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BY NADINE GOFF

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From the President General

Our cover image of a chair exhibits the simple beauty and clean lines of Shaker furniture design. Honoring the memory of the Shakers is the focus of ongoing efforts at the Mount Lebanon Shaker Village in New Lebanon, N.Y., near the Massachusetts border. Preservationists are working to bring the site of America’s most prominent and influential Shaker community back to life. The slow but steady restoration of the buildings there, which has been in progress for several years, will also eventually bring the Shaker Museum and Library in nearby Old Chatham, N.Y., to its rightful home.

German settlers in early America didn’t initially select Waldoboro, Maine, then known as Broad Bay and part of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, as their home. But once recruited by land speculator Samuel Waldo, they turned it into perhaps the most significant Colonial settlement of Germans in New England. The unusual and often tragic story of these hearty pioneers broke the mold of New England settlements and left a distinctive imprint on the region that can still be seen today.

Since genealogy research is our forte, DAR has been eager to track the growing trend of genetic testing. Although the National Society does not accept DNA results as genealogical records for membership (our article explains why), members have wondered what certain genetic tests could tell them about their family backgrounds. With this trend in mind, American Spirit Editor in Chief Denise Doring VanBuren invited fellow members of the Melzingah Chapter, Beacon, N.Y., to join her in having their DNA tested. The seven participants discovered a new world of information about their ancestry in the process.

Before the Revolution, Colonies sometimes went to war to protect their borders from each other, sometimes even resorting to violence against their fellow colonists. Perhaps these inter-Colony disputes aren’t surprising, but the fact that some states are still keeping these old grudges alive makes for an intriguing story.

Who isn’t fascinated by the feats of Deborah Sampson Gannett, the subject of the Our Patriots feature? Deborah Sampson disguised herself in men’s clothing to join the Continental Army, enlisted under a man’s name, and served for 17 months, during which she was involved in several skirmishes and wounded twice. Only after she was hospitalized in Philadelphia was her disguise discovered. She later went on to wage a persistent and successful public campaign for the benefits she believed were her due.

Speaking of fascinating, I’m inspired by Di anette Wells, this issue’s featured Daughter. She recently conquered Mount Everest—and plans to do so again on her quest to be the fastest woman to climb the Seven Summits.

Linda Gist Calvin
1998, Dianette Wells got 10 of her girl-friends together for a day hike up Mount Whitney, a mountain Ms. Wells had driven past many times in her home state of California. The hike was supposed to be just a fun excursion with the girls, but the moment she reached the top of the mountain it turned into so much more. “My first thought was ‘What’s next?’” Ms. Wells recalls. “It was so exhilarating.”

The next year, she climbed Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest peak in Africa. In 2003, she set out to climb the Seven Summits—the highest mountains on each of the seven continents. She accomplished that goal last summer when she summited Mount Everest, the world’s tallest mountain.

“At the top, you feel like you’re in some other world,” she says of standing on the peak of Mount Everest, which soars above the border of Nepal and Tibet. “It’s like you’re in God’s playground and really lucky to be there.”

After snapping a few photos (including one of her with a flag given by fellow Daughters of the Malibu Chapter, Malibu, Calif.), it was suddenly time to go. “It doesn’t last long,” she says. “I was on the summit for an hour, then we ran down. We were back to the high camp (26,000 feet) in two and a half hours.”

While climbing the other famous summits of the world can take between a week and four weeks, reaching the top of Mount Everest takes two months, due to weather conditions and strong winds that can keep climbers in their tents for days at a time.

“The entire process of reaching the summit is hurry up and wait,” Ms. Wells explains. “Summiting was a huge relief.”

She attempted to reach the top in 2005, but after two months on the mountain and the summit nowhere in sight, she had to turn back. “When I left my kids, I told them I’d be home in two months, and I wanted to keep my promise to them,” she says.

Ms. Wells admits that being a mom of three makes her extreme hobby difficult at times. “When you’re on the mountain, all you want is to be home with your kids, but when you’re home with your kids, you dream of being on a mountain,” she says. “Both pull so heavily on me.”

Fortunately, she’s found three new climbing buddies in her children. As Ms. Wells was coming down Everest, she ran into oldest daughter Brianna, 18, who has climbed Mount Kilimanjaro and was in Nepal to meet her mom. “I knew she’d be there, but I didn’t know when or where I would see her,” she says. “I left messages for her at all the tea-houses on the way to base camp. I told people if you see this little blond girl, tell her that her mother’s coming.”

Her son, Johnny, 17, is planning to summit Mount Everest this year, and her youngest daughter, MacKenna, 12, will take on Mount Kilimanjaro with her mother as soon as she turns 13.

She’s also found another love through mountain climbing—her fiancé, Todd Burleson, who has climbed Mount Everest nine times. He proposed to Ms. Wells in Kathmandu, Nepal, the day before she left for base camp.

“Ten years ago, I was just a mom with three kids, focused on raising my family, which was wonderful, but I knew I needed something more,” she says of her thrill-seeking interests, which also include weeklong adventure races, cross-country bike rides and ultramarathons. “It’s been a great example for my kids that nothing is impossible.”

With that can-do attitude, Ms. Wells is looking forward to accomplishing her next goal. She’d like to be the fastest woman to climb the Seven Summits. And, yes, that means she’s going to have to take them on all over again.

To nominate a Daughter for a future issue, e-mail a description to americanspirit@dar.org.
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Simon Willard & Sons of Roxbury, Mass., made this strange-looking clock—called a “lighthouse clock”—around 1825. The clock’s inventor, Simon Willard of Grafton, Mass., is arguably the most famous early American clockmaker and is best known for his many clockwork patents. Perhaps the strangest clock in Willard’s repertoire was his “alarm timepiece” or “lighthouse clock,” for which he received a patent in 1819. It wasn’t a success, and scholars speculate that fewer than 200 lighthouse clocks of various forms were made. After receiving the patent, Willard worked constantly to improve both the clockworks and the case design. His constant tweaking explains why no two of his lighthouse clocks are completely identical.

The DAR Museum’s example, purchased in 2006, represents Willard’s third and final model. Though similar to earlier models, this version lacks an alarm mechanism and bell that would have been situated in place of the gilt finial above the face. The mahogany case represents the most refined design and features an octagonal base with brass ball feet supporting a tapered column.
Do you have a Revolutionary Patriot in your family tree?

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 the 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 165,000 members in nearly 3,000 chapters worldwide, including chapters in 12 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.

Preserving the American Spirit
www.dar.org
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WHEN SOPHOMORES AT Vestavia Hills High School in Vestavia Hills, Ala., enter Amy Maddox’s classroom, they’re not just starting a school year—they’re beginning a three-year journey toward a greater understanding of our nation’s founding principles. From the settlement of Jamestown in 1607 to the Constitutional Convention in 1787 to current politics, Amy Maddox leads her students as they discover the people and events crucial to the formation of America.

Maddox has a unique setup at her school: She doesn’t pass off her students to another history instructor after teaching them for a year. Instead, she teaches the same students in her junior-level American history class as she did in her sophomore-level class. Most of these students then sign up for Maddox’s AP government class their senior year, capping the three-year experience by participating in the National Endowment for the Humanities’ We the People program, a national competition that tests students’ knowledge of America’s democratic principles.

The We the People program guides students through a mock congressional trial, and Maddox helps her students as they conduct their own research, draft an opening statement and prepare an argument for the competition. Working in teams, the class presents its work to a panel of judges acting as congressional committee members, and then fields questions. “The competition is scored as a group, so each individual has to be committed,” Maddox says. “They have to work together. I love watching the kids push each other and hold each other accountable.”

Maddox’s students have a proven record of success in the program. Vestavia Hills students have represented Alabama at the national competition in Washington, D.C., five times in the eight years that Maddox has entered the competition.

When her team scores in the top 10 at nationals, they get to present their project in the congressional hearing room on Capitol Hill.

“My students have been able to meet one of Alabama’s representatives, Sen. Jeff Sessions, and he is always incredibly supportive of us,” Maddox says. “Every time they make nationals, Sen. Sessions reads the students’ names into the Congressional Record. That’s really special to the kids because it makes them part of history, too.”

In addition to providing background and context for the inner workings of Congress, a big part of the We the People curriculum focuses on the Founding Fathers—a huge selling point for Maddox.

“I am so passionate about the Founding Fathers,” she says. “That’s why I love the program and continue to facilitate it in my classroom. It focuses on the drafting of the Constitution, the personalities of the Founding Fathers and the principles they promoted and fought to protect. I love being the one to introduce that concept to my students in their first year; it’s when they’re first reading about the Colonial period that inspires me most.”

Maddox particularly enjoys introducing her students to the Declaration of Independence. “I think the most powerful thing a teacher can do is read the Declaration out loud with students,” she says. She also believes in delving deep into the complex lives of the Founders.

“The kids tend to relate to Jefferson more than others since modern America has embraced many of his ideas,” she says. “It’s interesting to show the students that these men were flawed, yet they accomplished so much. It’s actually their weaknesses that make them relatable to the students—being able to identify with the country’s Founders helps them appreciate American history even more.”

“I think the most powerful thing a teacher can do is read the Declaration out loud with students.”

–Amy Maddox, winner of the 2008 DAR Outstanding Teacher of American History Award

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Making History
Mock congressional trial helps students appreciate America’s democratic principles

By MEGAN PACELLA
Photography by MEG McKinney
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Timeless Message Found in Lincoln’s Watch

THINGS AREN’T ALWAYS what they seem—and that certainly was the case when officials at the National Museum of American History opened a gold pocket watch that belonged to Abraham Lincoln during his presidency. The NMAH opened the watch to confirm a rumor that had circulated for generations that a watchmaker who repaired the timepiece in 1861 had engraved a secret message inside.

As legend has it, Jonathan Dillon was fixing Lincoln’s watch at M.W. Galt and Company on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C., when he heard about the attack on Fort Sumter. Moved by the news of war, Dillon engraved this message behind the dial of the watch:

Jonathan Dillon  
April 13, 1861  
Fort Sumpter [sic] was attacked  
by the rebels on the above date  
J Dillon  
April 13, 1861  
Washington  
thank God we have a government  
Jonth Dillon

After Dillon’s great-great-grandson, Doug Stiles of Waukegan, Ill., contacted museum officials, they agreed to remove the dial and confirm the decades-old rumor. Harry Rubenstein, curator of the NMAH’s “Abraham Lincoln: An Extraordinary Life” exhibit, says the museum considered opening the watch in private, but decided to make it a public event. When George Thomas, a master watchmaker, opened Lincoln’s watch, Stiles was excited to see his ancestor’s writing.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, watchmakers often left inscriptions hidden in watches to be found by other watchmakers. Dillon’s inscription on Lincoln’s watch is believed to have remained hidden for close to 150 years.

