American Spirit
Daughters of the American Revolution
January/February 2007

Visit to a Frontier Eden
Rebecca Lukens, Iron Maiden

The Trial of John Peter Zenger
Unlikely Abolitionists

There’s No Place Like Home
Consider membership in the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR), a volunteer women’s service organization that honors and preserves the legacy of our Patriot ancestors. More than 200 years ago, American Patriots fought and sacrificed for the freedoms we enjoy today. As a member of DAR, you can continue this legacy by actively promoting patriotism, preserving American history and securing America’s future through better education for children.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR MEMBERSHIP?
Any woman 18 years or older, regardless of race, religion or ethnic background, who can prove lineal descent from a Patriot of the American Revolution is eligible for membership. DAR volunteers are willing to provide guidance and assistance with your first step into the world of genealogy.

HOW IS PATRIOT DEFINED?
DAR recognizes Patriots not only as soldiers, but as anyone who contributed to the cause of American freedom. To find out if your ancestor is recognized by the DAR as a Revolutionary Patriot, a request form is available online at www.dar.org by clicking on “Membership.”

HOW MANY MEMBERS DOES THE NATIONAL SOCIETY HAVE?
DAR has 168,000 members in nearly 3,000 chapters worldwide, including chapters in 11 foreign countries. Since its founding in 1890, DAR has admitted more than 800,000 members.

HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE?
Go to www.dar.org and click on “Membership.” There you’ll find helpful instructions, advice on finding your lineage and a Prospective Member Information Request Form. Or call (202) 879–3224 for more information on joining the work of this vital, service-minded organization.
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ABOUT THE COVER: DOOR KNOCKER IN THE BEACON HILL NEIGHBORHOOD OF BOSTON. © STEVE DUNWELL, GETTY IMAGES
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On a cold winter day, there’s no other place we’d rather be than home. That’s why January/February is a perfect issue to spotlight houses that have witnessed fascinating chapters in our nation’s early history. We were inspired by the review of a brand-new book that examines American homes from 1775 to 1840. *Where We Lived: Discovering the Places We Once Called Home* charts the course of architecture in the young republic, accented by more than 400 photographs from the invaluable resource of the Depression-era Historic American Building Survey.

One such home—a mansion tucked away on an island in the Ohio River near Parkersburg, W.Va.—sets the stage for one of the most intriguing stories of the Thomas Jefferson era. The Blennerhassett House, now open to the public after an 18-year, $1 million restoration, was once the private retreat of a wealthy Irish expatriate who was a key figure in the sensational Aaron Burr treason trial.

Farther west, two historic homes in Illinois reveal the state’s early history as a territory. The Colonel Benjamin Stephenson House in Edwardsville and the Governor Joseph Duncan House in Jacksonville are Federal-style homes that hosted some of Illinois’ earliest political leaders. Local NSDAR members are doing their part to help preserve these treasures.

You probably know Crane & Company’s reputation as a stationery maker, but did you know of its ties to the American Revolution? The modern company descended from the Liberty Paper Mill, Massachusetts’ first paper mill. Stephen Crane and his family started the venture in 1770 to provide Patriots with currency and newsprint to publish their revolutionary messages.

Though the Crane family name is familiar, two other stories feature less recognizable figures of early America: John Peter Zenger and Rebecca Lukens, noteworthy examples of ordinary people who rose to meet unexpected challenges. After Zenger, owner of the New York *Weekly Journal*, criticized Colonial governor William Cosby in print, the governor had Zenger arrested and his paper shut down. Zenger’s 1735 trial set the stage for the development and passage of the First Amendment more than 50 years later. Rebecca Lukens took over her late husband’s Brandywine Iron Works and spent her days overseeing hot furnaces as the only woman iron manufacturer of her time. While balancing this with her duties as a mother, she demonstrated the foresight to modernize the mill and make it capable of responding to the demands of the industrial revolution. She rebuilt and expanded the mill through the 1820s and 1830s and became the nation’s first female industrialist.

Another one of our features looks at the issue of slavery before it divided the country and sparked a civil war. Several Founding Fathers, including Alexander Hamilton and John Jay, anticipated the problems it would cause for the young nation. They tried to prevent it as members of the New York Manumission Society, an organization dedicated to the abolition of slavery.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of *American Spirit* and that your winter days are warmed by the ideals of patriotism and the American Dream the articles represent.
Five questions every woman should ask herself.

- Do I have a signed will to protect my assets as well as my family and friends and is it stored in a safe place?
- Do I have any low-yielding stocks that I could reinvest in a charitable gift annuity or living trust for a better stream of income?
- Did I protect my family from the burden of high estate and income taxes due upon my death?
- Did I make arrangements in my estate plans to preserve the futures of the charitable organizations, like NSDAR, that I supported during my life?
- Did I take advantage of the new NSDAR gift planning program that is free with no obligation?

If you answered “no” to any of the questions above, you may benefit from speaking with a member of the Gift Planning staff in the Office of Development at the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution. Simply complete the form and mail it to the address listed, or please call 1-800-449-1776 or e-mail giftplanning@dar.org to speak to someone about bequests, gift annuities, trusts or other estate planning tools.

I would like to receive more information about:
- General Estate Planning
- Life Income Gifts (Charitable Gift Annuities, Living Trusts, Pooled Income Funds)
- Wills and Bequests
- Gifts of Life Insurance or Retirement Plans
- Gifts of Personal Property or Real Estate

Name:___________________________________________________________

Street Address:_________________________________________________

City:_________________________ State:_________________ Zip:____________

Telephone:____________________ Best Time To Call:________________

E-mail:_________________________________________________________

It sounds complicated, but to Dr. Edwards, it’s just part of her morning routine in a career she always saw herself doing.

Dr. Edwards studied economics at Wellesley College, a prestigious women’s college in Wellesley, Mass., and credits that experience for her career choice.

“They were very encouraging of economics students to get their doctorates because there were so few women in the profession,” she says of her Wellesley professors. “I was very influenced by that.”

After earning her Ph.D. at the University of Michigan, Dr. Edwards started as an economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and climbed the ranks to her current position with the Board of Governors.

Currently, she is only one of two woman officers in her division of 71 people—quite a feat for someone who works part-time.

Since her first son was born almost 11 years ago, Dr. Edwards says she feels blessed to work somewhere that encourages a balance of work and family life.

“I’ve been able to work part-time, and I’ve been promoted to an officer position,” she says. “It’s pretty amazing. Not a lot of places let you do that.”

And she certainly never thought that place would be the Federal Reserve.

“Before I submitted the memo asking to work part-time, I absolutely expected to be told no,” she says. “It was 1996, and the notion of alternative work arrangements were just coming into vogue. But they said yes really quickly.”

She admits there have been trade-offs to working part-time, but she wouldn’t give up having more free time to spend with her two sons and her husband, Paul Denis, for anything. It also frees up her schedule for involvement in the DAR.

When Dr. Edwards worked in New York, her husband took a job in Washington, D.C., and he commuted each week for three years. “When your husband’s away, you’ve got a lot of time on your hands, so I started researching my family history,” she says.

Dr. Edwards would spend a couple of hours a week at the Family History Library trying to trace her history back to John Boyd, an ancestor who fought in the American Revolution.

“When I moved to the Washington area, I realized that if I became a member of the DAR, I could use the DAR Library without having to pay each time.”

A member of the Freedom Hill Chapter, McLean, Va., since 1993, Dr. Edwards currently serves as National Vice Chairman of the Outstanding Junior Member Contest and State Chairman of the Finance Committee.

“The friendships are just wonderful,” she says. “I got into the DAR from the genealogy perspective, but what keeps me involved are my friends. I believe in the tenets of the DAR, and to do that with fun people is what keeps me going.”

To nominate a Daughter for a future issue, e-mail a description to americanspirit@dar.org.
CELEBRATE PRESIDENT’S DAY the old-fashioned way—at Mount Vernon. The weekend leading up to President’s Day—the official title of the anniversary of George Washington’s birthday—will be a big one, as Mount Vernon celebrates the 275th anniversary of the birth of the first commander-in-chief.

Sit down to breakfast with a George Washington re-enactor as he recounts his love of “hoecakes swimming in butter and honey.” Over breakfast, anyone can question the “president” about politics, farming, the Revolution or life in the 18th century. The commemoration weekend will also include “America’s Smallest Hometown Parade,” featuring an early American fife and drum band marching past the mansion.

On President’s Day, an official representative of the military district of Washington will lead a wreath-laying ceremony at Washington’s tomb. Visitors will then watch a Revolutionary War battle demonstration performed by the United States Third Infantry, the Old Guard Fife and Drum and the Commander-in-Chief’s Guard.

“The most popular event by far is the Revolutionary War battle demonstrations,” says Melissa Wood, spokesperson for the Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association. “It is an all-around family favorite—parents love it, and kids are fascinated with the re-enactors and love the cannons and fake gunfire.”

Admission to Mount Vernon is free on President’s Day. For more information, visit www.mountvernon.org.
LEWIS AND CLARK may have gotten all the fame, but they weren’t the only explorers of the frontier. Although his story has been neglected in history classes, Zebulon Pike also explored the Louisiana Purchase for the U.S. government. As Lewis and Clark trekked through the Northwest, Pike traversed areas known today as Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas and parts of modern-day Mexico.

Best known for discovering the eponymous Pike’s Peak near present-day Colorado Springs, Colo., Pike also helped open up the Southwest to trade, settlement and expansion.

Despite the dangers he endured for his country—he was captured and imprisoned by Spanish soldiers in New Mexico in February 1807—Pike was accused of espionage as a result of having taken orders for the expedition from General James Wilkinson, governor of the Louisiana Territory. Many believed Wilkinson not only planned the Aaron Burr conspiracy, but also plotted to wage an independent war on Spanish territories.

Despite a formal exoneration from President Thomas Jefferson, the stigma of espionage never fell away from Pike, and he never received the land grants, bonus pay or great recognition that his fellow Louisiana Purchase explorers enjoyed.

This year, however, the memory of Pike’s achievement is being revived, as communities around the Southwest are celebrating the bicentennial of his expedition.

“I believe it is time the gentleman is given the recognition and place in history he deserves,” says Lynda Carmichael, Chapter Regent of the Zebulon Pike Chapter, Colorado Springs.

Carmichael’s chapter joined with the Arkansas Valley Chapter, Pueblo, Colo., to participate in a parade last year to honor the rededication of the Historic Marker along the Riverwalk in Pueblo. It’s just one of many activities that have already occurred over this bicentennial.

For more information on the celebration and a calendar of events, visit www.zebulonpike.org.

Do you know a veteran?

If so, the Library of Congress wants to hear from you. In an effort to keep such a vital segment of American history alive, the LOC’s Veterans History Project is collecting the memories of armed service members who have served in combat.

In collaboration with National Geographic Books, the Veterans History Project has already published two books of the stories collected: Voices of War: Stories of Service from the Home Front and the Front Lines (2004) and Forever a Soldier: Unforgettable Stories of Wartime Service (2005). But it’s looking for more stories—in the form of oral histories (audio or video), letters, diaries or memoirs.

