizing autumn. Satsuma ware, produced for export to the West, was introduced at a Paris exposition in 1867, and its spareness, asymmetry and stylized quality strongly influenced Art Nouveau.

These were mainly for export—Japanese clothing was typically flowing and did not need fastening.

The Norwalk button, a distinctively American type of porcelain button that resembles tortoise shell, was produced in Connecticut stoneware factories in Norwalk and other towns in the early to mid-19th century. The streaked and mottled darker brown variety has what is called a Rockingham-type glaze—named after the brown lead glazes developed at the Rockingham kiln in England, which were often used on larger household objects. Others feature light brown and green shades. “Calicoes”—small china buttons whose designs match calico cloth patterns—were also made in abundance in the United States, England and France in the mid-19th century. About 600 transfer-printed calico patterns have been found so far for the two- and four-hole buttons, usually a quarter to three-quarters of an inch wide.

An unusual type of button that held a black-and-white photograph was the tintype or ferrotype button, made from 1860 to the early 20th century. Many Civil War soldiers wore tintype buttons bearing the images of wives, girlfriends and mothers as mementos.

Buttons made from shells, commonly called “pearl buttons” and handcrafted for more than 200 years, began to be mass-produced by machine in the mid-19th century. Many Civil War soldiers wore tintype buttons bearing the images of wives, girlfriends and mothers as mementos.

Muscatine, Iowa, became known as the “Pearl Button Capital of the World” when 3 button factories employed more than 3,500 people—over half the local work force—in 1897, thanks to the mus- sel shells that accumulated at the bend of the Mississippi River there. More than one-third of the world’s buttons were produced in Muscatine by 1905, notes the town’s Pearl Button Museum.

Muscatine’s pearl button pre-eminence began with John Boepple, a German immigrant who for eight years...
had operated a factory in Europe where he made buttons from animal horns and shells. In 1891, he opened the town's first button factory. Boepple considered himself an Old World craftsman and he cut button blanks from shells and horns with lathes. He once went from door to door asking farmers for wood or metal wheels to make lathes, and used fairly crude hand- and foot-operated equipment. He opposed automation, and eventually his business failed.

But what revolutionized the industry was the invention in 1908 of the automatic finishing machine by the Barry Manufacturing Co., founded in Muscatine as a gasworks and plumbing supplies firm by Irish immigrant Nicholas Barry Sr. By around 1910, a local saying audaciously stated, “No Muscatine resident can enter Heaven without evidence of previous servitude in the button industry.”

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Buttons became so intertwined with local culture that Muscatine crowned a “Pearl Button Queen” in 1946 to celebrate a half-century of button-making. The queen was Helen Burke, an Automatic Button Co. employee who fainted after being presented with her crown and a rose bouquet. For the town’s Independence Day parade, she and her court were seated on a mussel-shaped throne on a button industry float. She was chosen as queen from among seven contestants representing button companies by a handsome, well-known actor—none other than Ronald Reagan.

“Choosing a winner from the seven attractive contestants for the Muscatine button queen crown was one of the toughest assignments I ever tackled,” the future president said in a statement read by a Warner Brothers Studio representative at the ceremony. “As a former Iowan, I want to wish Muscatine a very happy 50th anniversary of the founding of the button industry. May it be as successful as Warner Brothers’ celebration of the 20th anniversary of the talking pictures, which we will observe next August 6,” he said, not missing the chance to put in a good word for the studio.

A modern twist is button jewelry, ranging from brooches and earrings to pendants. Grandmother’s Buttons makes both antique button jewelry and less costly jewelry from replica buttons, including perfume buttons, which have been sold in such stores and catalogs as Lord & Taylor and J. Jill.

But as Martha Stewart has observed, “Buttons are the fossils of the sartorial world, enduring long past the garments they were designed to hold together.”

BUTTON MUSEUMS

Mattatuck Museum  
144 W. Main St. Waterbury, Conn.  
(203) 753–0381  
www.mattatuckmuseum.org

Grandmother’s Buttons  
9814 Royal St. St. Francisville, La.  
(800) 580–6941  
www.grandmothersbuttons.com

Keep Homestead Museum  
35 Ely Road Monson, Mass  
(413) 267–4137  
www.keephomesteadmuseum.org

Pearl Button Museum  
117 W. 2nd St. Muscatine, Iowa  
(63) 263–1052  
www.pearlbuttoncapital.com

Tender Buttons  
143 E. 62nd St. New York, N.Y.  
(212) 758–7004  
www.grandmothersbuttons.com

National Button Society  
2733 Juno Place Akron, Ohio 44333,  
Lois Pool, secretary
most Americans about the role of American Indians during the Revolutionary War, you will probably be greeted by a blank stare. Should you get a response, it is likely to be that pro-British Indians attacked American settlers and either killed them or took them prisoner. It cannot be denied that such events did occur. However, the patriotism of members of more than two dozen tribes from Canada to the Gulf Coast, and the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River, can be chronicled. Acting alone or as representatives of their nations, American Indians served in, and sometimes lost their lives for, the cause of American independence. Although American Indians were originally excluded from military service by the governments
MEMBERS OF MORE THAN TWO DOZEN INDIAN NATIONS HELPED AMERICA WIN INDEPENDENCE, INCLUDING:

- catawba
- caughnawaga
- cherokee
- delaware
- huron
- iroquois
- micmac
- mohawk
- mohican
- narragansett
- nehantic
- oneida
- onondagas
- pamunky
- passamoquody
- penobscot
- pequot
- potawatomi
- shawnee
- stockbridge
- tuscarora

of the 13 Colonies and the United States, some served in all-Indian and mixed companies from the outbreak of hostilities until the army was disbanded in 1783. In addition, others participated as guides, spies, intelligence gatherers, messengers, runners, interpreters, translators and ship builders during the Revolutionary War. Massachusetts began preparing in earnest for war in early 1775. When news of the Lexington Alarm was received, companies of minutemen were ready to march. One such company from Natick started out early on the morning of April 19, 1775, and headed toward Menotomy (now Arlington). Seven Natick Praying Indians were in one of the companies, and participated in an engagement against the British at Menotomy. Several of them again saw action at the Battle of Bunker Hill in mid-June 1775.

( By Hazel Kreinheder )
company of Stockbridge Indians from Berkshire County, Mass., was formed in early April 1775 in accordance with instructions of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress. When news of the Lexington Alarm reached Berkshire County, the company was ready to march to Cambridge, where the American army was headquartered.