“Lincoln never knew of the message he carried in his pocket,” says Brent Glass, director of the NMAH. “It’s a personal side of history about an ordinary watchman being inspired to record something for posterity.”

For more information about Lincoln’s watch or the “An Extraordinary Life” exhibit, visit http://si.edu/visit/whatsnew/nmah.asp.
Folklife Festival Attracts Crowds

THE SMITHSONIAN CENTER FOR FOLKLIFE and Cultural Heritage’s Folklife Festival provides a venue for celebrating the differences that make America beautiful. This year, the 43rd annual festival will take place June 24–28 and July 1–5 on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. The event will focus on the power of words in the African-American community, the importance of music in Latino culture and the resilience of Welsh language and heritage.

Festivalgoers can enjoy dialogue about the importance of oral tradition in American culture; music stylings from Puerto Rico, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Chile and Venezuela; and cooking, crafts and other traditions native to Wales.

Since initiated in 1967, the Smithsonian Folklife Festival has attracted more than 23,000 musicians, artists, performers, storytellers and craftspeople. Festival hours are 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., with evening events at 6 p.m. For more information, visit www.folklife.si.edu/festival/2009/information.html.

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THERE’S NO BETTER PLACE TO celebrate the Stars and Stripes than in Philadelphia—the birthplace of the American flag. To honor Old Glory, the Betsy Ross House will hold a traditional Flag Day celebration June 13–14. “Flag Festival 2009: A Turn of the Century Celebration” will include a Victorian-style street fair complete with artisans selling their wares, an Uncle Sam re-enactor, high-wheel bicyclists and a midway featuring games, prizes and a penny candy booth. The Betsy Ross House will host entertainment such as an organ grinder and a ragtime band in its courtyard.

Located just a few blocks from Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell, the Betsy Ross House is the perfect place to celebrate the American flag’s rich heritage. Built more than 250 years ago, the Betsy Ross House served as home to many artisans and shopkeepers before it opened to the public in 1937. As legend has it, George Washington, Robert Morris and George Ross visited Betsy in her sewing shop and asked her to create a flag based on their design. On June 14, 1777, Congress adopted the Stars and Stripes as our official flag. For more information about the Betsy Ross House or the festival, visit www.betsyrosshouse.org.

DNA can be as revolutionary as your ancestors were.

For more information visit us at www.familytreedna.com/dar or call us at 713-868-1438.
WHEN O.C. LAM PURCHASED a section of prime real estate in downtown Rome, Ga., he laid plans to construct one of the finest theaters in the American South—and in 1929, the DeSoto Theatre was born. The DeSoto boasted the latest technology of its time, including a blower-fan air conditioning unit, state-of-the-art fire safety equipment and a Vitaphone sound system. Modeled after New York’s Roxy Theatre, the DeSoto seated more than 1,000 patrons and served as a premier entertainment venue for northwest Georgia residents for 50 years.

Unfortunately, after 80 years, the building’s integrity was threatened by its deteriorating roof, water damage to its floor and walls, and an outdated electrical system. But thanks to the Atlanta-based Fox Theatre Institute (FTI), a comprehensive restoration has been planned. FTI links communities and historic performing venues by providing assistance with preservation efforts. It has already spearheaded the renovation of the theater’s vestibule and continues to garner community support for the building’s complete restoration.

“The DeSoto Theatre has meant so much to so many lives in our community through the years,” say Rome native Jo Heyman and her husband, Lyons. “We are so happy the DeSoto will be restored to its former glory so generations to come can enjoy attending concerts, plays and events in downtown Rome.”

For more information about the DeSoto Theatre restoration, visit www.foxtheatreinstitute.org or www.rome littletheatre.com.

Modeled after New York’s Roxy Theatre, the DeSoto seated more than 1,000 patrons.

On June 6, 1944, more than 150,000 Allied soldiers in World War II launched Operation Overlord, a massive attack supported by naval, air and ground troops. Commonly known as D-Day, the attack gave the Allies a strong foothold on the edge of Nazi-occupied Europe, signaling a turning point in the war.

The National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, Va., will observe the 65th anniversary of the D-Day attacks June 4–7. The event kicks off June 4 with a two-day conference, “Overlord Echoes: The D-Day Journey Then and Now,” which will highlight the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of the men and women who served. On June 6, a nighttime illumination of the nine-acre memorial will honor the 4,400 Allied service members killed in action. Record numbers of D-Day and WWII veterans are expected to turn out for the event. For more information, visit www.dday.org or call (800) 351–DDAY.
Minnesota’s Greatest Generation: The Depression, The War, the Boom

Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minn., opens May 23

Today’s volatile economy has many people worried, but Americans can learn a lot from the example of the Greatest Generation—those who survived the Great Depression, emerged victorious in World War II, and facilitated a post-war boom. A Minnesota Historical Society exhibit celebrates the accomplishments and sacrifices made by the state’s Greatest Generation. It features 6,000 square feet of artifacts and hands-on multimedia displays to help visitors experience a slice of life in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. For more information, visit www.mngreatestgeneration.org.

Tools of the Trade

Jamestown Settlement, Williamsburg, Va., June 1–30

Creating a perfect exhibition for kids, Jamestown will display tools used by 17th- and 18th-century Americans to hunt, fish, farm, build, navigate and more. Interactive programs and hands-on activities allow participants to use the tools and take a close look at Colonial American life. For more information, visit www.historyisfun.org.

Big!

National Archives, Washington, D.C., now through January 3, 2010

In honor of its 75th anniversary, the National Archives’ “Big” exhibit celebrates the simply huge parts of our nation’s past. From a 13-foot scroll of the Articles of Confederation to a gigantic map of the Gettysburg battlefield to the enormous bathtub made for America’s biggest president, this exhibition displays the largest pieces of America’s history, including basketball star Shaquille O’Neal’s sneaker. Perhaps the most important part of the exhibition is its display of the first printing of the Declaration of Independence—a big idea that helped birth our nation. For more information, visit www.archives.gov.

Does your chapter name have an unusual story behind it? E-mail a description to americanspirit@dar.org.

What’s in a Name

Discover the meanings behind some of the DAR chapters’ interesting names.

The Warren County Chapter, Monmouth, Ill., honors Revolutionary War hero General Joseph Warren. After graduating from Harvard College as a doctor, Warren became the leading physician and medical teacher in Boston. He got involved in the Revolution at the beginning of the war and was the man who sent Paul Revere to Lexington to warn that the British were coming. Warren died at age 34 in the Battle of Bunker Hill.

The namesake of the Mary Tyler Chapter, Tyler, Texas, was born in York County, Va., in 1791. Mary Margot Armistead Tyler was the daughter of Robert Booth Armistead, a prominent planter, and his wife, Anne. Mary was descended from the Margot family of Huguenots who immigrated to the Colonies in 1700. When she was 16 years old, she married John Tyler, who served as governor of Virginia from 1808–1811. During their 20-year marriage, she had five daughters and three sons. Their sixth child and second son, John Tyler, named after generations of Tyler men before him, became the 10th president of the United States. He was only 7 years old when Mary died of a paralytic stroke in 1797. She is buried in Virginia.

The Fort Industry Chapter, Toledo, Ohio, is named after a fort established at the mouth of the Maumee River by General Anthony Wayne after the Revolutionary War. In 1794, Gen. Wayne defeated a coalition of American Indians at the Battle of Fallen Timbers near present-day Toledo. He then directed the building of several forts, including Fort Industry, named because it was built so expeditiously. The fort consisted of a blockhouse surrounded by a stockade and stood in the center of a clearing of about four acres. The official seal of the city of Toledo contains a silhouette of Fort Industry at sunrise behind the Maumee River.

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Does your chapter name have an unusual story behind it? E-mail a description to americanspirit@dar.org.
Learning The Lingo for Archiving Artifacts

By Maureen Taylor

Caring for your photos and other family memorabilia can be tricky, and the labels on photo albums and boxes in which to preserve them can get confusing. Use this short glossary when shopping for the right materials to preserve your family artifacts and images.

**Archival:** You’ll see this misunderstood word everywhere from albums to pens, but what does it really mean? Archival usually refers to the types of special storage materials used in an archive where items are preserved. However, there are not yet any industry standards for the word archival. While the term generally refers to material or conditions that extend the longevity of the objects stored in them, remember to use caution when purchasing archival items. For instance, when a photo album is labeled “archival,” consider whether the term refers to the outside, the pages or the plastic overlays. Manufacturers usually follow the word archival with a list of other terms, so you’ll need to read the fine print to see what you’re really buying.

**Acid-Free:** Think back to your high-school chemistry class. Do you remember discussing pH as a way to measure the acidity or alkalinity of things like paper? This measurement provides an indication of whether the product is suitable for storage. Acid-free refers to a paper with a pH higher than 7.1. Ideally this type of paper has been chemically purified and treated with a buffering agent to neutralize any lingering acid.

**P.A.T.:** The Photographic Activity Test is an internationally recognized standard for museum-quality storage that tests the reactivity of photographs to substances in manufacturer’s products. The Image Permanence Institute (IPI), a nonprofit research lab sponsored by the Rochester Institute of Technology and the Society for Imaging Science and Technology, tests paper and plastic as well as adhesives, inks, paints, labels and tapes for four to six weeks. The P.A.T. is used internationally, so look for evidence that products have passed this rigorous standard before buying.

**Polypropylene and polyester plastics:** Polypropylene and polyester are types of plastic approved for storing images and negatives. These neither deteriorate with time nor deposit chemicals on materials stored in them, and they are widely available. Nonglare plastics (also called non-PVC plastics or inert plastics) are available, but since they can be treated with chemicals, don’t use them. Just read the packaging carefully before you purchase.

**Photo Albums Go Digital**

Whether you want to preserve memories of a wedding, vacation, anniversary or family reunion, archiving your pictures in a scrapbook is a great way to guarantee that they will last a lifetime. And now that digital photography is so prevalent, there’s a new, easy way to archive your memories. Services like Inkubook offer a creative way to organize your pictures—and preserve your favorite family memories. Simply visit the Web site, upload your pictures and start building your personal memory book.