A national World War II veterans organization, the Greatest Generations Foundation, gives World War II soldiers, sailors and airmen the opportunity to return to the battlefields and record their stories. The foundation recently launched a fund-raising campaign to raise enough money to be able to let all surviving WWII veterans share their wartime experiences in the next decade.

For more information on both projects, visit www.loc.gov/vets and www.tggf.us.

AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE

In this issue of American Spirit, we explore a variety of American homes. Test your knowledge of the American architectural traditions—some enduring and some lost in time:

1. The Salem Towne House, a Federal-style home built in 1796, was considered the nicest house in Chariton, Mass. How much would it have sold for in the late 18th century?

2. How many houses did American architect Frank Lloyd Wright build?

3. Where is the oldest house in America?

4. What style of architecture, popular in New York in the 18th century, was often criticized for being backward, old-fashioned and uncouth?

5. What U.S. President designed the original buildings on the University of Virginia campus?

Answers on page 9.
A Quilted Countryside

WHEN DONNA SUE GROVES painted a quilt square on a barn in her native Adams County, Ohio, to honor her mother, Maxine, a lifelong quilter, she had no concept of what would come next. But her idea—to honor quilters and the traditions of rural America—has caught on.

From West Virginia to Tennessee, the Quilt Trail project is drawing tourists off the interstate highways and onto country roads, showcasing vividly painted quilt squares on the sides of barns and local businesses.

The project originated in Ohio and then spread to Kentucky and Tennessee. Today, there are quilt-clad barns in Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia, Iowa, North Carolina and even Canada.

Calling All Americans The National Mall is about to get a lot of attention. The National Park Service, which oversees the open-area national park that stretches from the Washington Monument to the U.S. Capitol in downtown Washington, D.C., recently unveiled an initiative that will give the general public an opportunity to help plan the future use, landscape and appearance of the National Mall. In November, the National Park Service hosted the Future of the National Mall symposium, which officially launched the planning process and brought together local, national and international experts for a brainstorming session.

The National Park Service also launched an interactive Web site that lets users view the progress, provide input and even sign up for volunteer opportunities. “The National Mall symbolizes our nation and our freedoms,” National Park Service Director Mary Bomar said at the unveiling. “Through this process the National Park Service wants to give the American public the chance to help determine how future generations will continue to honor, commemorate, celebrate and enjoy this national treasure.” For more information, visit the interactive Web site at www.nps.gov/nationalmallplan.
The series of earthquakes that struck the Big Island of Hawaii last October wasn’t severe enough to cause injuries or deaths, but it did cause devastation among many of its historic buildings and sites. The Historic Hawaii Foundation estimates that nearly a dozen historic structures were damaged, including the Kalahikiola Congregational Church, the oldest Christian church in the state, and the Hulihe‘e Palace, a former vacation home of Hawaiian royalty.

"A lot of these structures have survived many earthquakes in the past, but the severity of this one seems to have taken its toll on these buildings," Kiersten Faulkner, executive director of the Historic Hawaii Foundation, told the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Faulkner and other preservationists fear that many people will want to call the devastation “a total loss.” But “we’d like people to work with preservation professionals to see the extent of the damage and see if it can be repaired,” Faulkner said.

The Historic Hawaii Foundation held a fund-raiser in November to raise money for preservation projects in the earthquake-damaged areas. Other organizations, including the Daughters of Hawaii, which manages the Hulihe‘e Palace, and the Hawaii Community Foundation, are also helping in the rebuilding efforts.

Members of the Hawai‘i Loa Chapter, Kamuela, Hawaii, also plan to donate funds to help rebuild damaged properties. “Even though the sites are not tied to the American Revolution, like in Virginia or New York, they’re still important historical sites to Hawaii that we need to help preserve,” says Mary Ellen Smith, Chapter Regent of the Hawai‘i Loa Chapter.

For more information and ways you can help, visit www.historichawaii.org.
GO, WEST

“Rediscovering America’s Genesis,” the September/October 2006 article by Lee Gimpel, was informative and interesting. The author pointed out that Jamestown, the first permanent English settlement, is usually overshadowed by the Thanksgiving holiday commemorating the Plymouth Colony, which was founded several years after Jamestown.

But there is another event regarding the establishment of Jamestown that is also usually overshadowed by the story of John Smith and Pocahontas. I refer to the fact that after the “starving time” winter of 1609, the surviving colonists had abandoned Jamestown and left on their ships for England, dooming the settlement to the fate of being another failure for England. Fortunately for our American destiny, the departing ships were met by new supply ships arriving under the command of Thomas West, Baron de la Warr. De la Warr ordered all ships back to Jamestown, saving the colony from failure and making it, indeed, the first permanent English colony. It is true that his appearance didn’t occur until 1610, but if these ships had not arrived, there would have been nothing left to celebrate in 2007.

It seems unjust that this event is not more widely known. When I visited Jamestown two years ago, the only mention of Thomas West was on a small plaque in the church ruins. I hope that the committee that is planning the 400th anniversary celebration this year will give more credit to West than is usually accorded him.

Nancy Burch
Major William Lauderdale Chapter
Plantation, Fla.

AN ERIE CONNECTION

In reference to American Spirit’s article on the Erie Canal (September/October 2006), I recently discovered that my great-great-grandfather, Lyndon Thurber, had a boat on the Erie Canal. I didn’t know this from any family anecdote, but I discovered it when I found his name in the 1850 census in Verona, Oneida County, N.Y., with his occupation given as “boatman.” I couldn’t make any sense of this until I looked at a map and discovered that Verona was on the route of the Erie Canal.

Then I discovered that a distant relative had some old letters that mentioned details of Lyndon’s family life on the Erie Canal. Lyndon’s brother also had a canal boat, and others in the family were involved in providing timber that was shipped to the cities on these boats. Lyndon made enough money in a few years to move west to Illinois and buy a good-sized farm. He and his wife had six children born along the canal, but only three survived. Perhaps the rough canal life was nothing to brag about to your descendants, but I wish now that he had. I’d love to know more!

Karen Nilsen, Registrar
Washington Crossing Chapter
Yardley, Pa.

A FAMILY HISTORY

As a descendant of Anne Hutchinson, I was absolutely elated to find a review of her biography in the September/October 2006 issue of American Spirit.

After reading the review, I rushed to our local library to pick up a copy of the book, and after reading it I feel I must have a copy for my personal collection. It is a meticulously researched and brilliantly written book by Eve LaPlante, who is also a descendant of Anne Hutchinson. I am very proud to claim this strong, courageous New England leader and heroine as part of my heritage. Thank you for calling attention to this great woman and LaPlante’s fine work.

Joan Beckett Jacobs, Regent
Estudillo Chapter
Hemet, Calif.

EVEN SAFER SCRAPBOOKING

While I appreciate that American Spirit provides information on safe scrapbooking (July/August 2006), there is newer information out there that should be noted. The International Standards Organization (ISO) has finally developed and distributed standards that allow products to be tested, part of which is the Photographic Activity Test (PAT) mentioned in the article, but the whole standard is ISO 18902. Now companies’ products can be tested against these standards. Few companies go to the expense of passing the PAT since simply testing one sheet of paper costs about $200. At least one other company meets or exceeds these tests and should have been included in the article: Creative Memories (www.creativememories.com), which was instrumental in writing the new standard as well.

Martha Lane
Arlington House Chapter
Arlington, Va.

Send letters to the editor to americanspirit@dar.org.
President James Monroe ordered this pair of mahogany armchairs for the East Room of the White House in 1818. The order was placed with Georgetown cabinetmaker William King Jr., and the set originally consisted of 24 chairs and four sofas. The chairs cost $33 each, and the purchase of the set was financed by the “furniture fund” that had been appropriated by Congress in 1817 to refurnish the White House after the British burned it down three years earlier.

Originally supported upon brass casters, the chairs were not upholstered. They were described in the 1825 inventory of furniture in the President’s house as “unfinished.” The chairs were made usable in 1829, when the East Room was decorated by Louis Veron & Co. of Philadelphia. According to an invoice, the set was “stuffed and covered, mahogany work entirely refinished, and cotton covers [supplied].” At that time they were upholstered in “blue damask satin,” and the reference to “cotton covers” suggests that the set was provided with slipcovers used to protect against sunlight and dirt during the summer months.

In 1873, the set was sold at auction when Boston decorator William J. MacPherson redecorated the East Room under President Ulysses S. Grant. The DAR Museum purchased the chairs from an antique store in 1961.
Places We Call Home
All you have to do is look closely at a home to gain insight on its owner, says Jack Larkin, a noted historian of early American culture. In his new book, *Where We Lived: Discovering the Places We Once Called Home* (Taunton, 2006), Larkin takes readers on a chronological and geographical journey of architecture in the young republic, using hundreds of photographs of the houses of everyday—and not so everyday—Americans.

To gather the more than 400 photographs featured in the book, Larkin tapped a little-known but enormously important resource: the Historic American Building Survey (HABS). Established by the National Park Service in 1933 as an antidote to the rampant unemployment caused by the Great Depression, the HABS put unemployed architects and draftsmen to work documenting interesting structures, some dating from as early as the 16th century. Since its beginning, the HABS has produced documentation—including photographs, measured drafts and short written descriptions—on more than 35,000 architecturally interesting structures across the country.

“It provides such a rich record of early American architecture that can be so useful in transcribing part of the American experience,” Larkin says. The record was so full and varied that Larkin found it difficult to whittle down the 1,500 photographs he pulled from the survey. “There’s so much there. We did way more than just skim the surface, but there’s a lot of iceberg still under there.”

*Where We Lived* goes beyond imagery and physical descriptions of the American houses. Woven into the often haunting black-and-white photographs is a narrative that draws on public records, family histories and firsthand accounts—like the diary entries from Edward Parry, an English civilian who, in 1775, lived as a prisoner in a rural farmhouse in Sturbridge, Mass.

It’s no coincidence that Parry’s story appears at the front of the book. Larkin has long found fascinating the story of the Englishman who was traveling through America in the wrong place at the wrong time. In America on business with the Royal Navy, Parry was surveying forests to find white pine trees that would be used for masts on the Royal Navy’s warships. Thought to be a spy, he was captured. But because he was a civilian, authorities couldn’t hold him as a prisoner of war. Instead, they held him in a farmhouse to keep an eye on him.

“His host probably wouldn’t have been too happy to know that he was keeping a secret diary, but it’s amazing because Parry has given us a blow-by-blow account of being in a crowded, smelly farmhouse that lacked privacy,” Larkin says. “Because he was a stranger to life on a farm, he noticed all these things that were just mundane to the family he was living with but were interesting to him.”

European travelers were common in America during the nation’s early years, Larkin says. “Many people were interested in this strange new country. It was a brand new experiment. The Colonies had been there a long time, but the United States were new, so people were wondering if it was going to succeed, and they wanted to see for themselves.”