Stockbridge Indians served valiantly at the Battle of Bennington, Vt., in 1777. Shortly afterward, one of the Stockbridge chiefs, Abraham Nimham, requested financial aid from the Continental Congress in order to purchase appropriate clothing for his men to wear into battle. Congress granted the request “as an acknowledgement for their zeal in the cause of the United States.” The following year, disaster struck the Stockbridge nation when Chief Nimham and 30 of his companions were killed and many others wounded during a skirmish with the British at Kingsbridge, N.Y.

Jehoiakim Metoxsen was a Stockbridge warrior who survived the war. Metoxsen served as a second lieutenant in the company that marched to Cambridge in response to the Lexington Alarm. In 1779, he was one of the principal guides for General John Sullivan’s expedition into Pennsylvania and New York. Metoxsen’s services as a guide were invaluable to the American forces, and he continued in that capacity throughout much of the war. Metoxsen was also one of only a few American Indians who held a civil office during the Revolutionary War. He was chosen as both a selectman and as a constable by the people of Stockbridge.

The Stockbridge nation was not the only Massachusetts tribe to suffer devastating losses in the Revolution. The Mashpee tribe from Barnstable County lost much of its adult male population. In 1783, the Rev. Gideon Hawley, a minister to the tribe, recorded about 70 widows on the Mashpee Plantation. He wrote that most of them lost their husbands during the Revolution.

Mohican Indians from Connecticut were also quick to respond upon learning of the Lexington Alarm. One of them, Samuel Ashbro, was killed at the Battle of Bunker Hill, the first American Indian killed in the Revolutionary War. Fifteen Mohican warriors from Ledyard, Conn., also died in the war, as did five sons of the widow, Rebecca Tanner. John Uncas was one of the Mohican survivors. Both he and, later, his widow were awarded bounty land and pensions after the Revolution in payment for his service.

Mohican Indians played another important role during the Revolution. Because they lived near Norwich, Conn., they were called upon to provide labor for shipbuilding. Several served aboard the Continental frigate Confedency, which they helped construct.

Individual Indians from other Connecticut tribes also served with the American forces. Simon Hobart, a Nehantic Indian from New London, enlisted for the duration of the war in Captain James Elbridge’s Company in the First Regiment of the Connecticut Line. Tom Wansuc, a Pequot from Groton, was wounded during one of the last major battles in the Northeast.

Wansuc sustained a bayonet stab in his neck during the Battle of Groton Heights, when Fort Griswold was attacked by General Benedict Arnold and his Tory regiments in September of 1781.

Southern Allies

Not all of the first American Indian patriots were from New England. Catawba Indians from South Carolina, also pledged support. Shortly after a visit by several members to Charleston in July 1775, the Catawba nation decided to join the American cause. The alliance lasted throughout the war. A payroll of Captain Thomas Drennan’s Company in the South Carolina Accounts Audited Records contains the names of more than 40 Catawba warriors who served on the American side between 1780 and 1782, many for the duration.

Canadian Indians from Nova Scotia and Quebec also entered the war on the side of the United States. Passamoquoddy Indians from the Maine–Nova Scotia border area participated in the first naval battle of the Revolution, in June 1775 at Machias, Maine. They were among a group of men who captured the British cargo ships Peggy and Unity, along with their armed escort, the cutter Margaretta. Ultimately, the tribe moved to Pleasant Point Reservation in Maine, where all their Revolutionary War veterans are buried. In June 1916, the Maine DAR dedicated a plaque on the reservation that reads, “In Honor of the Indian Patriots for their loyal service during the Revolutionary War.”

Captain Ambrose Bear and a company of 16 Micmac warriors joined with Colonel Jonathan Eddy’s Regiment in a failed attempt to capture Fort Cumberland, Nova Scotia, in the fall of 1776. Most of the combined Nova Scotia forces retreated to the vicinity of Machias. Micmacs operating from that base continued to serve as runners between the United States and Canada for the remainder of the war.

Penobscot Indians from Maine volunteered to serve as guides for
Benedict Arnold’s march from Maine to Quebec in the fall of 1775. All of the guides survived the ordeal, during which many of their white comrades died.

John Neptune, himself a Penobscot, commanded a company of several men from his tribe, including his son John, which served with American forces protecting the New England coast from Maine to Massachusetts during the winter of 1776–77. The younger Neptune also took part in the disastrous American-led Penobscot expedition against the British in the summer of 1779. Although the Penobscot expedition ended in failure, Neptune remained loyal to the United States until his death in 1865.

John Vincent, a Caughnawaga Indian from Quebec, commanded a company of pro-American St. Francis Indians. The company provided much-needed protection along the border between Canada and New York, Vermont and New Hampshire.

Vincent fought with General Richard Montgomery at Quebec and was at the capture of British General John Burgoyne at Saratoga in 1777. He served with the Americans until the end of the war. Afterward, Vincent petitioned both the federal and Vermont governments for relief and was ultimately made a ward of the state. He died in Mendon, Vt., in 1810, at the age of 95.

While the St. Francis tribal elders were at war, several of their sons were students at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire. According to an early Dartmouth Alumni Directory, one of those men, Louis Vincent, who was fluent in English, French, Huron and Mohawk, took time away from his studies to serve as an interpreter. He graduated from Dartmouth in the class of 1781.

Indians from Rhode Island also played a significant role during the Revolution. The small Colony was having difficulty raising the quota of men imposed upon it by the Continental Congress. In order to raise that quota, the Rhode Island Assembly, in February 1778, passed legislation that permitted “every able-bodied negro, mulatto or Indian man slave” to enlist. Each man who enlisted in the Rhode Island Regiment was promised that he would be granted his freedom upon completion of his service at the end of the war.

Some Narragansett Indians from Rhode Island, such as Daniel Skesuck, of Charleston, were in service before the 1778 act was passed. Skesuck served for six days on Block Island under the command of Captain Thomas Thompson in December 1775. And John Skesuck, also of Charleston, was a private in Colonel John Topham’s Regiment on Christmas Day 1776. John Skesuck was discharged two years later after being infected with smallpox. However, he re-enlisted for several months in 1779. Moses Skesuck was recruited by the town of Richmond, R.I., in 1781. His heirs received payment in 1784 for his service in the aforementioned Rhode Island Regiment.

As the theater of war moved south and west, the United States gained some powerful allies from three of the six nations that composed the Iroquois League. A combined force of nearly 150 Oneida and Tuscarora warriors, along with a small number of Onondagas, joined in support of the American cause. The other three Iroquois nations, Mohawk, Seneca and Cayuga, chose to side with the British.