Want to create a book for your child’s wedding? Inkubook offers personalized backgrounds and page layouts to suit your taste. Plus, friends and family members can log into your account and write personal messages about the event. Printed on 100-pound archival-quality silk paper, your book is sure to stand the test of time. For more information, visit www.inkubook.com.
Memories of Elfreth’s Alley

What a pleasure it was to read Gin Phillips’ article, “The Life and Times of Elfreth’s Alley,” in the January/February 2009 issue. I can count myself, my husband and our son among the 3,000 Philadelphians who have called the alley our home. We lived there for a number of years in the late 1960s while my husband was a graduate student.

Each day I would walk to work past Betsy Ross’ home, Ben Franklin’s home site and Independence Hall to a building on the far side of Independence Mall. How fortunate I was to be surrounded by our wonderful history. At the time I did not know that one day I would be able to join the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution. Here is one of the photos I took during an Elfreth’s Alley Day in June 1969.

M. Joan Ebert Davies
Anna Stickney Chapter
North Conway, N.H.

Sisterhood in Savannah

I wanted to share with you how much I enjoyed “Savannah’s Story” by Amy Cates in the November/December 2008 issue. I visited Savannah with my sisters in 2006, and we were captivated by its unique history and the obvious efforts to preserve and protect that history. The article captured the spirit of the city quite well.

As recently welcomed members of Owasco Chapter, we were especially pleased to find the large historical marker about Jane Cuyler and the Liberty Boys, erected by the Georgia Historical Society and the Bonaventure Chapter, during a stroll along Bay Street after our dinner on the waterfront one evening.

Thanks, American Spirit!
Sandra Stoker Gilliland
Owasco Chapter
Auburn, N.Y.

Galveston Rebounds

I wanted to correct the date in the “Restoring Galveston” Whatnot article published in the January/February 2009 issue. Hurricane Ike actually came ashore on September 13, 2008, not September 18 as cited in the article. No matter the date, it was still devastating to Galveston and surrounding communities.

The article mentioned the Strand and its historic buildings, which were inundated with more than 8 feet of water. It is now eight months later, and the Strand is struggling to repair and revive itself. Currently, only a handful of businesses have reopened, and the Galveston Daily News reports that many merchants have decided not to return at all. There is tremendous optimism about Galveston becoming the city it once was; however, it will be a very slow process for all involved, since 75 percent of Galveston Island was flooded.

Don’t give up on Galveston; it literally lifted itself following the tragic 1900 hurricane, and it will do so again with financial support and its strong-willed citizens. Despite the continuing restoration, there are still many tourist attractions and fine restaurants that are back, and the cruise ships are sailing from the Port of Galveston, so come on down!

Mary Louise Gulley, Vice Regent
George Washington Chapter
Galveston, Texas

Children of the Revolution

I was most interested in the article “Born Brave” in the September/October 2008 issue. Ebenezer Fox experienced some of the same activities as my husband’s ancestor, Christopher Hawkins, did. We have the original manuscript of The Juvenile Adventures of Christopher Hawkins. Hawkins wrote his account in 1834, and his son published it in 1864, with notes and engravings added by a historian. Time Life Books published it again at the time of the centennial. Parts of it sound very similar to Ebenezer Fox’s account. Hawkins escaped from the Jersey prison ship “then lying in the harbour of New York by swimming.”
American Spirit magazine is wonderful—such interesting articles with great layout, photos and artwork. I enjoy it immensely.
Louise Swigart Davis
Westport Chapter
Kansas City, Mo.

Washington Spotted Reading
American Spirit

One day before I was to leave on my cruise to the southern Caribbean, I received the American Spirit issue detailing the George Washington House on Barbados. I took the magazine with me and vowed to stop by and visit.

The George Washington House is terrific and the staff is very knowledgeable and kind. Our visit there was one of the highlights of the trip. Here’s a photo of Washington “reading” American Spirit that you might find fun.

Thank you for the great article and the inspiration to visit those places that inspired our Founding Fathers.
Debora J. Edson
San Clemente Island Chapter
San Clemente, Calif.

A Barbados Attraction

Thanks to your article on George Washington’s stay in Barbados in the January/February 2009 issue, we visited the site in February. The setting and museum were delightful, and we were happy to learn more about Washington’s only visit outside the United States. Thank you for educating us on its existence. It’s worth a visit.
Deborah Olsen
John Bell Chapter
Madison, Wisc.

Serving in the Cadet Nurse Corps

This is nothing earthshaking, but I do wish to correct a detail in the Today’s Daughters story in the November/December 2008 issue. The Cadet Nurse Corps was established in 1943 to address the nursing shortage caused by World War II. I entered the hospital of the University of Pennsylvania Nursing School in September 1943, which is why I knew 1944 was incorrect. I do enjoy the magazine and the newsletter.
Beverly Lunt McCarthy
Bertha Hereford Hall Chapter
Leesburg, Fla.

The Beginnings of Black History Month

While glancing at the January/February 2009 issue of this wonderful magazine, I noticed an error on page 10. The paragraph states, “In 1926, February officially became Black History Month …” This is not entirely true! In 1926, Dr. Carter G. Woodson, father of Negro history, initiated Negro History Week (a week in February). It wasn’t until 1976 that the week was expanded to an entire month.
Darlene V. Farmer
Pentagon Chapter
Arlington, Va.

Lincoln’s Search for Meaning

Since the NSDAR motto is God, Home and Country, I thought that you might find the following of interest: Regarding the “self-made” Lincoln with the emphasis on morals and character (as Illinois State Historian Dr. Tom Schwartz mentions in the January/February 2009 story on Lincoln’s 200th birthday), Lincoln sought God throughout his life. A great deal of the time when he was “reading by candlelight,” Lincoln was reading the Bible. His mother taught him from the Bible and taught him to base his life upon its contents.

Declaration of Publication!

Heroes are honored, history is illuminated, and independence is celebrated in Patriots of the American Revolution, a new magazine from Two If By Sea Publishing, LLC. This high-quality, four-color quarterly focuses on the dramatic birth of the United States and the Patriots who risked everything for its liberation.

The rate for a one-year U.S. subscription to Patriots of the American Revolution is $24.95; single copies are $6.95. For every subscription purchased, two dollars will be donated to the DAR. For every single copy of the magazine purchased, one dollar will be donated.

For more information, visit www.patriotsar.com
call (239) 464-9730, or write to:
Patriots of the American Revolution
P.O. Box 60514
Fort Myers, FL 33906-6514
By age 10, Lincoln knew much of the Bible by memory. That’s what made him the great man and president whom we celebrate today. For more information regarding God’s influence on Lincoln and his presidency, I suggest referring to David Barton of Wallbuilders.

Anne Goodgame  
Fort Peachtree Chapter  
Atlanta, Ga.

A Primer for Studying Stones

“Stories Carved in Stone” by Gaylord Cooper in the November/December 2008 issue was extremely interesting to me, and it made me want to visit cemeteries of my ancestors again so that I can study the stones more thoroughly. I’ve taken some pictures of old family stones, but need to take many more, and the article inspired me to do just that very soon. The sidebar “Common Gravestone Icons and Symbols Found in Cemeteries and Graveyards” will help me to better understand them.

Phyllis McCord Fecher  
Rushville Chapter  
Rushville, Ind.

Land of Lincoln: North Carolina?

I always enjoy your magazine. Keep up the good work!

I read with interest about the upcoming celebrations scheduled for the 200th anniversary of Lincoln’s birth mentioned in the January/February 2009 issue. You may or may not know that there is credible evidence that Lincoln was born in Rutherford County, N.C.

Several years ago, our Union County Historical Society sponsored a program on the book The Tarheel Lincoln by Richard Eller and Jerry Goodnight, two authors from Hickory, N.C. They make a very good case that Abraham Enloe fathered Abraham Lincoln while Nancy Hanks worked for the family as a teenager. Tradition has it that Enloe paid Tom Lincoln to take Nancy and baby Abraham to Kentucky. Tom Lincoln bore no physical resemblance to Abraham, but there is a resemblance to some in the Enloe family. Maybe someday this mystery will be cleared up.

Virginia Bjorlin  
John Foster Chapter  
Monroe, N.C.

Singing the Daughters’ Praises

How serendipitous that two magazines recently arrived at my house with photos of trail markers placed by the DAR. American Spirit’s March/April 2009 issue has an article about the El Camino Real in Texas with a picture of a trail marker placed in 1918. American Archaeology’s Spring 2009 issue has an article on the Santa Fe Trail with a photo of a marker placed by the Kansas State DAR in 1906.

The DAR received additional coverage in that same issue of American Archaeology in an article about French and Indian War forts. In 1927 the DAR rescued the last remaining building at Fort Ashby, erected in 1755 and located in today’s West Virginia. The building was restored and opened to the public. How wonderful to note the good works of the DAR.

Barbara A. Welch  
Henry Clay Chapter  
Annandale, Va.

Texas vs. Mexico

I enjoyed the article on El Camino Real in the March/April 2009 issue. However, there is an error on page 45. The Texas Revolution, which took place October 2, 1835 to April 21, 1836, was not against Spain, but against Mexico. Mexico had won her independence from Spain in 1821.

Drusilla Cochran Sheldon  
Corpus Christi Chapter  
Corpus Christi, Texas

A South Carolina Garden

I wanted to alert you to an error on page 19 in the article “Building a Heritage Garden” in the March/April 2009 issue. Middleton Place on the Ashley River is in South Carolina, not Virginia.

I love the magazine, and we in John Lynch Chapter in Virginia continue to subscribe and hope to award subscriptions to new members in the future.

Terry Arnold, National Vice-Chairman,  
Historic Preservation Committee  
John Lynch Chapter  
Lynchburg, Va.

Please send letters to the editor to americanspirit@dar.org.
Portsmouth, N.H., was an important Colonial port, watched over by the Portsmouth Harbor Lighthouse, New Castle, N.H. The station was first established in 1771, and the present lighthouse was built in 1878. Its light is visible for 12 nautical miles.
The New Hampshire coastline stretches a lean 18 miles, the shortest of any coastal state. But its history spans close to 400 years.