As strangers in a strange land often do, many—like James Stuart, traveling in 1831 in Illinois and staying overnight in a small, cramped cabin—described in great detail what they saw and experienced. Larkin relates Stuart’s observation of the cabin:

“It was a small cabin ‘divided into three apartments by pieces of thin board and canvas’ … There was not even a board to close up the house’s one window opening. After getting into ‘the bed-clothes of which I shall not attempt to describe,’ he found ‘on looking up, that the roof was more open than closed.’”

“I always try to not just think of the style, but also of the spaces, and how they used the spaces,” Larkin says. “How would large families have organized their space?”

Categorized by region—New England, the middle states, the South and West—the houses in *Where We Lived* show the true diversity of American architecture. Passing through New
England, you would observe houses built of wood, a tradition settlers brought from their English villages, with windows and doors placed wherever they were needed. In the middle states, a Dutch style with steeply pitched roofs and brickwork was more prevalent. Further south, huge plantations in the Greek Revival style flourished from the Atlantic Coast to the Mississippi River. And along the frontier, which consisted of present-day states like Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky and Tennessee, pioneers put the vast forests to use to construct their log cabin homes.

American architecture styles varied from simple to ornate. But none were as ornate as the five monogrammed houses of Lower Alloways Creek in New Jersey, settled by Quakers from western England in the late 17th century. Built in 1754 for a newly married couple, the John and Mary Dickinson House is considered one of the most spectacular examples of the ornamental brickwork of the Lower Alloways, featuring the date and initials of the couple on a windowless gable end of the house. (See photo on page 16.)

“They make such an interesting statement about family life,” Larkin says. “They wanted to memorialize the beginning of the house and their family together.”

Larkin also notes that in a time when it wasn’t common for women to own
3. Sunnyside, circa 1835, Tarrytown, N.Y.
4. Rose Hill, late 18th century, Charles County, Md.
property, the woman’s first-name initial is also featured as prominently as her husband’s on the side of the house, which he says was the “mark of the Quaker way, which gave women more honor and visibility.”

Where We Lived is the first in a series published jointly by Taunton Press—a leading house and home publisher—and the National Trust for Historic Preservation to increase preservation awareness. While many of the homes—the photographs having been taken in the 1930s—are long gone, quite a few are still holding on.

Larkin hopes the book will help readers make a connection between their own lives and the lives he details in the book.

“I hope it shows them how the designs, shapes and forms of the past influence their houses today, that the architectural traditions go back to an America before the railroad, before the telegraph and before all the other modern conveniences,” he says. “In a way, we can think of the past as an anchor that gives us a perspective of where we’ve come from and where we’re going. And if we can tie it to the future, maybe we can convince people to help make sure their past is preserved.”
By Emily McMackin

Bringing the Constitution to Life

WHEN FIFTH-GRADERS ENTER Melinda Dickinson’s social studies class at Sheridan Road Elementary School in Lansing, Mich., most of them view the Constitution as nothing more than an old document with big words they can’t pronounce or understand. By the time they leave, they see it as a living document that guarantees rights and requires responsibilities they can grasp.

“We talk about their rights and where those came from,” Dickinson says. “You can make so many parallels to today—and that’s what you have to do to get them excited about a 200-year-old document.”

Getting students to appreciate history can be a challenge when they view the past “as what happened last week,” Dickinson says, but they are well aware of their rights—and rules that limit their freedom, such as raising their hand to express an opinion in class and walking instead of running to the cafeteria during their lunch break. Using students’ basic knowledge of classroom privileges and regulations, Dickinson tackles the more complicated subjects of democracy, equality and the balance of power.

“For kids who don’t know anything but those rights, it can be hard to try to imagine what life would be like without them,” Dickinson says.

DISSECTING THE MEANING

She starts the year by putting the preamble on an overhead projector so students can read and dissect it. Students look up unfamiliar words like “domestic” and “tranquility” and rephrase them to make sense. They even learn to sing the preamble, using music from the “Schoolhouse Rock” series.

“At first, you see them stumbling and looking quizzically at these big, long words, but by the time we’ve gone through it and put it into kid-friendly terms, they know what it means,” Dickinson says.

On Constitution Day, students get the opportunity to sign an enlarged version of the Constitution with quill pens like the ones the Founders used.

“When they do, they get their own pocket Constitution, then we celebrate with red, white and blue cupcakes,” Dickinson says. “Anyone who comes in the classroom is invited to sign, even the parents.”

Dickinson pulls out miniature dolls she collects representing some of the Constitution’s signers, including Benjamin Franklin, George Washington and James Madison. Students laugh at their fancy clothes, lace collars and gold-buckled shoes, but having the likenesses to pair with names in textbooks make the Founding Fathers all the more real.

“They need to know that even though these men didn’t have cars, TV or MTV, they aren’t that different from the way we are today,” Dickinson says.

‘‘When we have more people calling in to vote for the “American Idol” winner than for an election, we’re doing something wrong—and we’ve got to start with these kids.’’

—Melinda Dickinson
MAKING IT RELEVANT

In the spring when the class studies ratification and the Bill of Rights, students engage in mock debates and pick a Founder to report on from a first-person perspective. Dickinson uses clippings of current newspaper articles, editorials and political cartoons to show students how the Constitution relates to issues today.

She also encourages students to share their own stories about why their families came to America to give them a better idea of “the rights people in other countries don’t have.” She hopes to get them so excited about the Constitution that they’ll spread that enthusiasm to their parents.

“When we have more people calling in to vote for the ‘American Idol’ winner than for an election, we’re doing something wrong—and we’ve got to start with these kids,” Dickinson says.
Consider membership in the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR), a volunteer women’s service organization that honors and preserves the legacy of our Patriot ancestors. More than 200 years ago, American Patriots fought and sacrificed for the freedoms we enjoy today. As a member of DAR, you can continue this legacy by actively promoting patriotism, preserving American history and securing America’s future through better education for children.

**WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR MEMBERSHIP?**
Any woman 18 years or older, regardless of race, religion or ethnic background, who can prove lineal descent from a Patriot of the American Revolution is eligible for membership. DAR volunteers are willing to provide guidance and assistance with your first step into the world of genealogy.

**HOW IS PATRIOT DEFINED?**
DAR recognizes Patriots not only as soldiers, but as anyone who contributed to the cause of American freedom. To find out if your ancestor is recognized by the DAR as a Revolutionary Patriot, a request form is available online at www.dar.org by clicking on “Membership.”

**HOW MANY MEMBERS DOES THE NATIONAL SOCIETY HAVE?**
DAR has 168,000 members in nearly 3,000 chapters worldwide, including chapters in 11 foreign countries. Since its founding in 1890, DAR has admitted more than 800,000 members.

**HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE?**
Go to www.dar.org and click on “Membership.” There you’ll find helpful instructions, advice on finding your lineage and a Prospective Member Information Request Form. Or call (202) 879–3224 for more information on joining the work of this vital, service-minded organization.
In the late 18th century, deep in the Ohio Valley, a remote island blossomed with wealth, grace and charm. For a few brief years, Blennerhassett Island, one of the largest in the Ohio River, was the valley’s social and cultural hub. The Eden of the Frontier, as it was often called, was also the home of one of the era’s most captivating couples, Harman and Margaret Blennerhassett.

Their story, a lesser footnote in the decline of the Revolutionary War hero Aaron Burr, is a saga of glamour and intrigue that ended in tragedy and loss. For residents of Parkersburg, W.Va., the Blennerhassett story is a claim to fame, a legacy to be embraced and nurtured. For the rest of us, it’s a story with all the makings of a big-screen epic.
He was not a handsome man. Six feet tall, slender with sloping shoulders, he had curly hair; a prominent hooked nose and was probably legally blind by modern standards.

But he was intelligent, romantic and, apparently, daring. At 28 he joined the Society of United Irishmen, a secret society dedicated to overthrowing British rule in Ireland. Legend has it that when the French Revolution was brewing in the late 1780s, the family sent him to France to rescue his niece Margaret who was studying there, perhaps at a convent school.

Margaret, seven years younger than Harman, was a charming woman with delicate features and a well-educated, incisive mind. She was tall for the times—5 feet, 7 inches—with striking, almond-shaped blue eyes and luscious brown hair. Her fashionable wardrobe was colorful, often exotic.

To the dismay of the Blennerhassett family, the couple fell in love and married in 1794. The relationship, while legal under wardrobe was colorful, often exotic.
American tribes were a recent memory.

November 1796, they journeyed to the village of Pittsburgh.
Sunday morning services.
Philadelphia, the affluent, charming pair made friends easily. In a new life in America. Stopping first in New York and

$140,000, packed their belongings and, in 1796, sailed toward his property and hanged.

Irishmen. If the looming uprising failed, he'd likely be stripped of jeopardy because of Harman's leadership in the United church. Out of favor with their family, the couple faced greater

But a more adventurous life on the frontier beckoned. By

their fortune had been lost. • The spacious kitchen was considered state-of-the-art in the early 19th century. Housemaids lived in the quarters on the second floor of the kitchen.

Family fortunes change.
Into this paradise in 1805 strode former vice president Aaron Burr, who had a year before killed his longtime political adversary Alexander Hamilton in a duel at Weehawken, N.J. But don't expect the region's modern-day inhabitants to disparage his memory—even though it was his influence that brought about the ruin of Blennerhassett Island.

“This is Burr country,” says Ray Swick, the West Virginia State Parks historian and expert on the Blennerhassett legacy.
Burr, desperately seeking investors in his plan to establish an empire in the western part of the country, enchanted Margaret and intrigued Harman. Their own resources were dwindling, and Burr's scheme might offer financial salvation. They agreed to turn their island into Burr's base of operations and bankroll 15 large riverboats to transport the army he had yet to raise.

OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: A grand staircase leads from the foyer of the Blennerhassett mansion to the second-floor drawing room. The polished walnut plank floor was inlaid with black and white marble tile. • This small gilded jewelry box belonged to Avice Blennerhassett, Harman's eldest sister who took him and Margaret into her home after their fortune had been lost. • The spacious kitchen was considered state-of-the-art in the early 19th century. Housemaids lived in the quarters on the second floor of the kitchen. • In 1996 the remains of Margaret Blennerhassett and her son Harman Jr. were moved from their unmarked graves in a Lower Manhattan cemetery and reinterred on the grounds of her island mansion. • The master bedroom features a gold-trimmed white Old Paris porcelain tea set.

DREAM HOUSE
For the next two and a half years they lived in a small two-story log house while they built their dream house, one of the most extraordinary homes in the territory. In 1800 they moved into the white, two-and-a-half-story Palladian-style mansion. Its dozen rooms included a well-stocked library and a 16-by-25-foot dining room that accommodated dinners for 14. The furnishings, china, silver and carpets were of the finest quality. Silver doorknobs, gilded cornices and embellished ceilings hinted at a wealth far greater than the couple's actual worth. Curving covered piazzas connected the 8,000-square-foot main house to a state-of-the-art (for its time) kitchen to the south and Harman's study, laboratory and wine cellar to the north.