In May 1776, the Continental Congress authorized General George Washington to employ northern Indians in the Continental Army. New York, however, continued to forbid their enlistment in the Colony’s militia.

The Marquis de Lafayette, the French general, asked that some of the northern Indians be placed under his command.
This group of Indians, who spoke French and English, were able to communicate with LaFayette’s men and serve as interpreters. In 1778, about 50 of the warriors were sent to Valley Forge with the French forces. Six of the Oneidas were killed in a skirmish at Barren Hill, a few miles from Valley Forge. Two others were credited with saving the life of a French officer, Captain Louis de Tousard.

Twelve Oneida and Tuscarora Indians were commissioned by the Continental Congress in May 1779, and commanded their own Indian companies. One of them, Honyere Doxtator, an Oneida, was commissioned a captain. In 1777, prior to the commission, he was wounded at the Battle of Oriskany, N.Y. His brother, Honyst Doxtator, was a lieutenant in his company.

Two Oneida officers lost their lives in the war. Hanyost Thaosagwat was killed while acting as a scout in General Sullivan’s 1779 expedition. Lieutenant John Sagoharasie died in 1781 in a refugee camp behind American lines near Schenectady, N.Y. Another Oneida, Paul Powless, whose exact service is unknown, lost a horse, rifle and saddle. The United States later reimbursed him for those losses. Powless died at Green Bay, Wis., at the age of 89.

The last survivor of these 12 officers was Captain James Powless, who served under Lieutenant Colonel Louis Atayataghronghta. He died at Green Bay, Wis., in 1849, at the advanced age of 99.

Colonel Louis, as he was generally known, a Caughnawaga Indian from Canada, was commissioned by Congress in June 1779. Fluent in French and English, he served with the Northern Army in command of Oneida and Tuscarora Indians throughout the rest of the war. Under orders from General Philip Schuyler, commander-in-chief of the Northern Army, Louis led a delegation of nearly 20 New York Indians that greeted General Rochambeau and his French troops upon their arrival at Newport, R.I., in the summer of 1780.

Among the warriors who fought alongside the Americans were Grasshopper and White Skin, both Tuscarora Indians. The two men developed a close friendship with the soldiers of the 3rd New Jersey Regiment, which was stationed near German Flats, N.Y. During periods of relaxation, they taught the New Jersey soldiers to play an Indian game known today as lacrosse.

Lieutenant Nicholas Cusick, a Tuscarora who was one of the 12 commissioned by Congress, enlisted under Louis in Colonel Goose Van Schaick’s New York Regiment, and served a total of five years. Louis and the 12 officers or their widows were granted bounty land by the State of New York after the war. Of the 12, Cusick and the previously mentioned Honyere Doxtator were the only ones to be awarded federal pensions for their service during the Revolutionary War.

The Onondaga nation was the third of the Iroquois League to side with the Americans. Two members, Eagles Tail and Rattletrap, carried messages between the nation and the American Indian commissioners. By 1778, the Onondaga nation was sharply divided: Fifteen warriors, or nearly half of their strength, joined with the British.

Delaware Indians from the Ohio-Pennsylvania border provided valuable assistance to the American forces headquartered at Fort Pitt on the western frontier. One of their chiefs, White Eyes, died mysteriously in 1778 while on a mission for the Americans. A second chief, John Killbuck, remained a faithful ally until his death at Goshen, Ohio, in 1811. During the war, the sons of both chiefs were sent to Princeton College in New Jersey as a gesture of friendship by the United States. In 1873, more than 60 Delaware Indians from Michigan, who also supported the Americans, were sent to Princeton College in New Jersey and to gather intelligence. Another Delaware chief, Job Chiloway, did not move west but rather chose to remain in Northumberland County, Pa. He died of smallpox while on a mission to begin serving as an interpreter, leaving behind five children. The American government, calling Chiloway “a firm and steady friend,” appointed Colonel George Morgan, of Pennsylvania, to care for the orphans and provide for their education.

Morgan sent a Huron named Michael as a messenger to the Delaware Nation in Ohio, through territory inhabited by pro-British Indians. Michael was captured by a group of hostile Hurons and Englishmen, who took him to Detroit. Morgan wrote to Don Bernardo de Galvez, the Spanish governor of Louisiana, that he hoped Michael would quickly be released because he was a Spanish subject.

Galvez was often accompanied on his campaigns against the British along the Mississippi and into Florida by groups of Indians. The names of those warriors are yet to be discovered, as are those of a small number of Potawatomi Indians from Michigan, who also supported the Americans.

In January of 1781, Colonel Arthur Campbell reported to Thomas Jefferson that “the famous (Cherokee) Indian woman Nancy Ward” had come into his camp and provided his command with intelligence. In the same month, William Springstone, a trader and interpreter, reported to Jefferson that he and four other men had been captured by hostile Cherokees the preceding November. Springstone and the others said they had escaped from their Cherokee captors shortly thereafter with the assistance of Ward and other Indian women.

Nancy Ward was granted reservation land under the provisions of an 1817 treaty between the Cherokees and the United States. In 1818, she died and was buried in East Tennessee in 1822.

Only a few Indian patriots from Maryland, New Jersey and Virginia have been identified. The name of George, whose tribal affiliation is unknown, appears on a 1780 muster roll from Washington County, Md.

William Holmes first enlisted in New Jersey in 1778. He deserted soon after, but
was captured and imprisoned. Holmes escaped from prison, re-enlisted for the duration of the war and was still in service in 1783.

Robert Mursh, a Pamunky Indian, was a native of Virginia. He enlisted in 1776 and joined the 15th Virginia Regiment in 1777. Mursh marched with his regiment to Charleston, S.C., and Ebenezer, Ga. After the war, he became a Baptist minister. Both he and his wife received pensions for his service. The Mursh pension file is quite extraordinary. It contains a copy of several pages of his family Bible naming all his children and grandchildren, and including their birth dates.

During the war, Catherine the Grenadier, a Shawnee Indian woman, took refuge with Virginia troops stationed at Fort Randolph in Ohio. She brought much-needed provisions in the form of 48 horned cattle to the garrison. After the war, Catherine was compensated for the cattle and granted 1,000 acres of land in Ohio, on the west side of the Scioto River.