Situated at the mouth of the Piscataqua River, which divides New Hampshire and Maine, Portsmouth is equidistant—about 50 miles—from Boston; Portland, Maine; and Manchester, N.H. Its position along the water and its share of shoreline made it a shipbuilding capital during both world wars. But it was during the pre-Revolutionary period that maritime trade truly propelled Portsmouth toward prosperity. The city’s ports allowed for easy trade, spurring the local economy and luring European settlers.

Odiorne Point, which faces New Castle Island and Fort Stark, welcomed the first Europeans to the state back in the 1600s. During the next century, explains Stephanie Seacord of Leading Edge, a New Hampshire-based marketing firm, “Portsmouth actually liked the British.” England was a great source of trade for the town leading up to the Revolutionary War.

Perhaps Portsmouth’s history is best told through Strawbery Banke Museum, a namesake of the city’s earliest settlement. Founded in 1630 by Captain Walter Neal and a group of English settlers seeking to establish an economic center, Strawbery Banke and its Great House later became a commercial hub.

Within eight years of founding Strawbery Banke, the London merchants who established the colony went bankrupt, leaving the colony to its settlers. Through a covenant with England, the group declared its allegiance to the king, but the Massachusetts Bay Colony eventually annexed the area and helped provide a more stable local government. Strawbery Banke changed its name to Portsmouth in 1653.

Portsmouth served as the Colonial capital from 1679 through the early part of the Revolution. As the local economy thrived, the area experienced a building boom. Wood structures were converted to brick in the 1800s after a long series of fires devastated the area. Many of these structures remain today.

In December 1774, four months before his famous midnight ride, Paul Revere arrived along the New Hampshire coast from Boston with news that the British were coming to take over Fort William and Mary, a fort that had begun as a military installation in 1632. By 1692, it had grown to become one of the castles that dotted the Colonial coastline. At the time of the Revolution, the fort’s breastwork remained intact. The day after Revere’s alert to the colonists, 400 men from Portsmouth, Rye and New Castle
Portsmouth's peak tourism season begins in late May and continues with a full schedule through mid-October. Chowderfest is held in early June, followed by Market Square Day on the second Saturday of June. The city's Jazz Weekend and Festival kicks off in late June or early July, and the Prescott Park Arts Festival welcomes crowds to a variety of events throughout the year. (Visit [www.prescottpark.org](http://www.prescottpark.org).) As temperatures fall, residents and visitors gather for the annual Chili Cook-Off in October.

removed about five tons of gunpowder from Fort William and Mary. The following night, John Sullivan and a group of local men removed cannons and military equipment, galvanizing the colonists’ war efforts even before Concord and Lexington. Fort William and Mary was renamed Fort Constitution and is today a New Hampshire State Park.

In the 19th century, President Thomas Jefferson’s embargo of 1807 thwarted the local economy as it significantly decreased maritime trade. Within seven years, textile mills opened about 15 miles upriver. By the mid-1800s, however, modern inventions like the steam engine and the railroad gave a new face to Portsmouth’s industry, creating mills, foundries and machine shops.

Portsmouth reached a unique level of fame when President Theodore Roosevelt signed the Treaty of Portsmouth in this New Hampshire city in 1905. The treaty effectively ended the Russo-Japanese War and helped Roosevelt earn the Nobel Peace Prize.

What to See
Discover Portsmouth Center, hosted by the Portsmouth Historical Society, serves as “a gateway to all the interesting historic sites in Portsmouth,” Seacord explains. The center introduces visitors “to the whole panoply, the whole landscape” and is open from Memorial Day through the end of October. Admission is free. Centrally located and within easy walking distance of historic homes and Strawbery Banke, it includes an on-site art gallery featuring local artwork. Exhibits rotate annually.

On the campus of Strawbery Banke Museum are most of the neighborhood’s 42 buildings on their original foundations. The property sits close to the water, providing a scenic backdrop for summer picnics.

The Wentworth name is heard and seen frequently throughout Portsmouth. Benning Wentworth, Colonial governor of New Hampshire from 1741 until 1767, was the son of Lt. Gov. John Wentworth. Benning’s nephew, Royal
Gov. John Wentworth, succeeded him. He prepared for potential attack from France and other enemies by training three regiments of New Hampshire soldiers, intending for them to serve as the local militia. What he didn’t intend, though, was to train them to serve in the Continental Army. During the Revolution, these soldiers relocated and helped win the war.

The 40-room Wentworth-Coolidge Mansion served as Benning Wentworth’s home. Its gardens still feature some of the first lilacs brought to the new country. The lilac was later named the state flower.

Since 1874, Wentworth by the Sea has served as a social hub, and today it is a member of the National Trust’s Historic Hotels of America. The property began as a hotel at the end of the 19th century. Preservationists worked diligently to lead an extensive renovation during the 1980s, and the property reopened as a resort in 2003.

The Wentworth-Gardner House was built in 1760 by Elizabeth and Mark Hunking Wentworth as a wedding gift for their son. Major William Gardner bought the home in 1793, living there until his death at age 83. The house again changed hands upon the death of Gardner’s third wife in 1854 and became a tenant house. Photographer and antiquarian Wallace Nutting bought and restored the home, eventually selling it to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City during World War I. However, the poor economy thwarted plans to relocate the home to New York. The home was later operated and furnished by the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (now known as Historic New England). Another group of preservationists eventually bought the home, along with the Tobias Lear House, which sits next door.

The Lear House, built around 1740 by Captain Tobias Lear III, also exemplifies the Georgian architecture of the day. Lear was the grandfather of Tobias Lear V, private secretary to President George Washington. This home also operated as a tenant house during the late 19th century.

The Moffatt-Ladd House, a Georgian structure built from 1760–1763, was the home of Gen. William Whipple, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, during the Revolution. The National Historic Landmark has been open to the public since 1912.

At Strawbery Banke, the Shapley Drisco House provides a unique look at how urban America changed from 1795 to the 1950s. One-half of the house features exhibits of how a family lived during the late 18th century, while the other half showcases a 1950s lifestyle.

With more than 600 slaves in the New Hampshire Colony in 1775, Portsmouth also wrote an important chapter in the history of African-Americans during the Revolution. The Portsmouth Black Heritage Trail honors their place in the city’s history with 24 sites, including Long Wharf (where slaves were once sold), the William Pitt Tavern at Strawbery Banke, the Governor John Langdon House and the state’s first black church (now the site of the Portsmouth Children’s Museum). The trail commemorates African-Americans’ influence on the area to the 1960s.

To learn more about Portsmouth, explore www.portsmouthchamber.org and www.strawberybanke.org.

On the campus of Strawbery Banke Museum are most of the neighborhood’s 42 buildings on their original foundations. The property sits close to the water, providing a scenic backdrop for summer picnics.
Meet Your Match

Genetic testing offers clues to help you discover your ancestral roots

By NANCY MANN JACKSON

Intensive genealogical research can help you uncover the names, locations and details of relatives in recent centuries, but your individual history actually began thousands of years before. While no paper records may exist to lead you to your original ancestors, each person carries clues, written on his or her DNA, to unlock those ancient connections to the past. In recent years, the idea of using DNA testing as an aid in genealogical research has made headlines. While such testing can’t prove a genealogical record like the ones required for DAR membership, it can provide clues to the roots of our family trees.
In February, seven DAR members of the Melzingah Chapter, Beacon, N.Y., volunteered to participate in DNA testing using tests provided by Family Tree DNA, the world’s largest company working in genetic genealogy. After a few swabs of the cheek and a few weeks waiting for results, the women discovered a new world of information about their family backgrounds.

“Our ancestors fought in the Revolution, which is wonderful, but I never really thought about where they came from before that,” says Bonnie McHoul Wiegard, who discovered Italian ancestors after taking the DNA test along with her mother, Marikay Thomes McHoul, and her daughter, Megan Wiegard. “It’s really interesting to get new information that we’ll have for generations to come. In the future, I think we’ll see more and more people tracking their heritage as new technology and tools become available. It’s really exciting.”

Deciphering DNA Tests

There are various types of DNA tests, and each provides different types of results—so you must understand which test you’re taking in order to decipher them. “[Most] articles [about genetic testing] are not specific as to which type of test is being discussed,” says Thomas J. Ragusin, chairman of the DAR Genealogy Department’s DNA Committee. “This is truly unfortunate because each different test has drastically different accuracies and applications.”

The CSI-style test, named for the popular TV show, “is extremely accurate, although much more complicated in reality than portrayed in the television program,” Ragusin says. “This accuracy is achieved by comparing multiple locations found throughout the entire human genome from two viable samples of DNA.” Usually at least one of the samples is from a living donor, but the test alone is not sufficient to prove a relationship, because other non-scientific factors must also be assessed. An offshoot of the CSI-style test is the paternity test, which is accepted by the DAR as evidence of parentage.

The Y-Chromosome test is the one most often used for genealogical purposes, but because it is found only in males, women cannot take it. “The test can focus only on patrilineal descent or, in historic times, the line of our surname,” Ragusin says.

While the test can definitely tell if two individuals are related or not, it cannot be precise in determining when they shared a common ancestor. Ragusin elaborates: “For example, if two men with the same surname match 37 markers out of 37 markers tested, we would only know they are related within six generations, 50 percent of the time. If we wish to improve the accuracy to a reasonable level of about 85 percent, then we can only know they are related within 15 generations. Fifteen generations exceeds the length of all DAR applications submitted to date.”

“However,” explains Bennett Greenspan, president of Family Tree DNA, “matching on a higher number of
markers—67 for example, would increase the probability of sharing a common ancestor more recently.”

Although women can’t take the Y-chromosome test, “this hasn’t been a challenge,” Greenspan says. “They reach out to fathers, brothers and male cousins and get them to test” in order to learn more about their patrilineal DNA.

The test taken by the women of the Melzingah Chapter is the mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) test. Found in all humans, mtDNA derives only from a person’s mother, because the father’s mtDNA is lost during conception.

“This test determines our mother’s mother’s mother’s line,” Ragusin says. “It cannot be used for the historic time period. It is, however, excellent for deep ancestry studies such as the one being conducted by the National Geographic.”

The five-year, $40 million Genographic Project, currently a joint effort between the National Geographic Society and IBM, has a goal of collecting 100,000 DNA samples from indigenous populations around the world. By analyzing historical patterns in DNA from participants worldwide, the project’s leaders hope to trace human roots from the present to the origin of our species.