The grounds were as spectacular as the house. Two massive stone gateways in a Hawthorn hedge welcomed visitors to the north and south sides of the island estate. Large flower, fruit and vegetable gardens, a greenhouse and orchards sat beyond two spacious formal lawns where the Blennerhassetts often entertained. Gazebos, winding pathways, a fishpond, an English hedge maze and shrubs pruned into topiaries of the 13 original American states lent the gardens a fairy-tale quality.

The Blennerhassetts ran a ferry to the Ohio shore for the convenience of their numerous guests. Visitors from the Parkersburg. W.Va., shore could boat or—when the river ran shallow enough—ride horseback to the estate.

At least a dozen slaves and countless other workers maintained the almost completely self-sufficient property. The estate poured about $50,000 ($1 million in modern times) into an ailing local economy and marked the couple as community benefactors.

Margaret burnished that image by bringing the smallpox vaccine—a medical marvel in 1805—to the children of the area. Harman partnered in a chain of general stores across southeastern Ohio and backed Marietta ships transporting valley produce to the West Indies.

FAMILY FORTUNES CHANGE
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This blue enamel ring, set with diamonds, likely belonged to Harman Blennerhassett. • A 1981 painting by J. A. Dawson is, according to Blennerhassett expert Ray Swick, one of the most outstanding paintings of the mansion produced by an Ohio Valley artist in the 20th century. • Blennerhassett Island, with abundant gardens, orchards, livestock and wild game, was a virtually self-sufficient haven in the Ohio River Valley frontier. • An old hand-penned inscription on the drawer of an English Empire octagonal table in one of the mansion’s drawing rooms details the history of the beautifully crafted table. The table is believed to have been bought by Harman Blennerhassett in London and then brought to America in 1796. It was sold several times before it was returned to its island home.

THE FURNISHINGS, CHINA, SILVER AND CARPETS WERE OF THE FINEST QUALITY. SILVER DOORKNOBS, GILDED CORNICES AND EMBELLISHED CEILINGS HINTED AT A WEALTH FAR GREATER THAN THE COUPLE’S ACTUAL WORTH.
But suspicions grew—from Jefferson’s White House to the Ohio Valley. Burr’s actions—and those of his supporters, including the Blennerhassetts—were viewed as treasonous.

On December 11, 1806, the Virginia militia was dispatched to the island to seize any supplies and boats stockpiled for the Burr operation, as well as any Burr compatriots. Harman, sensing danger, had escaped downriver only hours earlier.

Margaret might have had flashbacks of the French Revolution, Swick suggests, as she faced a ransacking militia fueled by its raid of the mansion’s wine cellar. A week later she and the children were allowed to leave the island unharmed. They fled downriver to find Harman. Never again would Margaret see her beloved island.

Two months later Burr’s dreams were in ruins, and he was arrested. Harman was taken into custody, and both men were imprisoned in the Virginia State Penitentiary in Richmond.

Blennerhassett Island was identified as the center of the alleged conspiracy. The island’s importance in national history, Swick says, lies in the fact that the events occurring there were the basis for the final definition of treason in American law.

A single witness testified that the island’s defenders had drawn their guns on the invading militia, constituting an act of war, though no other witnesses corroborated his testimony. Burr’s trial for high treason ended in acquittal on September 1, 1807. Harman was released after serving 53 days in prison.

The luckless Blennerhassetts moved to a 1,000-acre cotton plantation in the Mississippi Territory. Beset by crop failures and mounting debt, they were forced to return to England in 1822 to live on the kindness of relatives. After a series of strokes, Harman died at 66 in 1831.

Margaret died in 1842 in New York City while visiting her bachelor son, Harman Jr. He died of cholera in 1854. One other son had already vanished in the wilderness near St. Louis, and no record remains of the fate of the eldest son. Both of the Blennerhassett daughters had died in infancy. Joseph, the youngest and only surviving son, married and fathered two sons, but they both died as infants.

THE BLENNERHASSETT LEGACY

With Joseph’s death in 1862 the family line disappeared, but not the family name. Although forgotten in the many other places they lived, the Blennerhassetts are folk heroes in the Ohio Valley, Swick says.

There are Blennerhassett schools and streets. A Blennerhassett Museum, an early 1900s building in Parkersburg, showcases an array of local history, including numerous artifacts from the island. The city’s Blennerhassett Hotel, dating to 1889, is a boutique hotel with an antique ambiance.

The island mansion has risen, like the phoenix, its unofficial symbol, from the destruction of an 1811 fire and subsequent years of flooding that buried the foundation.

Generations of families lived and farmed on the island but never in a scale to compare to the Blennerhassetts. From 1886 the island was a popular swimming and picnic park with a dance pavilion. When the DuPont Company bought the island in 1966, farming ceased. Brush and weeds overgrew the land, harboring a roving herd of wild pigs.

In 1973 West Virginia state archaeologists braved the brush to uncover the outline of the mansion’s semicircular shape. Years of painstaking research yielded enough information to replicate the Blennerhassett mansion.

The state leased the island from DuPont in 1978 and opened Blennerhassett Island State Park two years later. Swick was hired as the park historian. Work started on rebuilding the mansion four years later and finished in 1991.

“We’re still finishing the interior and the furnishings,” Swick says.

Stern-wheelers from Parkersburg take visitors on a 20-minute cruise to the island and the restored world of the Blennerhassetts.

In June 1996 the remains of Margaret and her son, Harman Jr., were exhumed from their unmarked graves in New York City and reinterred on the island.

Margaret Blennerhassett had come home to her frontier Eden.

Phyllis Speidell and John Sheally took a spirited adventure to Occoquan, Va., for the September/October 2006 issue.
Rags are as beauties, which concealed lie, 
But when in paper, how it charms the eye; 
Pray save your rags, new beauties it discover, 
For paper truly, every one’s a lover. 
By the pen and press such knowledge is displayed, 
As wouldn’t exist if paper was not made. 
Wisdom of things, mysterious, divine, 
Illustriously doth on paper shine.

—An announcement in 1769 in the Boston News-Letter urging colonists to donate rags so they could be made into paper.
We may think we live in a paperless society now, but colonists during the American Revolution often did not have enough to write on. The fiery Stephen Crane began his Liberty Paper Mill in 1730 near Boston so Patriots could get their anti-British message across in letters, newspapers, broadsides and currency.

Today, the fine stationery maker Crane & Company carries on the legacy of that ardent Patriot who fought at the Battle of Lexington and Concord. For the last 200 years, Crane has made banknotes for the U.S. Department of Treasury and has crafted everything from engraved invitations to holiday greeting cards for the White House.

"We have been there at all the right events and for all the right people—from the dedication of the Statue of Liberty to the condolences on the occasion of President Kennedy’s death," says Crane President and CEO Lansing Crane, a sixth-generation papermaker. "We feel lucky to be in two categories that will never go out of style or lose their relevance—personal communication and cash."

By Patricia Bates
Taking Stock in Paper

The first paper mill in the Colonies was built in 1690 near Philadelphia along a tributary of the Delaware River. That same year, the Massachusetts Assembly issued bills to volunteers returning from duty in Quebec during King William’s War, yet paper-making operations near Boston didn’t begin until 40 years later.

In 1728, the General Court instituted a law—the “Act for the Encouragement of Making Paper”—for the Massachusetts Bay province. Rights were granted to a few businessmen, one of whom was Thomas Hancock, the uncle of John Hancock, the Continental Congress president who became known for his personalmship as the first Declaration of Independence signer in 1776.

While not much is known about the mill’s early years, Thomas Hancock and others leased an old mill along the Neponset River. By 1730, they displayed samples of their work for the Massachusetts court. However, paper was never made regularly there, even though a British soldier was once hired on furlough to assist them.

From 1741 to 1769, Jeremiah Smith and James Boies became the mill’s manufacturers. Smith divested part of his interest in 1769 to son-in-law Daniel Vose. Vose, a shipping tycoon, formed a partnership with a 35-year-old Stephen Crane, whose ancestors settled in Milton by 1649.

Colonists in Milton were urged to donate their fabric scraps to be made into paper. “The bell cart will go through Boston before the end of next month to collect rags for the paper mill in Milton,” the Boston News-Letter announced in 1769.

In 1770, Crane, Boies and Vose—all of whom vehemently opposed British taxation without representation in the Massachusetts Colony—started the new Liberty Paper Mill, trading with Boston’s printers and publishers. Benjamin Edes and John Gill, who owned the Boston Gazette and Country Journal, likely used their materials.

Liberty Paper Mill gathered increasing amounts of rags, starting with at least 850 pounds in 1771 and growing to 7,000 in 1777. Many shipments came from New York; others came from hamlets stretching from Cape Ann, Mass., to Charlestown, S.C.

Ebenezer Watson, owner of the Connecticut Courant, Dr. Cotton Tufts of Boston and Isaiah Thomas, publisher of The Massachusetts Spy, also furnished the rags.

The defiant group likely met in secrecy with John Hancock, Sam Adams, James Otis and Paul Revere. They visited Isaiah Thomas’ lettering shop, otherwise known as the Sedition Foundry. The Suffolk Resolves of 1773—a precursor to the Declaration of Independence—were approved at Vose’s house. The first copy of Thomas’ The Massachusetts Spy came off the press on May 3, 1775—on newsprint from the Liberty Paper Mill.

During June 1776, Edes and Gill probably issued currency for the Massachusetts Bay Colony with Liberty Paper Mill’s stock. From August 1775 to November 1776, Paul Revere engraved his “Sword in Hand” banknotes to help finance the Revolution—after he, too, ordered materials from the Liberty Paper Mill. During 1777, his war horses grazed at the mill’s pastures.

The Cranes never wavered in their detest of the British. Two of Stephen’s cousins, Abijah and John, raided several ships, including the Dartmouth, Elinor and the Beaver, at the December 1773 Boston Tea Party. John was the only Patriot injured: a crate of tea fell on him while he trying to lift it from the hold of a ship.

Between 1773 and 1782, the Liberty Paper Mill also made thousands of rounds of cartridge paper for muskets and other firearms. Stephen Crane supplied the majority to William Shattuck, who became the first lieutenant colonel of General Henry Knox’s American Artillery Regiment.

After transferring to Rhode Island, Major John Crane raised two militias after fighting at the Battle of Bunker Hill under Lt. Col. Shattuck. Ironically, his cannon was fired with Liberty Paper Mill ammunition. By the end of the Revolutionary War, John Crane had risen in the ranks to brigadier general.

Stephen Crane was also a freedom fighter, but didn’t live long enough to see victory. He died on April 3, 1778, after becoming ill at his base in Cambridge, Mass. His son, Zenas, later apprenticed as a papermaker at a mill owned by Isaiah Thomas. Sometime after summer 1799, Zenas began his paper mill operation along the Housatonic River in Dalton. Eventually, seven Crane generations followed his legacy.