Catherine was not the only Shawnee Indian who chose to side with the Americans against their nation, which was pro-British. In 1775, John Shawnee marched in Captain John Lowdon’s company with a battalion of riflemen from northeastern Pennsylvania to Prospect Hill, Mass. He later served in the 6th Pennsylvania Regiment. He lived out his life at Bald Eagle’s Nest, an Indian town in Centre County, Pa.

In contrast to his vehemently anti-American nation, Peter, a Mohawk, enlisted in Colonel John Durkee’s 4th Connecticut Regiment in August 1778. He was credited to the town of Wethersfield and served in Captain John McGriegier’s Company until 1782.

As the foregoing has shown, even though many American Indians were pro-British during the Revolutionary War, numerous Indian tribes and individuals provided significant support for the American cause in a variety of ways, and throughout a wide geographical area. Not only did they serve as warriors, their familiarity with dangerous frontier areas also enabled them to provide unique services as guides, messengers, spies and intelligence gatherers. Some used their knowledge of multiple languages to act as interpreters and translators. Thus, contrary to modern-day misconceptions, many American Indians were true Revolutionary War patriots.

Several Indian nations are currently researching their ancestors’ contributions to American Independence. Some of the nations have placed that information on their Web pages. Much of this article is based on the research of Rita Souther, Elisabeth W. Schmidt and Hazel F. Kreinheder, published by NSDAR in 2001 as African American and American Indian Patriots of the Revolutionary War, edited by Eric G. Grundset.
MARY CASSATT
In downtown Washington, D.C., just blocks from the Smithsonian Institution, sits another of the city’s must-see, yet lesser-known sites: the National Museum of Women in the Arts. The museum, majestically housed in a formerly men-only Masonic temple, is the first in the world dedicated exclusively to female artists.
MWA’s permanent collection includes drawings, paintings, photographs and pieces of sculpture from the 16th century to the present. Among these are works by household names such as Mary Cassatt, Frida Kahlo, Georgia O’Keeffe and Grandma Moses, as well as more modern artists like Polish sculptor Magdalena Abakanowicz. Besides Moses, at least two other DAR members have had works exhibited at the museum: Hazel Wright Mohamed (1906–92) and Kate Freeman Clark (1875–1922), both of Mississippi.

Special programs focus on themes such as Virgin Territory: Women, Gender and History in Contemporary Brazilian Art, and An Imperial Collection: Women Artists from the State Hermitage Museum, and one-woman shows featuring the likes of Graciela Iturbide, Julie Taymor, Remedios Varo, Pat Olesko and Lesley Dill.

The museum’s holdings are built upon the private collection donated by Washington developer Wallace Holladay and his wife, Wilhelmina “Billie” Cole Holladay, who founded the museum in 1981. When the Holladays started collecting art 20 years earlier, they thought only of decorating their Georgetown home, according to Mrs. Holladay. They purchased pieces that appealed to them, never considering how well the various works coordinated with each other thematically. “We didn’t want to buy just one period or artist, or one anything,” she says.

At the time, they traveled frequently with Richard Brown Baker, the renowned collector of American contemporary art. He encouraged them to make their collection more interesting by focusing it. Initially, they resisted, not wanting to be limited in what they could acquire. Not long after Mr. Baker’s advice, however, the Holladays bought a still-life painting by Clara Peeters, a 17th-century Flemish artist. Mrs. Holladay discovered that the standard art history source book by H.W. Janson didn’t include any female artists. She was surprised, considering that she’d seen Peeters’ work in Madrid’s Prado Museum and in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. Mrs. Holladay then went to Washington’s National Gallery of Art library, where she found “a little bit” of information on the artist. “But I discovered there really was a dearth of material [on female artists].

“I think the men who were interested in art and wrote about art probably drank with the men artists, knew the men artists and wrote about men artists,” she adds. “But for whatever reason, the women were left out of the popular writings. Now, when you’re left out of the popular writings, you’re forgotten.”
The idea then struck Mr. Holladay that if the couple’s collection centered on works by women, they could continue to buy art from any period and in any media, “whatever you really liked,” she says. As it turns out, focusing on women artists still narrowed their options because auction catalogs included very few works by women—a condition that persists today.

Over dinner one night in the early 1980s, Mrs. Holladay and a friend were lamenting the lack of female museum directors when the friend, the late Nancy Hanks, joked that there ought to be a women’s museum. The next day, Mrs. Hanks, who served as the first chair of the National Endowment for the Arts from 1969–77, called Mrs. Holladay, serious about the prospect, and asking whether the Holladays would donate their collection to the cause. Soon thereafter, they formed an exploratory committee that included such prestigious figures as Michael Ainslie, then President of the National Trust for Historic Presentation, and the late Adelyn Breeskin, then Senior Curatorial Advisor for the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American Art.

No one expected a women’s museum to provoke controversy. “I didn’t dream anyone would be against it,” says Mrs. Holladay. “I just thought well, we’re going to give our collection and I’m going to work real hard. But the old dowagers thought it was some feminist act and were against it. And the feminists thought it was elitist and ... said I should take on abortion and homosexuality.” She responded to her critics by saying that “art is the great thing that brings people together. It doesn’t matter what your color is, it doesn’t matter what your nationality is—everybody can appreciate a beautiful work of art.”

She laughs now about the controversy. “It’s all in the past. They’ve all come around. The old conservatives have decided that our place is beautiful and that we do things well, and the feminists—we sell more of their books in our bookstore than they ever sold before.”

To some extent, the museum is able to placate both factions through its balance of shows. Two current offerings, for instance, will appeal to lovers of traditional exhibitions: Enterprising Women: 250 Years of American Business, which covers women’s entrepreneurial history (featured in the March/April 2003 American Spirit), and Passionate Observer: Photographs by Eudora Welty, which includes 50 black-and-white photographs by the novelist. (Both shows close February 29, 2004.)

Other shows are edgier, such as the 2002 survey of feminist Judy Chicago’s career that included selections from the artist’s groundbreaking 1979 work, “The Dinner Party,” and last fall’s examination of Lesley Dill’s haunting and provocative photographs, sculpture and tapestries.
Dill recalls her first visit to the museum. “It felt wonderful to walk into a ‘House of Art’ of my own gender. We’re supposed to have come such a long way, but the truth is bias and discrimination are still in the world with us today. The museum is a strong statement and a good reminder, which is to be applauded.” NMWA is ideally positioned to address women’s issues, she adds. “It has been, and is, a forum to talk about women and the way our identity is changing and re-inventing. All great women artists should show here because we’re nourishing the belief in feminine philosophy. To be ‘anti’ a museum of this kind would seem to be somewhat self-misogynistic.”