Greenspan says that DNA tests should usually be used as “anthropology tests” as well as genealogy tests. “If it showed that someone is related to you in the past several hundred years, it would be a genealogy test,” he says. “If we’re talking about your relatives from 3,000 years ago, we’re talking anthropology.”

Finding Matches

While DNA results are highly scientific and laden with information, the test-taking process is surprisingly simple. When Melzingah Chapter members gathered to take their tests, they opened the test kits from Family Tree DNA and simply followed the instructions, which involved swabbing the insides of their cheeks for 60 seconds, three different times over a period of several hours, then mailing the kits back to the testing center.

Within a few weeks, each woman had received a packet of information by mail and an e-mail explaining how to access her results online.

The results, which consist of various lists of “matches” and groupings of numbers, were “very scientific,” Mrs. Wiegard says, and difficult to understand at first glance. But after more explanation, all of the women were engaged and interested in learning more about those who share their DNA.

Family Tree DNA’s mtDNA database includes close to 90,000 people who have been tested, so each new test taker’s results include a list of low-resolution matches (people in the database whose first DNA section matches the test taker’s) and a list of high-resolution matches (people in the database whose first and second DNA sections match the test taker’s). Contact information is available for each of the people on these lists, so test takers can reach out to their matches to determine original villages, compare genealogies, and fill in missing details.

Those “matches,” however, are not necessarily close relatives. According to Family Tree DNA’s instructions, the rate of change within the mitochondria is very slow, so the time period reflected by the mtDNA test “is much further back than it is for Y-DNA matches. An exact match on Hyper Variable Region 1 [a low-resolution match] means you share a common female ancestor, but in only 50 percent of cases did this common ancestor live within the last 52 generations.”

On the other hand, if test takers have a DNA sequence with many mutations found only in a restricted geographical population or ethnic community, they may be able to confidently contact matches and assume they share more recent genealogy.

For instance, Pamela Barrack, a Melzingah Chapter member who took the test, had 106 low-resolution matches on her test but zero high-resolution matches, due to a unique
mutation at position 199 in her DNA. According to Greenspan, the mutation has never shown up in his company’s database of 90,000 people, which means it must have occurred within the past few hundred years. “If it had happened a long time ago, there would have been a lot of time for more of her ancestors to have children, and we’d be seeing it more,” he says. “The uniqueness of that recent mutation allows this anthropology test to become a genealogy test for her. If anybody else has that mutation, she can be pretty sure they share a recent female ancestor.”

Mrs. Barrack, whose mother’s line has been traced back to the Mayflower, was surprised to hear she had no high-resolution matches, but she appreciated that the test “confirmed the information we always thought we knew, that our ancestors were European,” she says. “I want my son to take [the test] as well; I would like to see how it carries through to him.”

Mrs. Barrack’s experience illustrates what Lewis Thomas, a famous American physician and writer, said was the real marvel of DNA: its capacity to “blunder” slightly. “Without this special attribute, we would still be anaerobic bacteria and there would be no music,” Thomas wrote.

Comparing Origins

Along with the list of matches, the test results also include a list of the countries of origin of those matches (according to their reported research), along with a map showing the towns and villages of their ancestral origin. Because “most people know the country but not the city they come from,” Greenspan says, the maps show the specific locations to which others with matching DNA have traced their ancestors, providing clues for new test takers.

As a result of the increasing public interest in genetic testing and genealogy research, Denise Doring VanBuren, a Melzingah Chapter member and American Spirit editor in chief, requested that her fellow members join her in having their DNA tested and share their results in a feature story. Many learned new things about their backgrounds. Ms. VanBuren, for instance, expected to see Germany on her list, but was surprised to discover several matches originating from Poland and England as well. “I was glad to confirm what I had assumed,” she says. “But this shows me that I may be more English than I ever thought.”

Mrs. Wiegard was similarly surprised to see matches hailing from Italy and Sicily. “I had absolutely no idea we had any Italian in us,” she says.

One of the most helpful components of the test results is the information provided about a test taker’s haplogroup, which is basically ethnic background, or what Greenspan describes as “the basic branch of the tree of humanity that your ancestors came from.”

The most popular haplogroup for people of European descent is haplogroup H. Several DAR test takers fell into this group, which migrated to Europe before the Last Glacial Maximum approximately 20,000 years ago and represents about 40 percent of all mitochondrial (female) lineages in Europe today.

While DAR members classified as haplogroup H weren’t surprised, Kathie Halvey, who traces her lineage from the past few hundred years to Scotland and England, was surprised to be classified as haplogroup J, which originated in the Middle East. According to her test results, Mrs. Halvey’s original ancestors were most likely Neolithic farmers in northern Iraq who migrated to Europe 10,000 years ago and could have taught Europeans how to farm.

Family Tree DNA has the largest comparative DNA database in the world, so customers from Western and Northern Europe almost always find quality matches and information. (Their Y-DNA database has more than 150,000 records.) However, those hailing from Eastern Europe
may not fare as well “because not as many people from that part of the world have gotten tested yet,” Greenspan says. Companies like Family Tree DNA will often make haplogroup comparisons for men and women who have been tested for genealogical purposes; Greenspan says his company has even been able to match adoptees with their biological family members.

Understanding the Results

While testing companies like Family Tree DNA provide detailed information with each set of test results, it can be difficult to decipher, especially for those uninformed about DNA testing.

“I felt a little overwhelmed by the scientific data that was here, and it was frustrating not to know what I was looking at,” Ms. VanBuren says. “I would like to have had a better understanding of what it would and would not show me before I took the test.”

However, after learning the differences between the different types of DNA tests and the limitations of each one, the DAR members wanted to know more. Several plan to ask brothers, sons and other male relatives to take the Y-chromosome test in order to learn more about their patrilineal lines of descent. “The whole process has been very interesting, and it’s been a hot conversation topic with people,” Ms. VanBuren adds. “Now I can better appreciate the reasons why we can’t use DNA tests as documentation for DAR membership, but it’s been a fascinating opportunity for me to see validated what I’ve learned in my own research.”

Nancy Mann Jackson wrote about preserving food the Colonial way for the March/April 2009 issue.

A Warm Welcome

One of Denise Doring VanBuren’s most treasured memories is of the day she used her forefinger to trace the signature of her great-grandfather in a naturalization register in a dusty basement storage room in Troy, N.Y. “He disavowed his allegiance to the King of Hanover and signed an oath as a U.S. citizen shortly after he arrived with his family from Germany in the 1860s,” she says. “You never shake a feeling like that, a connectedness to those who came before you in the pursuit of happiness, whether your ancestors arrived centuries ago or yesterday.”

Because almost every American family has a similar story, it was fitting that before gathering to take their DNA tests, members of the Melzingah Chapter, Beacon, N.Y., participated in a February naturalization ceremony for new American citizens, continuing the long NSDAR history of helping immigrants along the path to citizenship.

“At one point in time, all our ancestors were foreign-born,” says Kathie Halvey. “They came to this country for a better life. This country offered the opportunity to start that new life.”

As sponsors at the ceremony, members of the chapter presented each new citizen with a gift and provided refreshments.

“With the exception of American Indians, we are all descended from immigrants,” Ms. VanBuren says. “It’s impossible not to feel that tug on your heart when you attend a naturalization ceremony and see these new Americans become citizens of the greatest country that the world has ever known. I believe America’s strength through the centuries has come from the wonderful tapestry of its citizenry.”

Since its founding in 1890, DAR chapters have actively sponsored naturalization ceremonies and helped new citizens. For example, for many decades, DAR members prepared and distributed the new citizens’ manual. “As descendants of the men and women who risked so much to win American independence, we feel that have an obligation to ensure that the blessings of citizenship are protected and celebrated for every generation of Americans,” Ms. VanBuren says.
Deborah Sampson Gannett may not have been the only woman to see military service during the Revolutionary War or receive a disability pension from Congress. But in the course of waging a persistent and successful public campaign for the pay and pension benefits she believed were her due, she became America’s first professional traveling woman lecturer.

The fifth of seven children, Deborah Sampson was born in Plympton, Mass., in 1760. Her parents were Mayflower descendants: Her mother, Deborah Bradford, was a great-granddaughter of William Bradford, the first governor of the Plymouth Colony, and her father, Jonathan Samson Jr., was descended from Henry Samson who came over on the Mayflower. (She later changed the spelling of her last name to “Sampson.”) Her father abandoned the family in the mid-1760s, and her indigent mother was forced to “disband her family and to scatter her children abroad,” according to Historian Alfred F. Young, author of Masquerade: The Life and Times of Deborah Sampson, Continental Soldier (Alfred A. Knopf, 2004). Deborah worked as a servant until she turned 18 and became “a masterless woman.” For the next three years, she supported herself as a spinner and weaver and for “two seasons” taught school. Meanwhile, the Revolutionary War raged, and hostilities continued even after the victory at Yorktown in 1781.

Dressing in men’s clothing was against the law for women when Sampson joined the ranks of the Continental Army in 1782. (In Massachusetts at that time, cross-dressing was both illegal and immoral from a religious standpoint.) There was no physical examination for getting into the Army, and no one requested proof of age or residency, but Gannett’s first attempt to enlist, using the name Timothy Thayer, was unsuccessful. When her deception was detected, she clashed with church authorities. Fearing civil prosecution for her offense, she left town dressed as a man.

by NADINE GOFF illustration by ZELA LOBB
On May 20, 1782, Sampson enlisted in Bellingham, Mass., using the name Robert Shurtleff. She passed muster at Worcester on May 23, receiving a bounty of 60 pounds “to serve in the Continental Army for a term of three years.” She was stationed at West Point and served with the Light Infantry Company of the Fourth Massachusetts Regiment.

She served for 17 months, during which she was involved in several skirmishes and wounded twice. Only after she was hospitalized in Philadelphia for “a violent illness” was her masquerade discovered.

How was she able to hide her true identity for so long? Young argues “the attributes needed to maintain her deception—to be alert, quick and street smart—were the very ones that made her an ideal choice for the light infantry.” He asserts that, “She hid herself as a woman … by standing out as a man.”

In a brief remembrance of her, Calvin Munn, a drill sergeant with the Fourth Massachusetts Regiment, wrote that between the time she was discovered to be a woman and the date of her discharge, “she was protected by the officers whom she served under,” a response Young attributes to the fact that “she was found out after she had proven herself in military action.”