From Rags to Riches

Crane has made paper in Dalton, Mass., without sawing down trees for more than 200 years. Its materials come from 100 percent recovered cotton, which requires fewer additives and has less waste. Instead of white fluffy cotton, Crane’s bales are still made from rags that often come from excess jean or T-shirt material—scraps from factories that might otherwise be sent to landfills. In fact, the company has won awards for its environmental policies.
“At the turn of the 19th century to the 20th, papermakers began to use wood pulp,” Lansing Crane says. “We didn’t and instead focused on being a cotton fiber paper specialist.”

In the Colonial days, rags were sorted by quality before they were cleaned. Then they were beaten to pulp, which was stored in a vessel with about 98 percent water and 2 percent fiber. After the liquid was extracted, the material was hand rolled and hung to dry on wood at the top of the mill. Sizing solution was then added to make the fibers hold ink.

While basic papermaking has not changed since 1801, modern machinery has. Today the cotton is immersed in water, and then sent to an electric beater that holds up to 5,000 gallons. There the fibers fray between the rotating steel blades and a lava bed plate.

The pulp determines the texture of the paper and how fine it will be for engraving. It goes into a mixture of about 99 percent water and 1 percent fiber before continuing onto a belt of wire mesh, which operates at several hundred feet per minute. Through gravity, the water is removed and recycled.

After the sizing, heated cylinders dry the paper again before it goes onto a roll at the end of the machine. From beginning to end, the sheet travels about a quarter of a mile before it is inspected.

The rough edges are trimmed, and envelopes are precisely cut and folded. Some will receive borders, while others are leafed in gold or silver by hand. The tensile of the cotton fibers in paper makes it ideal for foil embossing and engraving.

Since the 16th century, printers have engraved stationery and invitations, a process that allows them to imprint paper with beautiful handwriting and illustrations. At the Crane engraving plant, artists create the designs, and skilled workers blend the many hues.

Today, Crane & Company regularly engraves invitations and designs holiday greeting cards for the White House.

Making Money

Americans had no national currency until 1862 when banks began issuing dollars. During the Civil War, currency became uniform by being sent to one printer. By 1879, Crane had received its first agreement to make the notes for the U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing. It has since supplied the Federal Reserve Bank.

Today, Crane, along with the Secret Service, has become an international expert on counterfeiting. The U.S. Treasury has a watermark of Ben Franklin on the $100 banknotes made by Crane, a security feature that has been in practice since the 19th century. The watermarks, which are made when fibers are very moist, go through a “dandy roll,” or cylinder, with a pattern on it. They appear opaque when held up to a light.

A few years ago, bogus bills were made on letterpresses. “Today it is being done with PCs and cheap color printers and copiers,” says Tim Crane, the vice president of research, development and security technology. While there are more offenders now, there are fewer fakes per individual, he says.

In 1991, Crane introduced the metal polyester security strip. It was eventually adopted by the U.S. Bureau of Engraving, giving both an external and internal method of detecting false dollars. Since the new millennium, Crane has been looking into instituting holograms into its currency.

Though the Internet has changed the way money is exchanged, Crane knows the world still needs paper just as much as electronic transactions.

Patricia Bates wrote the November/December 2005 story on the yuletide letters of three early American presidents.

Milling Around

The paper trail for the American Revolution leads directly to the Crane Museum of Papermaking in an old stone mill along the Housatonic River in Dalton, Mass., near the Berkshire Mountains. An account book there records how Stephen Crane sold currency in December 1775 from his Liberty Paper Mill to Paul Revere to be engraved to finance the war.

Since 1879, Crane has been manufacturing the green stock for U.S. dollar bills. While the content now comes from blue denim jeans, rags have been important to the operation since the 18th century. On current exhibit is an 1801 advertisement urging “every woman, who has the good of her country, and the interest of her own family at heart” to donate her scraps for the new mill.

Housed in the former Rag Room, the Crane Museum has been open since the 1930s. On the National Register of Historic Places, the interior is distinguished by its “ship’s hull” architecture. With its oak rough-hewn beams, Colonial chandeliers, plank floors and wavy glass windows, it looks like the Old Ship Church in Hingham, Mass.

Crane has saved papers from the Revolution, such as a 1775 hand note that Paul Revere issued for 36 shillings “in defense of American Liberty.” In other displays, pictures of Stephen Crane’s son, Zenas, as well as equipment and tools from 1801 to 1831 can be viewed, along with a model of the original mill’s vat room. Among the stationery is an October 1886 invitation to a banquet for the French at the dedication of the Statue of Liberty.

The Crane Museum has limited hours from mid-June until October, opening from 1 to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Admission is free. The museum is located behind the headquarters for Crane & Company. For more information, call (413) 684–6481 or visit www.crane.com.
Workers gather in front of a section of the old Lukens mill, now part of the Lukens National Historic District in Coatesville, Pa.
Well-off, well-educated and well-occupied with a houseful of children, Rebecca Pennock Lukens filled her days with running a household, gardening, sewing and reading to her children, as her father and, later, her husband ran an iron mill on family land. The clang of metal against metal sounded near her front porch, and the heat from the furnace was within walking distance, but her world remained largely inside the four walls of the house.

Then that world shattered. When Lukens was 31, her life shifted from the typical domestic routine of most women of her class to a decidedly atypical lifestyle—running the iron mill. After her husband died suddenly in 1825, she took over the family ironworks, becoming the first female industrialist in the country. More than simply maintain the mill, she expanded business and turned the debt-laden mill into a stable, prominent enterprise that thrived under her leadership for 22 years.

LIFE BEFORE

Lukens hadn’t planned or wished for a life of breaking precedents or leading a business. Born in 1794, she’d been raised a Quaker in Chester County, Pa., and reaped the benefits of the Quaker appreciation of a woman’s intellectual abilities. She had studied math, accounting and chemistry at boarding school, and she’d learned cooking, sewing and quilting while helping to raise her eight siblings. It was a childhood well-suited for a future wife and mother.

Returning from boarding school, she searched for an intellectual challenge in the small town, and she focused on her father’s new effort to convert a sawmill into an iron mill. When he took her on a business trip to Philadelphia, she met her future husband, Charles Lukens, then a doctor. She married him in 1813 at the age of 19, and he left medicine to become a partner in her father’s mill in the Brandywine Valley, later taking over the mill himself. The learning curve she’d begun with her father continued with her husband.

“[T]he duties of the home were not so separate from those of the family business,” writes Virginia Drachman in Enterprising Women: 20 Years of American Business (University of North Carolina Press, 2002). “At every turn she was at her husband’s side. When he purchased new nail-making machines, he explained to her how nails were cut from the end of iron sheets. When he rebuilt the mill and installed a larger water wheel, she understood the mill was constantly breaking down and required an owner’s special care.”

Buoyed by a broad education and years of observing the day-to-day decision-making of the mill, Rebecca found herself uniquely qualified for the new set of responsibilities. But after the death of her husband, she felt she had no choice as to her next step.

In her autobiography she wrote: “Necessity is a stern taskmistress; and my every responsibility gave me courage. I had my promise made to my husband. I had my duty to my husband.”

The railroad building boom of the mid-1800s opened up new markets for iron and steel. Lukens Steel Company responded by providing boilerplates for riverboat companies in New Orleans and locomotives for the Pennsylvania Railroad and others. A 1865 sketch of the Lukens mill shows the Wilmington and Northern Railroad and Pennsylvania Railroad lines in the background.
In the beginning, the obstacles must have seemed daunting. A widow with five children—one born a month after her husband’s death—she’d inherited a difficult business. Along with political and cultural shifts, the ironworks and its future seemed on unstable ground from the moment she took over.

Her father’s will had been unclear, promising the mill to Rebecca but assigning immediate control to her mother, who wanted the mill to go to Rebecca’s brother instead. Rebecca, however, pushed back against her mother’s wishes and bravely faced the mounting challenges of ownership.

The mill itself was nearly bankrupt with a stockpile of bills and unfilled orders. Constantly requiring repairs and updates on equipment, the running of the mill was further complicated by transportation difficulties. Until the railroad came to the area in the 1830s, rivers and roads were the only way for Rebecca to export her product, and weather made both methods unreliable.

Shortly before his death, Charles had introduced a then-experimental rolled boilerplate process, the first of its kind in the country. Its uniqueness made the venture a questionable investment.

**MAKING IT WORK**

While Rebecca didn’t have much choice in the task facing her, she did have a choice in how she handled those responsibilities.

“While other women managed a family budget, she kept careful business records, accounting for the purchase of coal...
and iron, the repair of water wheels, and the sale of iron nails and boiler plate,” Drachman writes.

Her brother-in-law handled the daily mill operations, while Rebecca managed the commercial side of the business. She found men to loan her iron and charcoal on credit, and she set about filling backlogged orders and generating more.

“From everything we’ve heard, she invested in the right people and the right machinery,” says Scott G. Huston, a descendant of Rebecca Lukens and president of the Graystone Society, which focuses on historic preservation in Coatesville, Pa., the Lukens’ hometown.

And Rebecca knew the people she hired.

“When she wasn’t working, she’d sit on her front porch and watch everyone go by,” Huston explains. “In a lot of mills, you have individuals who were entrepreneurial, but not as involved with the workers. The family houses are right next to the mill—Rebecca was really out there herself. And even during down times she would keep everyone employed.”

Those down times offered the biggest test to her resolve.

“The difficulties of the times throw a gloom over everything,” Rebecca wrote to her cousin during the Panic of 1837. “All is paralyzed, business at a stand. I have as yet lost nothing but am in constant fear ... I have stopped rolling for a few weeks—and set my men to preparing the [mill] race, dam & heavy stock manufactured already. I ... shall take the first gleam of sunshine to resume.”

Mere survival marked success during that time.

“Like Washington at Valley Forge she held on in the early days when times were very difficult,” says Gene DiOrio, executive director of the Graystone Society. “By the Panic of 1837, she really maintained a strong hold when a lot of small businesses went under.”

THE BIG PICTURE

A changing America offered a dramatic backdrop to Rebecca’s struggle. Her husband’s gamble on the new technology proved to be prescient: He’d anticipated a reliance on steam power, and his boilerplates perfectly suited the high-pressure demands of steamships and trains. His decision left Rebecca at the cusp of a new era in America, and her own vision matched and complemented her husband’s original foresight.

“Her husband saw the future,” DiOrio says. “But with the railroad during the 1830s, Rebecca saw an opportunity for much wider marketing, and she sold plates to many firms in other places, including Mississippi and New Orleans.”

Her business flourished with the fundamental shifts to the country’s economy instead of being crushed by them. With the railroad and improved transportation, “local markets integrated with national and even international ones, methods of finance and credit became more specialized, and machine power gradually replaced muscle power,” writes Angel Kwolek-Folland in Incorporating Women (Twayne Publishers, 1998).