Dill notes that, in some cultures, art styles and techniques are differentiated by gender traditions and neither is considered superior to the other. “In many cultures, it’s not just a question of raising women up. The genders are merely separate and not different in a pejorative way. This is a very interesting role the museum plays by bringing to light the specific aspects of female-ness, not always presenting it in opposition to the other gender.”

A quick survey of the permanent collection reveals a bias toward women from Western Europe and North America, which Mrs. Holladay readily acknowledges. One reason for the lack of equal representation from Africa, the Middle East and Asia is that “much of the art—and to me it’s art—are the handicrafts in these countries,” she says. “And while I don’t deny their creativity and their beauty and everything else, it takes experts to take care of them that we don’t have.” For instance, the museum can’t afford to hire a curator specializing in textiles, she says.

However, Mrs. Holladay knows better than to be distracted by any criticism, and she’s candid about what she considers the museum’s shortcomings. Topping her acquisition wish list is a major work by Mary Cassatt, whom she considers the first prominent American female artist. “We have some good original prints, and we have a Mary Cassatt that isn’t bad [“The Bath,” 1891, print, soft-ground etching with aquatint and dry-point on paper], but we don’t really have one of her great works. They’re much harder to come by because she’s so well known.”

NMWA highlights women’s leadership in the performing and literary arts as well as the visual arts, hosting a film program featuring the work of women directors and screenwriters, and a literary series, whose 2003 authors included novelist Maxine Hong Kingston and poet Molly Peacock. In 2004, the writers program will include performance poet Wanda Coleman in March, fiction writer Nelly Rosario in April, and novelist Diana Abu-Jaber in May. The museum also sponsors the Shenson Concert Series, co-chaired by Gilan Tocco Corn and Linda Hohenfeld Slatkin, wife of National Symphony Orchestra...
Maestro Leonard Slatkin. This year’s program began on January 7 with acclaimed guitarist Sharon Isbin. A February benefit for NMWA will feature violinist Midori.

But Mrs. Holladay wishes the museum could do even more. “We would like to do everything we possibly can for women in all of the disciplines. Unfortunately, we are limited in scope. We’re just not able to do all we’d like to do.”

Even so, the museum’s accomplishments to date are impressive. In its first 10 years, it opened a gift shop and restaurant, established a library and purchased the building next door for expansion purposes. In 1997, then-First Lady Hillary Clinton cut the ribbon at the opening of the new wing. The NMWA Library and Research Center holds more than 18,500 art history books and exhibition catalogues featuring women in the visual arts, 50 periodicals, 300 videotapes and 100 audiotapes.

The library also contains the Archives on Women Artists, which holds nearly 17,000 files on individual female artists. Resumes, correspondence, catalogues, announcements, slides and photographs of art, and newspaper and magazine clippings comprise the files, which are created for women who have had at least one solo show in a museum or gallery. This restriction, however, doesn’t apply to artists working before the 20th century or to book artists.

NMWA has an annual budget of $9 million and is supported mainly by its large membership base. When it opened, it had 60,000 members. By comparison, in that same year other private Washington museums had much smaller memberships; the Corcoran Gallery of Art’s base was around 3,500 and the Phillips Collection had less than 1,000. NMWA membership has dropped to about 35,500—still a remarkable number, with members representing every state and 31 nations. It has 50 full-time staff and about 50 part-time employees and volunteers.

The top goal now is to establish a $35 million endowment, of which $25 million has already been raised—thanks in large part to a kick-off gift of $5 million over a period of five years from Wal-Mart heiress Helen Walton. “My dream is to be internationally known,” says Mrs. Holladay, “to have an international presence, you know, like the Tate [Gallery in London], so that people know us all over the world.”

Admission to the National Museum of Women in the Arts, 1250 New York Ave., is $5 for adults, $3 for students and people 60 and over, and free for museum members and people 18 and under. (During certain exhibitions, admission increases.) Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and from noon until 5 p.m. on Sundays. The Mezzanine Café is open weekdays 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. (202) 783–5000 or www.nmwa.org.
In the bitter pre-dawn hours of **February 29, 1704**, members of a French and Native American war party dropped silently inside the stockade fence surrounding the village of **Deerfield, Mass.**, where 291 English settlers were sleeping. The dozing sentry awoke only after the **first invaders** had opened the gate to the rest, and in minutes, 48 French and more than 200 **Abenaki, Kanien’kehaka (Mohawk), Pennacook and Wendat (Huron) soldiers** swept from house to house, **torching buildings** and killing some 50 men, women and children.

**The Deerfield Raid of 1704**

A Morning that Changed the History of North America

When the raid was over at about 9 a.m., dozens more had been wounded or captured and the village was in flames. The raiding party, which suffered only 11 dead and 22 wounded, then led 112 English captives up through the Connecticut River Valley to New France, now Canada—300 miles through deep snow.

Among the prisoners were the surviving members of the Williams family: the Reverend John Williams, the village minister; his wife, Eunice; and their children, Warham, 4; Eunice, 7; Stephen, 10; Esther, 13; Samuel, 15. (Two other Williams children, 6-year-old John Jr. and 6-week-old Jerusha, and one of the family’s African slaves, Parthena, were killed during the raid.)

During the arduous trek, the war party killed 19 more captives, including Mrs. Williams, who could not keep up, and the family’s male slave; two more captives starved to death, two escaped, and three more fled after reaching Canada. Once the expedition arrived in Canada, the French and the Indians began the business of ransoming the captives back to the English. By 1714, 55 had been ransomed, or “redeemed,” back to the Colonies. In the 1720s, two more returned on their own. Three remained unaccounted for. Twenty-six chose to stay in Canada.

Of the unredeemed captives, 19 settled among the French and seven with Native Peoples. Seven-year-old Eunice Williams was one of them, adopted into the Native community of Kahnawake, a village of Mohawks south of Montreal, converted to Catholicism by French Jesuit missionaries. Her siblings and father were eventually reunited in Massachusetts, but Eunice’s adoptive family refused Rev. Williams’ many appeals to give up the child they named Aongote. To the Puritan minister’s horror, Jesuits baptized his youngest daughter, which, according to his beliefs, put her soul in jeopardy. In 1707, the despairing Williams penned an account of the raid and his experiences in captivity, called *The
Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion, which has remained continuously in print to this day.