**LOST AND REDISCOVERED**

Although she left few written records—a short diary, two one-page letters and some short petitions—Gannett’s story did not disappear from history, even after she returned to Massachusetts, married Benjamin Gannett Jr., and began raising a family. Her accomplishments did, however, fade from public consciousness. Young notes that, for more than two centuries, her life story “illustrates what Gloria Steinem calls the general fate of women’s history: ‘to be lost and discovered, lost again and rediscovered, relost and rerediscovered.’”

Enter Deborah Sampson Gannett’s name into a popular Internet search engine today, and it will likely yield thousands of results. A genuine Revolutionary War Patriot and heroine, she has also become a historical celebrity—and as is often the case with celebrities, much of what is written about her is incomplete, inaccurate and occasionally sensational.

For far too long, most of what people “knew” about Deborah Sampson Gannett was based on Herman Mann’s book about her. Published in 1797, *The Female Review; or, Memoirs of an American Young Lady*, made its subject a celebrity. But according to an essay written by Patrick J. Leonard for the Canton Massachusetts Historical Society, Mann was “an imaginative hack writer” who “wrote a far from factual biography” containing “innumerable falsehoods and inaccuracies.”

Young admits that some of the material in Mann’s book is questionable, but reminds us that while it may be easy to dis-
sometimes appearing in uniform, traveling alone at a time when there were almost no precedents for a woman as an itinerant lecturer—brought her fame but not fortune. It also failed to earn her a place in the history books of the day about the Revolutionary War, including those written by Mercy Otis Warren and Judith Sargent Murray. According to Young, “The female soldier was not recognized by the genteel, articulate women of Massachusetts of the Revolutionary era, the advocates of a 'bluestocking' kind of feminism.”

But even if she was not mentioned in 19th-century history books, Deborah Sampson Gannett, who died in 1827, was remembered and honored by some prominent Americans of that time.

On June 16, 1838, more than eight decades before the passage of the 19th Amendment guaranteed women the right to vote, John Quincy Adams—former president (1825–1829), secretary of state and senator—began an extraordinary filibuster. It lasted until the House of Representatives adjourned three weeks later. It was, Young writes, “a filibuster against [the] annexation of Texas, against slavery, for the right of petition—and for the right of women to participate in public life, the first such speech in Congress.”

During his marathon speech, Adams invoked Deborah Sampson Gannett’s record of military service in the Revolutionary War, and on June 28, 1838, he read aloud an excerpt from a House committee report stating, “That the whole history of the American Revolution records no case like this, and 'furnishes no other similar example of female heroism, fidelity and courage.'”

Forgotten and rediscovered many times since then, Gannett’s story has been told and retold, marginalized, sensationalized and misappropriated. Recently, historians have begun using new techniques to write accurate histories of those women who have made a mark on history but left behind little evidence. These techniques require them to act as detectives, tracking down clues in the field rather than reading papers in archives. Now, instead of viewing Deborah Gannett through the distorted lens of The Female Review, a much clearer image—that of a gifted, complex woman of “uncommon native intellect and fortitude”—is emerging, and in the process it is transforming our understanding of women’s roles in the American Revolution.

Nadine Goff wrote about Eliza Pinckney for the January/February 2008 issue.

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“We commonly form our Idea of the person whom we hear spoken off [sic], whom we have never seen, according as their actions are described, when I heard her spoken off as a Soldier, I formed the Idea of a tall, Masculine female, who had a small share of understanding [sic], without education, & one of the meanest of her Sex. — When I saw and discourse[d] with [her] I was agreeably surpris[ed] [sic] to fine [sic] a small, effeminate and conversable [sic] Woman, whose education entitles her to a better situation in life.”

—Excerpt from a letter from Paul Revere to congressman William Eustis Esq., written after he visited Deborah Sampson Gannett at her home in Sharon, Mass., in 1804. Revere and Gannett became friends; one of her two surviving letters was written to him, asking for “the loan of ten Dollars for a Short time.”

When a woman successfully masquerades as a man, we find ourselves, like Paul Revere, wondering what she really looks like without her disguise.

Deborah Sampson Gannett’s image has been painted with both words and oils, but the pictures that emerge are often contradictory. While Revere found her “effeminate,” biographer Herman Mann offered a notably different portrait in The Female Review:

“Her aspect is rather masculine and serene than effeminate and silly jocose. Her waist might displease a coquette, but her limbs are regularly proportioned. Ladies of taste consider them handsome, when in the masculine garb.”

In addition to knowing Gannett personally, Mann also commissioned Massachusetts artist Joseph Stone of Framingham to paint a portrait of her for the frontispiece of his book.

Patrick J. Leonard of the Canton Massachusetts Historical Society writes that the picture, now in the John Brown Museum in Providence, R.I., “... is far from flattering... but one does get the impression of a woman with calm level blue eyes, rather blonde hair, a prominent nose and a pugilistic chin.”

In Stone’s painting, Gannett has long hair and wears a dress. However, in 1954, when the United States Military Academy at West Point commissioned German military illustrator Herbert Knotel to create a watercolor painting of Gannett for an exhibit honoring women in the military, he depicted her in a military uniform. Historian Alfred F. Young, author of Masquerade: The Life and Times of Deborah Sampson, Continental Soldier, writes that, “Deborah came out tall, thin, impossibly long-limbed, with a smiling face, pouting lips and well-coiffed hair—a cute but ridiculous figure, compatible with the Army’s expectations of women.”

Young notes that the statue of Gannett that has stood in front of the public library in Sharon, Mass., since 1989 attempts to reach a compromise about whether its subject was masculine or feminine by depicting her in a plain dress, with the coat of a Continental soldier draped over her shoulder. There is a tricorn hat in her left hand and a powderhorn in her right hand. Her left arm steadies a musket. Young speculates that the statue, created by sculptor Lu Stubbs, “can be read as a reassuring image saying that a woman can be a soldier with a gun and remain a woman in a dress—in other words, that she can ‘have it all.’”

American Spirit • May/June 2009
Although a significant number of German immigrants crossed the Atlantic Ocean to Colonial America, they didn’t scatter across the Colonies. Instead, they streamlined their movements, mostly choosing Pennsylvania as their destination. The census of 1790 showed that about one-third of the population of Pennsylvania was German. New England, on the other hand, failed to attract German immigrants. Five of the six New England states had a population that was 0.5 percent or less German. Maine’s German population weighed in at 1.3 percent, largely due to the town of Waldoboro, perhaps the most significant Colonial settlement of Germans in New England. The unusual, and sometimes tragic, story of these hearty pioneers broke the mold of New England settlements and left a distinctive imprint that can still be seen on the town today.
The First German Settlers

The German settlers didn’t select Waldoboro, then known as Broad Bay and part of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, as their home. Instead, Samuel Waldo, who owned the land, recruited them. “Waldo was a land speculator and salesman who used many methods, many of them unscrupulous, to sell and populate his tracts of land,” says Thomas Jordan, president of the Waldoboro Historical Society.

“The climate here ... is very healthful and the soil extremely fruitful and yields all kinds of produce as in Germany,” Waldo noted in a 1741 circular distributed in Germany. “Game also is most plentiful in these forests, and the streams abound with fish.” Waldo also wrote a contract promising assistance. He agreed to build two 35-square-foot, two-story houses and a church at Broad Bay before the settlers arrived. He also vowed to pay the salaries of a surveyor, physician, preacher and schoolmaster for the first few years. And, finally, he promised to shoulder responsibility for housing maintenance and food for one year.

More than 200 settlers responded to Waldo’s call. In March of 1742, they assembled to begin their journey. But the trip quickly became a fiasco. As the delays and costs mounted, some of the travelers turned back. The group, which had dwindled down to 140 Germans, didn’t reach Broad Bay until late October.

As their ships made their way into the bay, the scene that unfolded in front of them must have been a shock. Instead of the two houses and church, they found a couple of crude log cabins. Instead of a village, they found only a few acres of cleared land still studded with stumps. And winter would be arriving soon. As Jacob Stahl wrote in History of Old Broad Bay and Waldoboro (The Bond Wheelwright Company, 1956), “In the hearts of some there must have been a consciousness of cruel deception, as well as a vague sense of betrayal, as they gazed for the first time in their lives on the vast, untenanted wilderness.”

The settlers struggled through that first winter, suffering from exposure and lack of food. But the worst was yet to come. In 1744, King George’s War—a war between the French and English that sucked in the American Indians and New England settlers—broke out. The settlers moved to forts for protection as the tribes killed cattle and launched isolated attacks on people and homes. The culminating point came in May 1746 when a large band of American Indians attacked the village. Some villagers fled; others
were captured, killed or carried away to Canada as prisoners. The town, Stahl quoted one observer as saying, was “almost entirely laid waste” and burned to the ground. By the time the hostilities ended, most of the Broad Bay families had been killed, captured or had escaped to build another home.

**Rising From the Ashes**

Still, this was not to be the end of Broad Bay. Waldo returned to his recruitment efforts. This time, he sent his son to Germany where he succeeded in recruiting some small groups of settlers over the next few years. In September 1753, another large group arrived—this time with 60 families.

The conditions that greeted these new arrivals weren’t much different from those that had greeted the immigrants years earlier. Just as Maine didn’t suddenly develop a “healthful” climate, neither did Waldo suddenly become concerned about keeping his word.

Waldoboro, despite being wiped out two different times, managed to survive through the centuries with its German heritage intact. Below: The German Meeting House dates to 1772, one of the oldest remaining structures in Waldoboro.
“They did not receive the full measure of provisions promised by Waldo,” Jordan says. “The majority of the new settlers were housed in a shed without heat and generally unfit for humans in the best of weather. Seventeen people died from exposure and starvation.” These settlers were buried in a mass unmarked grave.

Making matters worse, hostilities continued with the American Indians. The new families had to immediately begin fortifying their community. Soon the French and Indian War began. Fortunately this time, a big attack never came, although many people lost their lives in isolated incidents.

By 1760, peace had finally arrived in Waldoboro. The settlers continued to struggle and work hard, but they had reached a turning point. Conditions never got as bleak again. “They faced obstacles and deprivations, but they stayed and endured—and not only endured, but built a vibrant, thriving community,” says David Putnam, president of the Broad Bay Family History Association.