In A Woman in Steel—Rebecca Lukens, 1794–1854 (Princeton University Press, 1940), Robert Wolcott recounts a story of Rebecca posing the possibility of a railroad across the Chester Valley. When her uncle asked her how she would “span that chasm,” she responded, “By a high bridge, of course.”

“This was spoken prophetically in days when small stone bridges over narrow streams were considered engineering feats—in stagecoach days,” Wolcott writes.

That high bridge became a reality in 1833. When the first train passed over the bridge in 1834, the market for Lukens Steel expanded, compared to the 50- to 75-mile radius road transportation had offered.

RETIREMENT

Rebecca paid off debts and turned the mill into a profitable venture less than 10 years after taking over operations. The 1830s saw Lukens as a leading figure in the flourishing iron industry—and the only woman of the 12 iron manufacturers in the country. She retired in 1847 at age 53, passing control of the business to her son-in-law.

“Rebecca can’t vote and has five kids to raise, yet she decides she will do this for herself and her family and the community,” Scott Huston says. “She was instrumental to the success of the whole community.”

The November/December 2006 issue featured Gin Phillips’ story on the early American lace industry run by the women of Ipswich, Mass.
PUPPET OR PATRIOT?

The Trial of

JOHN PETER ZENGER

By Kim Hill
Ask most Americans today to identify John Peter Zenger, and you'll likely get blank looks. Perhaps that's only fitting, as Zenger wasn't wealthy or important in his own time. Yet Zenger and his libel trial are synonymous with the development of a free press in this country. Zenger wasn't a journalist or a lawyer. He wasn't a member of the ruling classes. He was a printer, a German immigrant, who had six children and a wife to support. He was also the right man in the right place at the right time. Zenger's trial in 1735 served as a catalyst for trials by jury and for the foundation of a free and open press in the United States. At the time, most colonists didn't recognize the significance of the verdict—perhaps least of all Zenger himself.

PARTISAN POLITICS

The roots of the Zenger trial had little to do with freedom of the press, however, and everything to do with political control of the New York Colony. A new governor, William Cosby, had arrived in the colony in 1731. Historians describe Cosby as spiteful, greedy, mean-spirited and jealous. His brief military training hadn't done much more than teach him "an affection for petty tyranny," writes William Lowell Putnam in *John Peter Zenger and the Fundamental Freedom* (McFarland & Co., 1997). During the six months it took Cosby to get to New York, Rip Van Dam, a senior member of the provincial council, served as governor. The 72-year-old Van Dam had been a member of the council for nearly 30 years and was well regarded in local politics.

Cosby got off on the wrong foot almost immediately. Upon his arrival in New York, he demanded a pay raise and half of the salary Van Dam had received as interim governor. Cosby got the pay raise, but Van Dam refused to part with the salary. "He told Cosby he was offended by both his venality and his thanklessness and would give him not so much as a penny," writes historian Eric Burns in *Infamous Scribblers* (Public Affairs Press, 2006).

Cosby then sued Van Dam and ordered the Colony's Supreme Court, with Chief Justice Lewis Morris as its head, to rule favorably in his behalf. Morris ruled against him, and Cosby removed Morris from the court.

Morris sought revenge, but he needed a public outlet—something that would let every colonist know of Cosby's pettiness and corruption. At that time, William Bradford published New York's only newspaper, the *Gazette*. Bradford also received all of the Colonial government's printing business. "Bradford would never print criticism of Cosby in his Gazette because it would endanger his status as the colony's official printer, which amounted to a government subsidy," says David Copeland, author of *Debating the Issues in Colonial Newspapers* (Greenwood Press, 2000). Morris and his cronies needed a different venue. New York soon became a two-newspaper city when the Morris camp financed the *New-York Weekly Journal* published by John Peter Zenger, the only other printer in the Colony.
POWER OF THE PRESS

Morris and other influential men, including lawyers James Alexander and William Smith, used the pages of the Weekly Journal to sway public opinion against Cosby. “Zenger set the type and printed the pages, but Alexander and Smith wrote the articles and essays,” says Copeland, author of numerous works on the Zenger trial.

In the second and third issues of the Weekly Journal, Alexander and Smith included an essay about freedom of the press. When newspaper articles focused on political controversy, printers in the 18th century ran accompanying essays about press freedom and basic rights to protect themselves from libel suits. This was not always successful, as Zenger would soon learn.

Many of the articles attacking Cosby did not even mention him by name, but there was no mistaking the target. The Weekly Journal told of instances in which Cosby had openly violated the law. A series of unsigned letters in the newspaper—a common 18th-century practice to protect the writers—suggested Cosby was stealing public funds, and called Cosby and his henchmen “monkeys” and “spaniels.”

Cosby refused to tolerate such insolence. In November 1734, he ordered all copies of four issues of the paper confiscated and destroyed in public. The Weekly Journal struck back, declaring the next week that “only the wicked Governors of Men dread what is said of them.”

Incensed, Cosby had Zenger arrested on charges of seditious libel, which meant that he printed material that undermined the authority of the government. At that time, British law considered any criticism of the government—whether true or false—a criminal act. Some sources cite Zenger’s bail at 400 pounds, although it may have been as much as 800 pounds. “Either way, it’s safe to say that the amount of bail was quite high for the time,” says Jeffrey McCall, professor of communication at DePauw University.

Zenger could not fathom raising that kind of money. It was a pittance for his wealthy backers, who used Zenger’s incarceration to their advantage. “A jailed printer created more sympathy for the cause and more dislike for the governor,” Copeland says. “I don’t know if Zenger protested [being left in jail], but he probably didn’t particularly like it.”

Zenger remained in prison for eight months. Alexander and others continued to write articles about Cosby and Zenger’s wife, Anna, resumed publishing the paper, missing only one issue. The governor had won a battle, but would he win the war of words?

THE TRUTH AS DEFENSE

Although Zenger’s backers left him in jail, they didn’t leave him high and dry. Alexander and Smith represented him; their first acts were to ask that the presiding judges—both staunch Cosby supporters—remove themselves from the case.

Judge James DeLancey said the lawyers’ request was an insult to his integrity, threw them out of court and even had them disbarred.

Alexander and Smith eventually arranged for a celebrity lawyer for Zenger. A few days into the trial in August 1735, the man who was arguably the most famous practicing attorney in the Colonies announced he was taking over the defense. Andrew Hamilton of Philadelphia, 59 years old, was also a “bench”—the equivalent of a bar examiner—in the British law school system. He was the only such person in the Colonies.

Hamilton said his client had indeed printed the allegedly libelous materials in the Weekly Journal. Zenger’s friends and supporters surely thought his lawyer had just lost the case. At that time, the law did not permit truth to be used as a defense for libel.

For a number of years, however, people had been arguing that truth of statements nullified libel charges, Copeland says. In the Zenger trial, Hamilton argued that truth must be a defense against libel. “Truth had to be served regardless of the repercussions and regardless of whether the person who felt the repercussions was a governor or a smithy, a throne-sitter or a weaver,” Eric Burns writes. Equally important, Hamilton also argued that a jury, not a judge, should decide if material was libelous.

Deliberating only about 10 minutes, the jury returned with a verdict of not guilty. Shouts of “huzzas” and cheers resounded from the spectators, who retired to the Black Horse Tavern to congratulate Hamilton. Zenger was freed the next morning and returned to publishing the Weekly Journal.

‘GERM OF AMERICAN FREEDOM’

The Zenger trial had an impact on the development of a free press in the Colonies but not in an immediate or dramatic fashion. “No one in the Revolutionary era shouted the name of Zenger as part of their attacks on British taxes or rules,” Copeland says. Curiously, most newspapers made no comment at all about the Zenger trial in the first years after the verdict.

As history unfolded, however, the influence of the Zenger verdict became apparent. Jury trials became the norm in libel cases brought by government officials. Some printers had already been speaking their minds more openly, but others grew bolder. “Papers ran afoul of...
LEFT TO RIGHT: The November 12, 1733 issue of the New-York Weekly Journal featured Zenger’s essay extolling the importance of the “Liberty of the Press.” The August 18, 1735 issue, published following the trial, announced the vindication of a free press.

authorities in Boston, Charleston and New York,” Copeland says. “After the Zenger trial, Colonial governments never had any success in silencing commentary in papers, though they tried.”

Was Zenger merely a puppet for powerful politicos who sought Cosby’s removal for their own gains? Or was he one of the first Patriots—a hero standing on principle who would soon influence the very Founding Fathers of the republic?

The answer is both. “Zenger was a mechanic,” Copeland says. “His English was not particularly good, but he knew the repercussions of what might happen to him. He was a puppet in many ways. It took guts to do what he did.”

Yet the Zenger verdict became part of the American consciousness. “After the Zenger trial, independence was in the air, however tentatively,” Burns writes. And as members of the first Congress debated the proposed Bill of Rights some 50 years later, one of the Constitution’s drafters would write: “The trial of Zenger in 1735 was the germ of American freedom, the morning star of that liberty which subsequently revolutionized America.”

The author of this passage was none other than Gouverneur Morris, the great-grandson of Lewis Morris, whose removal from the New York Supreme Court put the events leading to Zenger’s trial in motion.

Kim Hill is a freelance writer in Gilbert, Ariz.
if these walls could talk
TWO HISTORIC HOMES, the Governor Joseph Duncan House in Jacksonville and the Colonel Benjamin Stephenson House in Edwardsville, share a common role. Both of the Federal-style homes hosted some of the earliest political leaders in the Illinois Territory, and each now provides visitors with a glimpse into the cultural and political fabric of the era.

By Nancy Mann Jackson
CLOCKWISE: Elizabeth Duncan’s piano is a focal point for the home’s second floor music room. - A military campaign desk commemorates Governor Joseph Duncan’s time as major general of the Illinois state militia. - The cabinet was made for the Duncans and contains photos, documents, and other memorabilia. - Gov. Duncan’s mahogany poster bed was custom made by Sam Anderson, a local cabinetmaker. - The antique clock belonged to the Duncan family.
Kentucky native, Joseph Duncan moved to Illinois in 1818 and settled in Jackson County, where he became a justice of the peace in 1821. The following year, he was appointed major general of the state militia, and he served as a member of the Illinois Senate from 1824 to 1826. While in the Illinois Senate, Duncan authored a law providing the first establishment of a common school, a concept that was later adopted by other states and formed the foundation for today's public-school system.

In 1827, Duncan was elected to the U.S. Congress, where he served three consecutive terms. While in Congress, Duncan attended a dinner party for President John Quincy Adams at the White House. There he met Elizabeth Caldwell Smith, the granddaughter of Reverend James Caldwell, a Revolutionary War hero nicknamed "the Fighting Parson of New Jersey." After a brief courtship, the couple married in 1828 and settled in Jacksonville in 1830. While Duncan was a congressman, he and his wife traveled to and from Washington until he was elected governor in 1834.