As a young woman, A’ongote married a Kanien’kehaka named Arosen. After Rev. Williams’ death in 1729, the couple and their children—historians believe they had at least three—made four visits to A’ongote’s relatives in Massachusetts, who continued to try to win her back to her family’s religion and the English way of life. But A’ongote was resolute. She always returned to Kahnawake, where she died in 1785 at the age of 95.

For generations, the story of Eunice has gripped the American imagination, kept alive in tales of the Deerfield Massacre fueled by Rev. Williams’ book, as well as town histories, children’s stories and eventually pageants, films and even paper dolls. This child, wrenching from a distinguished minister’s family after witnessing the murders of two of her brothers and perhaps her mother, began a new life among people who were viewed as savages by English society.

Not only did her adoptive family refuse to redeem her by collecting ransom money and returning her to the Williamses. Her new identities as a Kanien’kehaka and a Catholic placed her beyond social and spiritual redemption in her former community. What most rankled the Williams family was that when old enough to make her own decisions, Eunice chose to stay with her native community.

On its surface, the tale of Eunice Williams and the Deerfield raid appears uncomplicated. A band of courageous, hard-working settlers was brutally attacked in the midst of carving civilization out of a barbaric wilderness. For taking this risk, they paid a price; loved ones were lost to killers and to captors. The troubling question of why the adult Eunice cast her lot with the Indians now fascinates more than it distresses, but many would still count her among the raid’s many losses. Was this not the expected sacrifice to the good cause of advancing not only the frontier, but also a better way of life?

Not to today’s historians, who point out that this version of the events at Deerfield bears the gloss of a romantic myth. And romantic myth, they say, is the enemy of history. “In the 1800s and early 1900s, this story served to assert and justify the special status of descendants of the English settlers by highlighting their ancestors’ sacrifice in settling this land,” says Tim Neumann, Executive Director of the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association (PVMA), one of two historical and educational organizations in Deerfield planning a series of events to commemorate the raid’s 300th anniversary (see sidebar).

Neumann and others believe Williams’ monolithic tale has cast a shadow that obscures the role the settlers played in their own fate, and the motives of their attackers, which reflected a struggle among the European powers for the domination of North America. “The people who moved here knew they were likely to be attacked,” says Neumann. “This territory was contested by both the French and the local Indians, who shared the view that the English didn’t belong here,” he says, comparing the English villagers’ position to that of modern-day Israeli settlers on the West Bank, which Palestinians regard as their turf.

To make sense of this analogy, Neumann points to the longstanding rivalry between England and France, which played out in the colonies they established in the New World. Between the late 17th and mid-18th centuries, France, England and their respective Native American allies fought a series of wars in North America known as the French and Indian Wars. These conflicts were an extension of what Europeans called the War of the Spanish Succession, or Queen Anne’s War, in which Britain and France vied to control the Spanish throne.

As the two powers expanded their influence in North America, France focused on controlling trade routes and searching for a northwest passage to China. The French interest in trade led to trading relationships—and later, military alliances—with several Native American groups. England, on the other hand, concentrated on dispersing its excess population throughout the New England landscape. Settlers, the English rulers hoped, would expand their territory, export raw materials to the mother country and consume more of her finished goods.

But the English expansion threatened both French interests and Native Peoples. Settlers drove Natives from their homelands and, albeit inadvertently, introduced devastating diseases such as smallpox. The resulting tensions erupted in Metacom’s War of 1675–76 (also known as King Phillip’s War), in which the Wampanoag chief, Metacom, led a Native uprising to rout...
the English from their homelands. In one major raid in 1675 at Bloody Brook, near Deerfield, Natives surprised a party of Massachusetts soldiers and other Colonists, killing 60 of them. Settlers briefly abandoned Deerfield in the aftermath. Then in May 1676, the English colonists killed about 300 Native elders, women and children in a single attack not far from Deerfield. Survivors fled to an Abenaki village in Quebec, strengthening ties to the French and fueling hostilities toward the English.

The French also had reason to fear the English, who had attacked Quebec in the 1690s, says Kevin Sweeney, professor of history and American studies at Amherst College and co-author, with Evan Haefeli, of Captors and Captives: The 1704 French and Indian Raid on Deerfield (University of Massachusetts Press, 2003). English settlers, with a population of about 90,000, far outnumbered the 15,000 French colonists in the early 18th century. But as native groups in the region lost both land and population to the English, many fled north to New France, cementing trade alliances with fresh resentments.

Native Americans in the region belonged to two distinct language and culture groups, the Iroquois and the Abenakis, which in turn encompassed several independent political and social groups, Sweeney says. The Natives involved in the Deerfield raid, for example, included Mohawks from Kahnewake, an Iroquoian people; Iroquois of the Mountain, who had fled from what is now New York state to Montreal; Odanaks, a mix of Abenakis and other native refugees driven out of New England by the English; the Wendats, also Iroquoian, who had fled other Iroquoian attackers in what is now Ontario; and Penacooks, an Abenaki group that came from what is now Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine, where they had battled English settlers. This list supplies the primary motives for each group to join the Deerfield Raid, Sweeney says. As for the Wendats, “they hadn’t experienced direct conflicts with the English—but the English were allied with their Iroquoian enemies,” he says.

As the story of Eunice makes clear, Jesuit missionaries had converted several of these native groups to Catholicism, underscoring another point of venomous French-English rivalry: religion. In his writings, Rev. Williams refers to the French as “papists,” which in Puritan terms, translated to decadent idol worshippers. He may even have viewed them as spiritually inferior to the “savages.” When Eunice embraced “heathen” society, she also fulfilled one of the English Puritans’ worst fears. It was what historian John Demos, in The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America (Vintage Books, 1995), called “the nightmare prospect: Civilized people willingly turned savage, their vaunted ‘Old World’ culture overwhelmed by the wilderness.”

The savagery of the Natives was, in Williams’ mind, amply demonstrated by the murders of his wife and children, and the brutal circumstances of their demise may be another reason why his view of events has been so widely accepted. Without the context of similar atrocities perpetrated by the English in Metacomic’s War, his testimony holds even more power. Nonetheless, these events remain deeply disturbing and difficult to understand from today’s perspective.

Lyne Manring, PVMA Youth and Living History Programs Director, says, “The killing of infants, pregnant women and other defenseless folks is simply a sad and horrible thing, for their times and ours, no matter what the reason.” Manring adds, however, “these killings didn’t happen out of hatred or intense anger, for the most part. A captive who was ill or struggling ran the high risk of perishing along the way” and would also endanger the group’s ability to advance. It would seem better to perform a “mercy killing” under the circumstances, she says.