**Waldoboro Today**

Because of its German heritage, Waldoboro always had a different identity from its neighbors. That difference can still be seen in the buildings and street names. But it’s not just Waldoboro’s heritage that makes it unique; it’s how well that heritage has been preserved. Many residents today trace their families back to these mid-18th-century settlers. “People here have a sense of their history,” Putnam explains. “There are very few towns that take the kind of pride in their roots that these people do.”

Last year, the community erected a memorial at a local school dedicated to those 17 pioneers who died in the winter of 1753. As Putnam says, the memorial “will serve as a constant reminder of Waldoboro’s heritage—of those brave settlers who were willing to take risks to create this community.”

Leslie Albrecht Huber wrote about Colonial-era courtesy books for the March/April 2008 issue.
A Shaker-style hat displayed at the Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill in Harrodsburg, Ky.
In May 1774, “Mother” Ann Lee and a group of followers set sail for America. Like countless Colonials, they were fleeing England because of religious persecution. They were thought to be members of a Quaker sect, and many of them already had been jailed in England. America offered them the chance of freedom—and the opportunity to spread their beliefs.

BY LESLIE GILBERT ELMAN
Arriving on August 6, 1774, Mother Ann settled with her group in Watervliet, N.Y., near Albany, where she and her followers proceeded to set up a community and recruit converts to the Shaker sect. But they were not welcomed with open arms there either. Mother Ann was even jailed briefly in 1780 when she and the Shakers refused to pledge allegiance to the Colonial cause against the British. New York Governor George Clinton released her only after she assured him that the Shakers had no intention of taking either side in the war—in fact, the pacifist group opposed the conflict altogether.

Though Ann Lee died just 10 years after arriving in New York, the results of her “revolution” continue to this day in Shaker style, craftsmanship and philosophies of equality and simplified living. An adaptation of the Shaker song “Simple Gifts,” written in 1848 by Elder Joseph Brackett Jr. at the Shaker community in Alfred, Maine, figured prominently in the inauguration ceremony of President Barack Obama in January. And in New Lebanon in upstate New York, ongoing efforts aim to bring the site of America’s most prominent and influential Shaker community back to life. The slow but steady restoration of the buildings there, which has been in progress for years, will also eventually bring the Shaker Museum and Library in nearby Old Chatham, N.Y., back to its rightful home.

THE COMMUNITY

Broad-minded and industrious, the Shakers preached pacifism and gender and racial equality. At their mid-1800s zenith, there were 19 Shaker communities with some 6,000 residents stretching from Maine to Kentucky.

Of all the communities, the one known as Mount Lebanon, located at New Lebanon, N.Y., near the Massachusetts border, was considered the most significant. “From Mount Lebanon all things Shaker developed,” says Jerry V. Grant, director of research at the Shaker Museum and Library. It was where all the rules and standards of the community were determined, from the way Shakers worshipped to the designs of their famous furniture to the width of the brims on the men’s hats.
Mother Ann didn’t live to see the Shaker community at Mount Lebanon; its construction began in 1785 under the direction of her successor, Father James Whittaker, and the Shakers settled there in 1787. Predictably, its first building was a meetinghouse—the first Shaker meetinghouse in the United States—which was followed by separate dormitory-style dwellings for men and for women (to maintain the Shakers’ practice of celibacy).

By 1860, the community had grown to 600 members who set up smaller enclaves, known as “families” (the North Family, the South Family and so on), on the 6,000-acre Mount Lebanon site. They built barns, workshops, manufacturing facilities, storage buildings, living spaces and meetinghouses—and they worked at a variety of pursuits that kept them self-reliant yet connected to the outside world. They produced and sold their renowned handcrafted furniture, packaged seeds and herbal medicines, and produced cloth for sale. They published books and pamphlets, wrote poetry and music, actively recruited members, and invited outsiders to watch and participate in their worship services. Authors Charles Dickens and E.M. Forster were among those who visited Mount Lebanon. (Forster’s account of his visit in his 1951 book Two Cheers for Democracy was surprisingly derisive and factually inaccurate.) It’s also said that P.T. Barnum bought woolen horse blankets from the Mount Lebanon Shakers.

**THE BUILDINGS**

One of most memorable buildings at Mount Lebanon was the Great Stone Barn, located on what was once the North Family site. Measuring 50 feet wide and nearly 200 feet long, the four-story structure built in 1859 was the largest stone barn in the United States. In a 1947 interview with The New Yorker’s Berton Roueche shortly before the Mount Lebanon community disbanded, Sister Jennie Wells explained, “We’re a very practical people. There’s no foolishness about anything we do. Our barn was made the length it is for good reason. The men wanted to have enough room for a dozen or more loaded wagons on the floor at the road level … [and] it’s wide enough for a big team and wagon to turn around in. The reason it’s built on a slope is so hay can be hauled in at the top floor and pitched down to the mows. Then it’s pitched down from there into the stock stalls below. In most barns … hay has to be pitched up … [but] Shakers have never seen any sense in fighting against gravity.”

Even after the Shakers left Mount Lebanon in 1947, the Great Stone Barn marked the North Family site until 1972 when it was gutted by arson. News of the damage to the barn, followed by the planned demolition of the North Family’s...
First Dwelling House (ostensibly to discourage further vandalism), galvanized support to rescue and preserve the Mount Lebanon site. But funding was not forthcoming, and despite the site having achieved National Historic Landmark status in 1965, both the World Monuments Fund and the National Park Service eventually placed it on their “endangered” lists.

Grants from the state of New York and the federal government helped get the restoration of the Great Stone Barn started. “It’s the highest priority of the design and engineering projects we have in progress; it’s also the slowest and the most delicate,” says David Stocks, president of the Shaker Museum and Library, which owns 10 buildings on the North Family site.

Students of historic preservation and historic building trades spent the summers of 2006 and 2007 at field schools in New Lebanon assessing the Great Stone Barn. They took the first steps to shore up its walls with appropriate materials, experimenting with burning limestone and oyster shells to make lime mortar (though the actual mortar was made by Virginia Lime Works). Work on the barn continues, and Stocks cautiously hopes that it will be completed by 2010. A two-story wood-frame Wash House that was sliding off its brick foundation and down a hill has also been stabilized. Work also has been done to the timber frame and the exterior of the Granary building, which Stocks says is in “relatively good shape compared to the other buildings.”

In the course of the restoration another interesting challenge has bubbled to the surface—literally. On the North Family site is a Shaker-built system of millraces and underground aqueducts. “They took the water from the mountains and harnessed it into power, similar to the technology used for paper and textile mills at the time,” Stocks explains. But what the typically meticulous Shakers apparently did not do was draw a map of the underground channels that would have helped today’s preservation crews document—and avoid—them. As a result, one of the projects for 2009 will be a three-month field study sponsored by the National Park Service’s Historic American Landscapes Survey to document the Shaker waterworks on the site.

Work will also continue on the Great Stone Barn, with the World Monuments Fund sponsoring five scholarships for students to do historic preservation projects at the site. A public course on timber-frame construction is also on the calendar for this year. The ultimate plan—not yet set in stone—is to relocate the Shaker Museum and Library to the site and possibly use part of it as an education center for both Shaker history and historic building trades.

“This is not a Gilded Age house; these were working buildings,” Stocks says. “We don’t want to be a passive museum; we want to be an active community.”

Leslie Gilbert Elman is a freelance writer in New York.
John S. Williams Sr., a New York City stockbroker, began collecting decorative Shaker objects and farming equipment in 1935, when he was in his 30s. According to Jerry V. Grant, director of research at the Shaker Museum and Library in Old Chatham, N.Y., Williams was attracted to the pieces because of their ethnography. Yet it wasn’t long before his intellectual curiosity became a sustaining passion.

Williams bought a farm in Old Chatham, about 10 miles away from the Mount Lebanon Shaker community, where he raised Aberdeen Angus cattle and stepped up his acquisitions of Shaker artifacts by doing business with his neighbors. As the Shakers died out and their communities began disappearing, Williams bought up the entire contents of Shaker workshops, forges and other buildings. Most came from Mount Lebanon, but some came from Shaker communities at Sabbathday Lake, Maine; Hancock, Mass.; and Canterbury, N.H.

In 1950, three years after the last seven Shakers left Mount Lebanon, Williams founded the Shaker Museum and Library in a vacant dairy barn on his Old Chatham farm. By the time he died in 1982 at the age of 80, he had amassed what is arguably the finest known collection of Shaker objects and furniture. Today the museum’s collection, expanded through donations and acquisitions, contains more than 40,000 objects and archival items, 80 percent of which come from Mount Lebanon.

With the help of a Save America’s Treasures grant in 2001, the Shaker Museum and Library acquired the Mount Lebanon site with the intention of shoring up its existing buildings and moving its collection back to Mount Lebanon—the Shakers’ once and perhaps the Museum’s future home.
Colonies and states sometimes went to war to protect their borders—from each other.

By Bill Hudgins
In 2008, Governor Sonny Perdue of Georgia declared that a tiny slice of neighboring Tennessee actually belongs to the Peachtree State, and that Tennessee should give it back. He signed a resolution to negotiate with Tennessee Governor Phil Bredesen and, if the talks fail, he plans to take the matter to the United States Supreme Court.

The action received national media coverage—some of which seemed politely amused at the revival of a 190-year-old dispute over a surveying error. The notion of one state staking a claim to another seemed somehow quaint—Bredesen was quoted as saying “Is this a joke?” when informed of Georgia’s assertion.

No joke—a slight shift of Tennessee’s entire southern border would allow thirsty Georgia to tap into Nickajack Lake on the Tennessee River to slake a multi-year drought. It would reset the border about a mile north to the 35th parallel where Congress decreed it should be in 1796, lining it up with North Carolina’s southern boundary. And as an unintended consequence, it would also give Mississippi legal claim to part of sprawling Memphis, since the city goes right to the border.

Georgia’s claim has roots in a late-18th-century dustup with North Carolina, which insisted that its southern border had been inaccurately surveyed. The boundary with Georgia was supposed to follow the 35th North parallel of latitude. North Carolina claimed the surveyed border was 12 miles too far north; Georgia said it was less off the mark than that.