In 1834, the Governor Joseph Duncan House in Jacksonville, Ill., served as the official governor's mansion from 1834 to 1838. It is the only standing structure in Illinois, outside of Springfield that served in this capacity. As governor, Duncan led the movement to build a canal connecting the Illinois River to Lake Michigan. Construction on the Illinois and Michigan Canal, a National Historic Landmark, started in 1836 and was completed in 1848, four years after Duncan's death. It formed the first cross-continental waterway connection between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River and instantly connected New York and New Orleans. The canal transformed Chicago from a frontier outpost settlement to an important transportation hub between the eastern United States and the developing Midwest.

During his term in office, Duncan invited into his home other politicos, such as Daniel Webster, William Jennings Bryan and Colonel John J. Hardin. The Federal-style mansion where these leaders gathered was known as Elm Grove. The house spans three stories, includes 17 rooms and is now owned and operated by the local Reverend James Caldwell Chapter, Jacksonville, Ill., which is named for Elizabeth Duncan's grandfather. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1971, it has been fully restored and contains many original Duncan family furnishings.

"The chapter purchased the house in 1920, and it has been an ongoing effort for the chapter to maintain a mansion and meet their obligations to NSDAR," says Loretta Widdows, director of the Duncan House. "They have been very successful in this endeavor. The chapter and the Governor Duncan Association, a support group, continue to seek funding for ongoing restoration."

The mansion, for instance, is currently undergoing a $400,000 restoration funded by gifts, grants and community support.

While the local DAR chapter has owned and maintained the home for almost a century, the Duncan House has another important connection to the National Society: Ellen Hardin Walworth, one of the NSDAR founders, was the best friend of the governor's daughter, Mary Duncan Putnam, and played in the mansion as a child. Even after Mrs. Walworth moved to New York and founded the National Society, she and Putnam remained lifelong friends.

Today, the home where the two girls played as children looks much like it did then. The exterior of the house was modeled after the exterior of the Duncan Tavern, which was Duncan's boyhood home in Paris, Ky. The plan for the interior of the home was based on the house of Elizabeth Duncan's sister, the Matthew and Anna St. Clair Clarke House, which is now called the Ashburton House and is located in the Lafayette Square National Historic District of Washington, D.C.

"There are still many Duncan family items in the mansion," Widdows says. "A local craftsman built a sideboard, a huge bookcase, a mahogany four-poster bed and a round table for the family. They are magnificent pieces of furniture. We have a beautiful oil painting of the governor that was painted in 1840 in New York City, and we also have a picture of Mrs. Duncan."

Along with the original furnishings, the DAR has a number of diaries belonging to Duncan family members that offer a glimpse into the day-to-day life in the home. "Mrs. Duncan writes about placing a cake on the outside steps to cool—and the wolves licking the icing off of the cake," Widdows says. "She also tells about being disgruntled with the governor; he would pick her up and place her on the fireplace mantel until a servant would lift her down."

At 4 feet, 5 inches tall, Mrs. Duncan had no problem fitting on the mantel. The home's walnut staircase was also built with short risers to accommodate her small frame. "We have a stick to show all the visiting children how tall Mrs. Duncan was," Widdows says. "That's the main thing they remember when they leave."

After the governor's death in 1844, his wife, son and six daughters remained in the home for about 20 years. From 1865 to 1876, the home served as a groundbreaking public school for mentally handicapped children. In 1882, Governor Duncan's daughter, Julia, and her husband, Judge Edward Kirby, moved into the house. After Julia died in 1896, the home remained under the ownership of Judge Kirby until his death in 1917.

In 1920, the local DAR chapter purchased the home from Kirby's widow, Lucinda Kirby. In addition to preserving and maintaining a local historic treasure, the chapter uses the home as a meeting location. It also serves as a meeting place for other historical organizations, a museum, the focal point for local schools in their study of Illinois history and a tourism stop for Jacksonville.
Born in Pennsylvania, Benjamin Stephenson lived in Virginia as a young man and arrived in Illinois soon after the territory opened up to settlers. His good friend Ninian Edwards, the first territorial governor, promptly appointed Stephenson as the sheriff of Randolph County.

“He worked closely with the governor to develop the laws of the territory,” says Roxanne Raisner, director of the Stephenson House Museum in Edwardsville, Ill. “He governed the area until the population reached a level for them to install a territorial legislature.”

Stephenson left his home in the Illinois Territory to serve as a colonel in the Illinois militia during the War of 1812. Upon his return, he became the territorial representative to the U.S. House of Representatives, where he made some of his most important contributions.

“We try to do a hands-on approach to history ... a feel of what life was like for this 19th-century household.”

In 1816, Stephenson was offered the job of managing the federal land office in Edwardsville. Because the Illinois Territory stretched all the way to the Canadian border, Stephenson’s land office was the busiest in the country.

“Anyone who wanted to purchase land in Illinois had to come here to do it,” Raisner says. Stephenson served as a representative to the convention that produced the first constitution for the state of Illinois in 1818, and he continued to run the land office until 1822.

Stephenson’s Federal-style home, built in 1820, is the oldest brick home in the county and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. According to the Illinois State Historic Preservation Agency, the Stephenson home is one of only a handful of Illinois homes still remaining from this early American period.
OPPOSITE PAGE: The restored 1820 Col. Benjamin Stephenson House in Edwardsville, Ill., gives visitors a glimpse into the cultural and political fabric of the era. THIS PAGE. CLOCKWISE, A formal garden features historic varieties of roses. A panel window shows the intricate design in the Federal-style home. Period furnishings and historical wallpaper in the dining room and children's room take guests back in time. The stairway, one of the house's most interesting features, was completely reconstructed during the restoration.
After Stephenson died in 1822, his wife Lucy lived in the home until 1834. She and her family maintained Stephenson’s close friendship with Governor Ninian Edwards’ family. In fact, when fire destroyed the Edwards’ house, the family moved into the Stephensons’ home for a short time. After Lucy moved out of the house, the home went through a variety of owners. In 1999, it was serving as a fraternity house when Illinois Senator Evelyn Bowles contacted the local historic preservation organization to find out if the group had any wish-list projects that she could help fund with that year’s budget surplus. The Stephenson House topped the list.

“The preservation society convinced the city that the house needed to be preserved,” Raisner says. “The state gave $500,000 toward the purchase and restoration of the house, and everything has been accomplished through grants and local donations. The Edwardsville-Drusilla Chapter, Edwardsville, Ill., gave the first public donation, and Chapter Regent Elizabeth Edwards serves on the board.”

The city of Edwardsville purchased the house for $150,000 and began restoration in 2000. “Many things had been changed over the years,” Raisner says. “During the Victorian period, doorways had been widened, which had damaged the structure of the building, and the floors had termite damage, so the house had to be gutted. The brick had been painted white, so the paint had to be removed without damaging the brick.”

With the help of old photographs and Jack Luer, a restoration architect specializing in historic homes, organizers worked to recreate the house exactly as it would have looked in 1820. An outdoor kitchen was built, and restorers are considering building a wash house, a common addition in a home like Stephenson’s.

Because Stephenson’s family was left with debt after his death, they were forced to auction many of their belongings. With no original pieces from the home left, restorers spent six years searching for period furnishings to replicate the recorded inventory of the home’s items. Scouring auctions, antique stores and eBay, the Stephenson House Acquisitions Committee wanted to create the same setting the home had while the Stephensons lived there. In fact, the committee purchased only items that originated in areas where the Stephenson family lived to ensure they would resemble items they would have purchased. For instance, the master bedroom features an acanthus leaf bed rather than a tobacco leaf bed—which was more popular during the time period—because records show that the Stephensons’ bed was engraved with acanthus leaf.

Restoration work finished in early 2006, and the home opened to visitors in March. “We try to do a hands-on approach to history, we don’t just do a furniture tour,” Raisner says. “We try to give a feel of what life was like for this household and allow people to experience history, touching things and tasting things.”

Docents dress in period clothing, and the home is alive with the sounds and smells of everyday life in the 19th century. “We have a working kitchen, and people are always in there cooking, making candles or doing laundry, undertaking tasks that would have been necessary to run this house,” Raisner says. “Occasionally, we have people who role-play as Benjamin Stephenson or Ninian Edwards. It’s an authentic experience.”

Nancy Mann Jackson’s November/December 2006 story covered a fashion design firm that uses traditional hand-stitching methods.
In the summer of 1817, an 8-year-old black girl named Mary sat on a schooner in New York Harbor, her life about to change forever. Just days before, she had been living in Poughkeepsie, working as an indentured servant for a white family and looking forward to the freedom she would receive in several years under state law. That was until a band of slave catchers kidnapped her, along with five other blacks. The kidnappers took the group down the Hudson River by boat, then ordered them aboard a schooner. Mary and the others were about to sail South where they would be sold into slavery.
Fortunately, members of the New York Manumission Society were watching. Samuel Kelley, a society member from Poughkeepsie, noticed the slave catchers and called an emergency meeting to stop them. The society hired officers to storm the schooner and rescue the captives. The kidnappers went to jail, while Mary and her fellow captives received their freedom early through the courts.

This incident was one of the many injustices from which the New York Manumission Society sought to save blacks in early America. Originally formed to protect free blacks in New York, the society also adopted the lofty mission of abolishing slavery in the state and educating and enlightening children of slaves who had grown up in a culture of degradation and shame. At the helm of the society were two Founding Fathers and unabashed abolitionists, John Jay and Alexander Hamilton. What these men couldn’t accomplish in Congress, due to their efforts to promote sectional unity in the nation and ratification of the Constitution, they achieved with some success in their home state.

**Slavery in New York**

Before the Revolution, New York City had more slaves than any city in Colonial America besides Charleston, S.C. Slaves accounted for 20 percent of the population, as opposed to 2 percent in Boston and 6 percent in Philadelphia. After the Revolution, the population of free blacks in New York grew, eventually outnumbering the slave population by 3 to 1—a phenomenon that happened for several reasons.

As the war came to a close, the British, hoping to incite slave revolts, offered liberty to blacks who escaped and crossed their lines. New York countered by offering blacks freedom in exchange for serving three years in the militia or Continental Army. The revolutionary ideals for which Americans fought also caused more colonists to view slavery as a violation of human rights. In addition, as the labor market expanded and wages dropped after the Revolution, the cost of maintaining slaves became less profitable for some.

It became common for slaves in New York to bargain with masters and prospective buyers for their freedom, creating a culture of indentured servitude. For this reason, slaves who escaped from their masters would often come to New York where they could blend with free blacks. Slave catchers also traveled north to take advantage of this situation.

“They would grab any person of color they saw and claim them as their own,” says Kathleen Hulser, a public historian at the New-York Historical Society.

These slave catchers would take the blacks they kidnapped back down south to sell. Charles C. Andrews, who wrote a brief history of the Manumission Society in 1830 after interviewing one of its last surviving founders, describes the practice as “being carried on in this city and its vicinity to an alarming extent ... the measures pursued by the man-stealers were too bold and daring, either to be mistaken, or to pass without corrective.”