This appears to have been the case with most of the captives killed on the 300-mile journey to Canada. Rev. Williams’ wife, Eunice, was weak from recent childbearing; others dispatched by their captors included infants and children under three, who could not chew the rough diet of barely cooked game and dried corn, Sweeney says.

The goal of the raid, Sweeney argues, was not to simply murder and plunder, but to secure captives, in part for the lively ransom trade that had grown up in the Colonies at the time. French and Indian raiders held English captives in Canada, then released them when governments or families raised the money.

The other reason for taking captives, Manring says, was to build up decimated Native populations, a custom that some Native groups practiced even among themselves. Sweeney says that young Eunice Williams may have been taken to replace a beloved female relative in her adoptive Kanien’kehaka family, as sometimes happened when bitter grief persisted over a death. French settlements were male-dominated and sparsely populated, he says, and they sought female captives for marriage.

Eunice’s own marriage into the Kanien’kehaka, so abhorrent to her family at the time, has served to create a clearer understanding of the events that brought them together, as the descendants of A’ongote and Arosen have blended the interests of former English settlers with those of the natives. Their descendants also continue to assist in the historical research about the events of 1704, says Neumann.

The raid, Neumann says, was part of a continuing saga of war in New England that lasted until the mid-18th century. But because of Rev Williams’ famous account, Deerfield became a rallying cry for the Colonists, who succeeded in winning resources from the mother country to keep the French and Indians at bay. “Victory on the Plains of Abraham in Quebec in 1764 secured England’s dominance over France in America,” Neumann says.

The revolution that shortly followed may also have taken root in the French and Indian Wars. “England had gained Native allies...
As well as a large debt from over 50 years of war,” Neumann says. “Honoring treaties with Native groups that limited English settlement in Native lands, as well as taxation of the American Colonies to repay the war debt became bitter seeds of the American Revolution.” Years of fighting French and Indian forces had created extensive organized and armed militias that would turn on the mother country.

These newer interpretations may not be as easy to digest as the myth polished over time, and they present many more fronts for debate. But, their proponents insist, they are equally powerful and extremely important.

“This story isn’t simple,” says Sweeney. “It’s tragic, and it’s violent. But we must give some sense of the complexity of why such things happen, in order to understand any event, even today. Otherwise, the event gets wrenched out of context, and the invaded can become the invaders, and the intruders, the victims. When that happens, it’s easier to rationalize what one wants to do.”

A Year to Remember

The year 2004 marks the 300th anniversary of the Deerfield Raid of 1704. Two local historical organizations, Historic Deerfield Inc. and the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association (PVMA), are jointly producing a series of commemorative events, including an exhibition, original opera, walking tours, and other activities.

An exhibition, Remembering 1704: Context and Commemoration of the Deerfield Raid, will run from February 27, 2004, to April 8, 2005, in the Flynt Center of Early New England Life at Historic Deerfield. The exhibition will explore social repercussions of the Deerfield Raid, incorporating the latest research to examine the events in a larger context that includes Native American perspectives. For details, contact: Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, 10 Memorial St., Deerfield, MA 01342. (413) 774–7476, www.deerfield-ma.org; Memorial Hall Museum, 8 Memorial St., Deerfield, MA 01342, (413) 774–3768, or e-mail info@old-deerfield.org; or Historic Deerfield Inc., Box 321, Deerfield, MA 01342, (413) 774–5581, www.historic-deerfield.org.

On February 29, 2004, a new Web site, www.1704.deerfield.history.museum, will be launched featuring an online exhibit, Many Stories of 1704, prepared by an international coalition of Native Peoples, Canadian museums and PVMA.

Old Deerfield Productions, a locally based theater company, is producing a new opera called The Captivation of Eunice Williams, which dramatizes the life story of Eunice Williams, to debut in 2004. The play will examine the complex legacy of the 1704 events. Contact Linda McInerney at (413) 774–4527 or lmciner@aol.com, or visit www.eunicewilliams.com for information.

For Deerfield lodging and travel, contact Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, (413) 773–5463, or browse the Deerfield Guide at www.deerfieldguide.com.

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When it debuted on American television in 1997, “Antiques Roadshow” kicked up clouds of dust in attics and basements all over the country as countless viewers dug into old trunks and boxes for potentially valuable heirlooms. Since then, the hit show has inspired mixed feelings of hope and dread in viewers—hoping that they own a valuable item similar to those appraised on air, and dreading that an unsuspected treasure went into last summer’s yard sale.

There are good reasons for such mixed emotions. Virtually every episode reveals some valuable item found at a yard sale, or doggedly held on to despite family ridicule. Who knows how many arguments have broken out in front of the television along the lines of, “I wanted to keep it, but nooooo, you said it was ugly and it had to go!”

By Bill Hudgins
If you’ve had one of those arguments or have been tempted to start one, here’s a note of consolation from Kay Fausel, one of the “Roadshow” crew and also a member of the New York City Chapter, NSDAR: An object with similar appearance rarely carries similar value. More than likely, you did not mistakenly sell a Picasso for 25 cents.

Spun off from a long-running British show and produced by WGBH in Boston for PBS, “Antiques Roadshow” is arguably more real than any of the plethora of “reality” shows. Just look at the people lining up at the Moscone Center in San Francisco or the International Trade and Convention Center in Savannah, Ga. (see sidebar). Why, they look just like your neighbors—or you. There’s no exotic locale, just folding tables and chairs, some banners, and the lights, cameras and sound gear.

Plus, you won’t find contrived contests or hyped-up rivalries between folks in the line for ceramics and those in the tools queue. No, the challenges and rewards here are much more personal and closer to the heart. For instance, will that saber supposedly carried at Antietam by great-great-grandfather Ransom turn out to be a post-Civil War knockoff? The answer could end, or start, a century of family debates.

A CLOSER LOOK

As producers last summer were taping for the 2004 season, Kay and her husband, Alan, who is one of the show’s longtime appraisers, gave American Spirit a glimpse inside the workings of the popular show. The Fausels work at Doyle New York, a prestigious fine arts and antiques auction house. She heads the scheduling department, while he is senior vice president of the paintings department, specializing in Old Masters through early 20th-century painting. On the “Roadshow,” he is one of several appraisers who specialize in paintings, while she is part of the generalist, or “triage,” team whose members direct guests to the appropriate appraisers.