In 1808, Congress tried to settle the matter. It decreed that North Carolina was correct—the border should follow the actual 35th parallel. Unsatisfied, the Georgia militia clashed several times with North Carolina’s in an attempt to defend Georgia’s “property,” but lost each time. An 1818 survey intended to establish the border was later found to be too far south by about 1.1 miles. The disputed, water-rich slice of Tennessee is a by-product of this contretemps, since it lies in the affected zone. The chronic drought revived the old disagreement and an apparent standoff between the neighbors.

**Hold That Line**

The squabble is the latest of scores of border disputes that arose as Colonies sought to define their borders and, later, as territories evolved into states. Although most of these conflicting claims were settled at the negotiating table or in court, some led to angry confrontations and actual bloodshed. Some have never been officially settled, but lie dormant until one of the parties has a reason to renew them.

The disputes also account for some of the quirky outlines of states, where compromises jiggered the cartographer’s pen into
bizarre convolutions. Mark Stein’s *How the States Got Their Shapes*, reviewed in the November/December 2008 issue, gives many examples, some of which are recounted here.

Most early border disputes resulted from a combination of overlapping royal charters based on inaccurate maps and geographic guesswork, compounded by erroneous surveys. Often years passed before anyone noticed the discrepancies.

Meanwhile, settlers who believed they were residents of one colony established claims on disputed lands. Kings and judges generally balked at disrupting settled areas by redrawning boundaries, so they tended to rule for the colony that had the oldest charter or the most settlers in an area.

Some of those charters granted colonies extensive holdings in the western United States—“to the Pacific Ocean.” As settlers moved west after the Revolution, these grandly fuzzy grants were divided into territories and, eventually, states. Congress adopted a policy of trying to divide territories into new states of roughly equal size—this is much more apparent west of the Mississippi River. (Texas and California were notable exceptions because they were long-settled when they became part of the United States.)

Still, political and geographical factors forced Congress to zig and zag on boundaries. Disputes took years to work their way up to Washington, D.C., and by the time they did, Congress usually opted to preserve the status quo.

‘Freedom and Unity’

As might be expected, the original Colonies and earliest states had more than their share of boundary disputes. Robert Frost famously wrote that “good fences make good neighbors,” and it seems that bad borders made bad neighbors.

Early on, Vermont, for instance, embodied its future state motto, “Freedom and Unity.” It originally lay in land that had been claimed by the Dutch; the English also claimed the land through the Plymouth Colony Charter. Massachusetts and New Hampshire each claimed part of the southern section of Vermont. And, New York state asserted that it had inherited and preserved the old Dutch claims, so that it and New Hampshire each laid claim to what would later become Vermont (see www.freedomandunity.org). New York asserted that its eastern boundary was the Connecticut River (today’s eastern border of Vermont).

Massachusetts, Connecticut and New Hampshire disagreed, saying the Hudson River should be New York’s border. Much to their chagrin, after the Seven Years’ War, King George II in 1764 agreed with New York’s claim. According to Stein, historians think he did this to punish the hotbed of dissent in Massachusetts and to keep the land-hungry residents of New Hampshire from trying to settle in Canada.

Vermonters rejected the notion that they belonged to anyone but themselves and resisted settlement by the “Yorkers.” The famous Green Mountain Boys under Ethan Allen were a militia formed in part to defend the republic’s borders. When the American Revolution began, Vermont declared itself an independent republic and remained that until 1789, when Congress recognized it as a separate state with the borders it has today. Vermont entered the Union in 1791.

‘Them’s Fighting Words’

It’s hard to picture from today’s maps, but besides fighting with New York, Connecticut also waged a long-running border dispute with Pennsylvania in the latter half of the 18th century. The feud grew so bitter that fighting broke out; the clashes became known as the Yankee-Pennamite Wars.

Under their respective charters, each colony had overlapping western land claims in the Wyoming Valley, site of Wilkes-Barre, Pa. Frontier land sales were a good business, and the dispute escalated from words to battle.

According to the Society of Colonial Wars in the State of Connecticut (www.colonialwarsct.org/1769.htm), “there were two Yankee-Pennamite Wars with the Revolutionary War in between [the Yankees were the Connecticut forces]. During the first Yankee-Pennamite War two forts were built by the Yankees, one called Fort Durkee, located on the bank of the Susquehanna River close to the site of Wilkes University today and the other in Kingston, called Forty Fort … The Pennamites took shelter in a fort located in Wilkes-Barre … After the major Battle of Nanticoke in 1775, the Connecticut settlers were able to hold and stay in charge of the valley…”

After the Revolutionary War, settlers again flooded into the area, which was still in dispute. Congress eventually decided Pennsylvania had the stronger claim. Things might have remained peaceful, but Pennsylvania’s government decided to dispossess the Connecticut settlers from their land. Fighting resumed in 1784 and continued sporadically for years. Pennsylvania’s legislature finally reached a settlement with the “Yankees” in 1799.
Holy Toledo!

Some years after the Yankee-Pennamite Wars, Ohio and Michigan squared off in a dispute known as the Toledo War. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 defined Ohio’s northern border as “an east-west line drawn through the southerly bend of extreme Lake Michigan.” Congress also used the same description in 1805 to identify Michigan’s southern border.

Congress intended for these lines to run to Lake Erie north of the Maumee River’s mouth. Once again, faulty geography thwarted good intentions: The line actually fell south of the Maumee, leaving about 468 square miles of territory in dispute, including the site of Toledo, Ohio.

Ohio’s state constitution dictated that its northern boundary included the river’s mouth and, though Congress accepted the constitution, it did not clarify the boundary. This created a dispute with the then-territory of Michigan. In 1817, Ohio and the Michigan Territory obtained conflicting survey results that settled nothing.

As the Michigan Territory neared statehood in late 1833, Ohio pressed for a conclusive decision. In Congress, the House and Senate split over the matter. Michigan’s territorial governor offered to negotiate, but Ohio’s governor refused. Instead, the Ohio legislature created a county in the disputed area in an effort to further establish the Buckeye claim.

In 1835, both Michigan and Ohio called up their militias to defend their claim. President Andrew Jackson sent representatives to try to defuse the situation. Ohio agreed to a proposal to administer the area jointly with Michigan, but, when Michigan refused, Ohio dispatched its militia to seize the land.

The militias confronted each other across the Maumee River. Jackson ultimately replaced Michigan’s hard-nosed territorial governor with a more tractable leader, who soon negotiated a settlement. Ohio got the 468 square miles, and Jackson compensated Michigan with a big chunk of Wisconsin’s northeast corner, today known as the Upper Peninsula.

‘The Battle Queen of Yore’

Maryland’s warlike state song, “Maryland! My Maryland!” seems to hearken to the days when she waged simultaneous, interrelated disagreements with Virginia, Pennsylvania and Delaware. Geographic errors in her charter led Maryland to contest her eastern border with Virginia; the Old Dominion prevailed in keeping most of the Eastern Shore. Maryland also objected to Virginia’s claim of much of what is now the northern part of West Virginia. The Supreme Court finally decided that matter in 1910, dismissing Maryland’s claims.

Maryland and Pennsylvania feuded over their common border as well as over what to do with Delaware. The trouble started with errors in the royal charters that established the two Colonies. The land descriptions overlapped and were also subject to several interpretations.

One of the most important disagreements concerned the Maryland-Pennsylvania border. Maryland’s charter located it at the 40th North latitude—smack in the middle of Philadelphia. Years of negotiations finally resulted in setting Maryland’s northern border about 15 miles south of Philadelphia’s South Street. This allowed the prosperous port city to retain its vital access to the Delaware River and from there to the Atlantic.

The Penn family also coveted the region that became Delaware for its direct access to the ocean. The Dutch had claimed Delaware as part of their holdings. When England forced the Dutch out of America, Delaware appeared to fall within Maryland’s original charter.

But Delaware’s Protestant Dutch residents feared living under Maryland’s Catholic government and sought relief from the Crown. In 1685, a royal committee established Delaware as a separate colony.

North vs. South

As noted earlier, border disputes seem almost quaint today—unless you live in a spot some other state claims. Not so in the past. For instance, as the issue of slavery crossed state and territorial borders in the 19th century, Congress tried to strike compromises to balance new free and slave states. The entire nation followed the process, worried that “Bloody Kansas” foretold the cataclysm of the Civil War, as pro- and anti-slavery forces fought to control the new state’s destiny.

Ironically, it was a routine border survey more than a century before the American Civil War that provided one of the most enduring symbols of the war and its legacy of racial discrimination and sectional friction.

In 1763, Maryland and Pennsylvania agreed to resurvey their common border to finally establish the line. To be sure it was correct, they hired a pair of renowned British scientists to do the job. The resulting line became the symbolic border between North and South, free and slave states. It is the Mason-Dixon Line, known by the last names of the surveyors, Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon.

Bill Hudgins explored America’s campaign for Canada for the September/October 2008 issue.
Shaping the Peace


As Thomas Fleming demonstrates in The Perils of Peace: America’s Struggle for Survival After Yorktown (HarperCollins, 2007), the stunning American-French victory at Yorktown in 1781 was only one step along the road toward a cessation of hostilities. And it was by no means a guarantee that the United States would remain either united or independent of Great Britain.

The victory deeply worried Commander in Chief George Washington, because he feared the war-weary nation and the feckless Congress would regard it as a final stroke. The British army was still in the field, while its navy blockaded America’s ports. Loyalists and hostile American Indian tribes continued to raid and pillage. If the country equated the victory with the end of the war, the Continental Army might be disbanded, leaving the states wide open to their enemies.

Not all enemies wore red coats. A powerful faction in Congress headed by Arthur Lee and Sam Adams, and aided by John Adams as a peace commissioner in France, viciously attacked aided by John Adams as a peace commissioner in France, viciously attacked aided by John Adams as a peace commissioner in France, viciously attacked aided by John Adams as a peace commissioner in France, viciously attacked aided by John Adams as a peace commissioner in France, viciously attacked aided by John Adams as a peace commissioner in France, viciously attacked aided by John Adams as a peace commissioner in France, viciously attacked aided by John Adams as a peace commissioner in France, viciously attacked aided by John Adams as a peace commissioner in France, viciously attacked aided by John Adams as a peace commissioner in France, viciously attacked aided by John Adams as a peace commissioner in France, viciously attacked aided by John Adams as a peace commissioner in France, viciously attacked aided by John Adams as a peace commissioner in France, viciously attacked aided by John Adams as a peace commissioner in France, viciously attacked aided by John Adams as a peace commissioner in France, viciously attack...
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