**Founding the Society**

By 1785, these street prowlers became so prevalent that state and city leaders knew they had to stop them. Several meetings were called to address the issue, and after much discussion, the men decided to form a society similar to one they had heard about in Philadelphia to protect free blacks from kidnappers and work toward winning freedom for those still held in bondage. No one knows exactly what was said at these meetings, but the rhetoric was inspirational, according to Andrews.

Andrews writes that “the discussions, which took place, at these meetings, gave occasion for a greater display of eloquence, to the exercise, of more manly and noble feelings, than are often witnessed or felt.”

Thus, the Manumission Society was born, adopting the formal name of “The New-York Society for promoting the Manumission of Slaves, and protecting such of them as have been or may be liberated.”

**The Men**

Most of the men who founded or later joined the group were from the upper echelon of New York society; the organization
consisted of church leaders, wealthy merchants, lawyers, political scholars and American Revolution veterans.

“Patriotism based on wartime service united them, and a sense of civic duty motivated at least some of them,” Hulser says.

Society member E.H. Smith, for example, criticized slavery’s defenders as “deserters from the cause of the Revolution.” He also depicted slavery as a characteristic of barbarous civilizations “of the rude edges of the world.”

Religious conviction prompted some to join, particularly those from denominational sects that condemned slaveholding. About half of the membership consisted of Quakers, including prominent ones like publisher Samuel Wood, who wrote a children’s book that promoted the dignity of occupations like street peddling and incorporated illustrations of both black and white sellers.

George Clinton, governor of New York at the time, was a founding member, as was John Murray Jr., a leading merchant and director of the Bank of New York. But far, the most well-known members were men who not only signed the Constitution, but also helped lead and shape the United States in its infancy: Alexander Hamilton and John Jay.

Hamilton, who authored the Federalist papers, founded the bank system and eventually became the first U.S. Treasury Secretary, was a key member. Throughout his public life, Hamilton made no secret of his abhorrence of slavery and its existence in the United States, “though at times he let the question slide as did all the Founders,” wrote Richard Brookhiser in Alexander Hamilton, American (Free Press, 2000).

Growing up in the West Indies, where slaves outnumbered free men by 12 to 1, Hamilton had witnessed the cruelty of slavery firsthand. As an illegitimate child who worked his way out of poverty, he knew what it was like to live in shame and be judged by his background instead of his capabilities. Hamilton was sympathetic to the discrimination blacks suffered and pushed economic policies that sought to end the country’s dependence on agriculture and, by extension, slavery.

John Jay, former president of the Continental Congress who went on to become the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, served as the society’s first chairman. Though Jay’s father was one of the largest slave owners in New York, and Jay himself owned a handful of slaves, he never could reconcile the practice with his conscience and advocated abolishing slavery gradually in New York as well as subsidizing black education.

The Mission

These illustrious members established the society with a two-pronged mission in mind: to protect free blacks from being re-enslaved and facing further discrimination and to lobby the state legislature for the abolition of slavery in New York. Using their influence in the community and the courts, they launched a vast campaign against slavery, sponsoring lectures, printing essays, organizing boycotts and establishing a registry to prevent free blacks from being dragged back into bondage.

Not only did they defend free men from accusations of being runaways, they pursued cases on behalf of blacks still enslaved.

“They saw part of their mission as protecting people from abuses that resulted from having slavery exist as a system in different states with different laws,” Hulser says. “They represented slaves who were beaten or harshly punished or masters who broke agreements with slaves whom they had promised to set free.”

Records show that though Hamilton didn’t attend a lot of the meetings, he took some of these cases and wrote many of the society’s legal briefs, Hulser says. Despite winning a fair amount of cases, it would take the society nearly 20 years and many legislative efforts for their philosophies to translate into law.

One of the society’s first actions was to petition the New York Assembly for passage of a bill proposing that all blacks born after a certain date be considered free. The society enlisted the help of Aaron Burr, also a society member, in toughening the legislation by introducing language that would terminate all slavery after a certain date. The amendment was defeated, and in the end, a diluted bill passed permitting slaveholders to voluntarily free slaves between 21 and 50 years old.

In 1786, the society again lobbied the legislature, this time to halt the export of slaves from New York, a measure that eventually passed. Hamilton headed up a contingent of society members who bombarded federal and state legislators with pamphlets entitled “A Dialogue on the Slavery of the Africans etc...” and a petition demanding termination of a practice “so repugnant to humanity and so inconsistent with the liberty and justice which should distinguish a free and enlightened people.”

In keeping with their objective to promote the welfare of recently freed slaves, society members also instituted the New-York African Free School in 1787.
“They knew that the first thing a person moving from slavery to freedom needed was an education and a chance to get started,” Hulser says.

The school recruited students from black families in the community, some of whom were slaves, and instructed them in reading, writing, geography, science and social skills. A female teacher was hired to teach needlepoint to the girls. Classes grew quickly, reaching nearly 56 students by 1788, and it wasn’t long before the trustees had to search for another building.

Jay, who once described education as “the soul of the republic,” was one of the school’s biggest supporters. Records show that he gave money for its operation and attended its graduation ceremonies every year, Hulser says.

The African Free School developed such a good reputation in the city that trustees urged state and federal officials to visit in the hopes that what they saw would sway their views on slavery and prove that blacks weren’t inferior in intelligence or capabilities. Once students graduated, the society tried to provide them with humile yet steady work through apprenticeships in shops, stables or domestic service, an effort that wasn’t always successful.

“The numbers of African-American bakers, butchers and carpenters declined as slavery ended, and white guilds and artisans excluded the free people,” Hulser says. “The Manumission Society even implored artisans to take on black apprentices—largely without success.”

The Contradictions

Perhaps the biggest criticism that the society received was that more than half of its members owned slaves. Hamilton recognized this contradiction, and he proposed early on that members be required to give up their slaves. He even gave them a timeline, urging immediate freedom for slaves over 45 years old and gradual freedom for younger ones.


Members deferred the issue to the next meeting and, shortly afterwards, disbanded the committee. While they agreed on the need to rid society of slavery, which many considered a moral corruption, their ideas about how and at what pace to do this differed. While most of the slaveholders in the group showed an intention to emancipate their slaves, they wanted to do it as they saw fit.

They had a set of rationales for this, according to Hulser. Some wanted to emancipate slaves slowly to help them make a gradual transition to freedom and develop “civilized” ways. Some viewed emancipation as a right that slaves earned when they demonstrated good character by going to church or showed motivation by doing a good job or learning new skills. Others were reluctant to free older slaves who had been with them for their whole lives.

Jay tried to justify his reasons for keeping his slaves, stating that “I purchase slaves and manumit them at proper ages when their faithful services should have afforded a reasonable retribution.”

The rationalization angered some in the group, causing tension between the Quaker and non-Quaker members. The African Free School, as noble as its cause was, also had some contradictory elements.

“There are records that trustees recruited only children from families with good character, so it wasn’t like the school provided universal education for a population born into slavery,” Hulser says.

The Achievements

Despite some speculation about its motives, historians still consider the New York Manumission Society one of the most influential and effective antislavery groups in early America. Its legislative efforts eventually resulted in a 1799 law abolishing slavery in New York, a measure that Jay largely authored and then signed as New York governor.

The law provided for gradual emancipation with extended apprenticeships, allowing owners to be able to extract the value of their slave from a lengthy period of service. Children born after July 4, 1799 were considered free, but were required to serve the masters of their parents until their mid-20s, receiving payment at the end. The law also required all slaves to be set free by 1827, though some never received their freedom due to a provision requiring masters to financially support slaves above a certain age.

“If the slaves were too old to work, their masters were required to take care of them for the rest of their lives,” Hulser says. “Some were never freed as a result.”

The society was most successful on the education front. By the time slavery ended in New York, the African Free School had grown to encompass more than 700 pupils, and many of its graduates went on to become leaders in the black community and the 19th-century abolition movement.

Most importantly, the society succeeded at its original mission—protecting the freedom of free blacks. Overall, it rescued 292 free men and women from being sold back into slavery, according to Charles C. Andrews’ account.

Though it would be a century and a half more before African-Americans throughout the country would realize Jay’s dream of a time “when all our inhabitants of every colour and denomination shall be free and equal partakers of our political liberty,” the Manumission Society and the activism of Hamilton, Jay and other early American leaders represented one of the first steps in making that a reality. ☛

Emily McMackin is a contributing editor. She took readers on family pilgrimages for the July/August 2006 issue.
A floor lamp that spreads sunshine all over a room, and pays for itself!

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Ever since the first human went into a dark cave and built a fire, people have realized the importance of proper indoor lighting. Unfortunately, since Edison invented the light bulb, lighting technology has remained relatively prehistoric. Modern light fixtures do little to combat many symptoms of improper lighting, such as eyestrain, dryness or burning. As more and more of us spend longer hours in front of a computer monitor, the results are compounded...and the effects of indoor lighting are not necessarily limited to physical well-being. Many people believe that the quantity and quality of light can play a part in one's mood and work performance. Now there's a better way to bring the positive benefits associated with natural sunlight indoors.

The Balanced Spectrum® floor lamp will change the way you see and feel about your living or work spaces. Studies show that sunshine can lift your mood and your energy levels. But as we all know, the sun, unfortunately, does not always shine. So, to bring the benefits of natural daylight indoors, use the floor lamp that simulates the full spectrum of daylight. You will see with more clarity and enjoyment as this lamp provides sharp visibility for close tasks and reduces eyestrain.

Its 27-watt compact bulb is equivalent to a 150-watt ordinary light bulb. This makes it perfect for activities such as reading, writing, sewing, needlepoint, and especially for aging eyes.

Experience sunshine indoors at the touch-of-a-switch. This amazing lamp is easy on the eyes and easy on the hands. It features a special "soft-touch, flicker-free" rocker switch that’s easier to use than traditional toggle or twist switches. Its flexible gooseneck design enables you to get light where you need it most. The high-tech electronics, user-friendly design, and bulb that lasts 10 times longer than an incandescent bulb make this lamp a must-have.

**SAVE $77 over the life of one Balanced Spectrum® bulb!**
A 150-watt incandescent bulb uses $0.013 per hour in energy cost. The Balanced Spectrum® bulb uses an average of 70% less energy which saves you $0.009 per hour. Based on 8,000 hours bulb life, the Balanced Spectrum® bulb will save $72 in energy cost. Plus, because the Balanced Spectrum® bulb lasts 10 times longer than an incandescent bulb priced at an average of $0.50, an additional $5 savings is realized.

**Source:** "Lighting the Way to Energy Savings"; 1999

Try the Balanced Spectrum® floor lamp for the best value ever! Now more than ever is the time to add sunshine to every room in your home at this fantastic low price! The Balanced Spectrum® floor lamp comes with firstSTREET’s exclusive guarantee. Try this lamp for 90 days and return it for the product purchase price if not completely satisfied.

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As soon as I turned on the lamp and began to read the newspaper I could see the wonderful difference. This lamp is just what I needed. Thank you so much.”

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