The couple became involved with the “Roadshow” during its first year, when the producers sought underwriting from Doyle. Instead, the firm offered to supply appraisers—the first to do so, he says.

In its first season, “Roadshow” visited 13 cities in a whirlwind tour. “That first year, we were lucky to get a couple thousand people at each show,” Alan recalls. They were stunned the next year when 17,000 people showed up in Los Angeles for the second season’s first taping, and many had to be turned away. After that, the producers introduced a lottery system for tickets. About 3,200 tickets are available for each venue; each lucky ticket-holder can bring a guest, and each of them can bring two items.

The number of cities has dropped since the first season: In 2003, “Roadshow” visited only Savannah, Chicago, Oklahoma City and San Francisco. Producers tape 50 to 55 appraisals at each venue, as well as a number of quick “over-the-shoulder” appraisals—enough for a season’s worth of episodes.

“One reason it is so successful here is that America has always had a huge material culture,” Alan says. “There are collectors for everything. Most of it is fairly ordinary, but everyone seems to have something.”

HISTORY LESSONS

“For most people in America today, the real challenge is to identify whether something is real or a copy,” Alan says. “Most Americans don’t have any idea how to tell; sorting it out is half of it.” So the appraisers take every opportunity to educate their guests and viewers about specific items and also about the general category.

Quite often, he notes, the history of a piece enhances its value. An item’s provenance—the story of its acquisition and the chain of ownership—can help to authenticate it. “The history of a piece is particularly important in America, where there is a much greater sense of things having belonged to specific, identifiable people.

“Our history is shorter than Europe’s, and that enhances our ability to track ownership of items of American origin back to the country’s early days,” he says.
A DAY AT THE “ROADSHOW”

In July, DAR member Imogene Hancock of Savannah, Ga. (at right in photo at left), won the “Antiques Roadshow” ticket lottery. She invited her sister, Kay Westberry, also a member of the Bonaventure Chapter in Savannah, to go with her.

“It was an experience,” says Mrs. Westberry. “They run about 700 people an hour through there. We had tickets for 2 p.m. First we went to a table where we got tickets telling us which area to go to and which line to be in. They didn’t film our appraisals, but we did spot a man with a metal pelican-like object who was being filmed.”

For her two items, Mrs. Westberry had a framed 19th-century print of Highland cattle and an 1882 history book. Her husband obtained the print years ago at an auction of contents from a mansion on Georgia’s Cumberland Island. The print was appraised at around $400.

The book, a leather-bound pictorial history of the United States, was written by Alexander Stephens, the vice president of the Confederacy. “It has beautiful pictures, but the appraiser said it had been mass-produced like a textbook and was worth only about $50,” she says, adding that an Internet search indicated it might be worth more.

Mrs. Hancock brought a monogrammed, sterling silver ladies’ purse that was appraised at $100, and a sterling silver mechanical pencil designed to hang from a chain around one’s neck, that was estimated to be worth about $20.

“It was hard to decide what to take,” says Mrs. Westberry, who also collects Depression glass. The sisters didn’t expect their items to bring a fortune, and were actually more interested in participating in what has become a national craze.
Between 70 and 80 appraisers work each show, grouped according to their specialty—ceramics, painting, tools, weapons, apparel, etc. With as many as 6,500 guests allowed to bring two items each, the appraisers see nearly 13,000 objects in about eight hours. The appraisers cannot solicit business for their firms, but are allowed to place business cards at the exit. Most of the items are not valuable enough to interest the auction houses, but a few are gems—which, of course, is the lure for viewers.

**BEHIND THE SCENES**

A few days before each taping, a couple of trucks loaded with cameras, lights, sound gear, banners and tables arrive at the venue. While some of the production staff set up the hall, camera crews do location shoots around the host city. The appraisers and triage team members arrive by Friday afternoon and have a brief rehearsal that evening.

The “Roadshow” crew are like a big family, says Kay. “The art world tends to be a small community, so it becomes like a family reunion. Everyone associated with the show does it for the love of it.”

Taping starts at 8 a.m. on Saturday. The guests’ first stop is the generalist or triage area, where they are directed to the appropriate appraisers. Most of the triage team are spouses or relatives of the appraisers who are knowledgeable about antiques but not qualified to give appraisals. “That first season, Alan was traveling so much that going with him was the only way I could spend some time with him. He suggested I do this, and it’s been great,” says Kay.

The array of stuff guests bring is mind-boggling, and sometimes, so is their determination to get it there. “You see people bringing things in red wagons, huge armoires on dollies, even piled into the lap of a guest in a wheelchair,” she says.

**FAKES AND FORTUNES**

At the appraisal tables, the guests give a short history of their items. Few get more than quick, off-camera estimates. Those who go on camera have intrigued an appraiser, who in turn has convinced a producer that the appraisal will make good viewing.

The appraisers look for items that are rare, unusual, potentially valuable or accompanied by a good story. Fakes are also high on their list, because they present good opportunities to educate owners and viewers, Alan says. The on-camera appraisals are true reality television: The appraisers withhold their verdicts so the guests’ on-camera reactions are genuine. The thousands of appraisals Alan has done over the years have blurred together. However, his first on-air appraisal remains as clear as antique crystal. During the show’s visit to Philadelphia in 1997, a woman brought in a painting she insisted was a Gauguin. “I immediately realized it wasn’t,” he says.

Nevertheless, another appraiser sensed good television and urged him to talk with a producer. “I explained to the producer it was not a real Gauguin and it would be embarrassing to the woman, but the producer said, ‘Let’s do it. We want tears. That makes for great TV!’” So Alan and the unsuspecting guest went before the camera.

“She thought it would be her moment of vindication and public triumph, and was probably expecting tears of joy,” he recalls. “When I told her all the ways that it was clearly a fake, we got the other kind of tears.” Sometimes, just the opposite occurs. A Russian-born visitor who worked as a gardener brought in a painting he’d received years ago as payment for yard work. He’d always liked the painting, and on a whim, decided to try to get tickets to the show to have it appraised. Alan was stunned when he saw it—the work appeared to be by the 19th-century painter, Tissot. “But that just didn’t seem possible. So, I had several colleagues at the paintings area look at it, too. They weren’t sure, either.”

Because the appraisers weren’t certain, Alan did not recommend taping the appraisal. “But I told the man what I thought and that if I were right, the painting might be worth $150,000 to $200,000. I urged him to get a formal appraisal.” It turned out the painting was indeed a Tissot and sold later for around $180,000.
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