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A nation's infancy

ALMA MATER OF A NATION
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Marvel at the works of a visionary and his revolutionary company at the “Wedgwood: 250 Years of Innovation and Artistry” exhibit at the DAR Museum.
BY NANCY MANN JACKSON

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BY LENA ANTHONY

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Our cover feature on Wedgwood spotlights just a small sample of the catalog of beautiful ceramics in the company’s storied history. In 1759, Josiah Wedgwood, an apprentice potter in England, left his job at an established workshop and opened his own pottery business. This year, to celebrate its 250th anniversary, Wedgwood will join the DAR Museum as it presents a new exhibition, “Wedgwood: 250 Years of Innovation and Artistry” from October 3, 2009, through February 27, 2010. I hope many readers plan to attend the exhibit illustrating the legacy of a talented visionary and featuring 200 diverse pieces dating from the 1700s to today.

Only twice in U.S. history has the fertility rate been on the rise: during Colonial times and the post-WWII baby boom. In Benjamin Franklin’s time, the U.S. population doubled about every 24 years, reflecting a remarkable annual growth rate of 3 percent. Our feature explores reasons for the rise in birthrate and its rather steep fall after independence was won.

The College of William and Mary, founded by a royal charter by King William III and Queen Mary II in 1693, made many contributions to the new republic. Besides educating Thomas Jefferson, James Monroe, John Marshall and other Founding Fathers, it claims several “firsts,” including the first college in the nation to institute an honor code.

Essayist Judith Sargent Murray was one of the nation’s first voices to dismiss the prevailing view of women’s inherent inferiority, pointing out in her 1790 essay, “On the Equality of the Sexes,” that women’s lack of education created this impression. We explore how Murray’s assertions of female equality and appeals for quality female education influenced the public conversation, leading to 19th-century movements for women suffrage and equal rights.

Those travelers who love the Pacific Northwest will enjoy our story on Friday Harbor, Wash. The seat of San Juan County, a series of small islands just off the coast of mainland Washington state, is celebrating its 100th birthday this year. The town’s history is a quirky one, involving a skirmish over a British pig.

Capturing your family’s oral history is made less intimidating by the tips in our Genealogy Sleuth story. Today family historians can draw upon numerous online resources in a quest to gather valuable snippets of their personal history.

From the President General

Linda Gist Calvin
These are exciting times for breast cancer research, and in the center of it all is Dr. Deborah Dillon, assistant professor at Harvard Medical School and molecular genetic pathologist at Brigham and Women’s Hospital.

When breast cancer patients go to Boston’s Dana Farber Cancer Institute or Brigham and Women’s Hospital (an affiliate of Harvard Medical School) to see a surgeon, oncologist or radiation therapist, Dr. Dillon and her colleagues review slides from their biopsies, excisions and mastectomies to determine what type of breast cancer they have and how aggressive it is likely to be. They also identify the tumor’s other critical characteristics, such as hormone receptor expression and status of a protein called HER2/neu.

“This information helps the surgeon decide whether margins need to be re-excised, whether they need to sample lymph nodes or to do any additional surgery,” she explains. “It also helps the radiation therapists decide whether to irradiate the breast and helps the oncologists decide on the best therapy for the patient.”

Gone are the days of one-solution-fits-all cancer therapy. Pathologists like Dr. Dillon help oncologists customize breast cancer therapy to the individual patient.

“The idea of tailoring therapies to the particular features of an individual patient’s tumor has really changed the paradigm in cancer medicine,” she says. “Right now, the expression of hormone receptors and HER2/neu by a patient’s tumor largely determines which therapies are likely to be successful in a patient. Since these therapies still fail to stop the cancer in some patients, researchers are continually working to discover even more specific molecular changes in tumors that can be targeted by specific drugs.”

When Dr. Dillon is not analyzing tissue under her microscope, she’s designing experiments to test new molecular markers in breast cancer, discussing results with colleagues and collaborators, and reviewing scientific literature. She also teaches residents and fellows at Brigham and Women’s Hospital and medical students at Harvard Medical School.

Dr. Dillon says debating diagnoses and treatment with her colleagues is one of the most rewarding parts of her job. “The most interesting research ideas come out of clinical discussions, usually of a challenging clinical diagnostic or treatment problem,” she says. “That’s exactly the sort of thing that needs to be addressed in the laboratory. What we discover in the lab can go back into the clinic to improve how patients with breast cancer are treated.”

Dr. Dillon is a member of the Piety Hill Chapter, Birmingham, Mich., and a wife and a mother to three active children. “Balance is a challenge,” she says. “Fortunately, my husband has always been supportive of my career and involved in our children’s lives. Our children understand that it has not been easy for me to make it to every school play and swim meet, but I think they have also learned from me the excitement of working at the frontiers of knowledge and the importance of helping others.”
Peggy Doheny, Ph.D.

PIONEER OF OSTEOPOROSIS RESEARCH

It’s been almost 15 years since Peggy Doheny, Ph.D., a professor at Kent State University’s College of Nursing, began her research on osteoporosis, a bone disease that predominantly affects post-menopausal women. She’s proud of the strides she and her research team have made during that time, but she also knows there’s so much more to be done to help prevent this devastating disease—in both women and men.

“Since we started our research, [understanding about] osteoporosis has become more mainstream,” she says. “Fifteen years ago, it was thought of as an old woman’s disease. But that’s just not true.

“When we would talk to men, they’d say, ‘Talk to my wife, not me.’ Now you see osteoporosis research focusing on men all the time. We were really on the leading edge back then.”

Dr. Doheny’s interest in osteoporosis developed when she was working as an orthopedic nurse at Kent State University Hospital, where she saw so many patients who were debilitated by hip fractures. “It was just devastating,” she says, “especially knowing it was something that probably could have been prevented.”

But prevention doesn’t come easily. “You can teach people about prevention, but changing behaviors is very difficult,” says Dr. Doheny, who is currently applying for a grant that would allow her to explore osteoporosis interventions, such as helping individuals increase their calcium intake and encouraging them to exercise more. Once the behavior is changed, the reward is great. “A man who participated in one of our studies contacted me after he found out he had low bone mass and told me I saved his life. It’s those kinds of things that make what I do fulfilling and worthwhile.”

Dr. Doheny has been recognized for the accomplishments she has made in her research career with awards from the National Association of Orthopaedic Nurses and invitations to share her research findings around the world, including in Japan and Singapore. She has even presented prevention tips to her fellow members of the Hannah Luther Bosworth Chapter, Strongsville, Ohio.

April Sandmeyer

A CHAMPION FOR HER COMMUNITY’S HEALTH

April Sandmeyer is an advocate for her community’s health in various ways, many of which have gone unheralded. In 1995 she wrote a letter to the Avon Foundation on behalf of a women’s community center in Brooklyn, N.Y. That letter resulted in the center receiving a $100,000 grant to help minority women get free mammograms and treatment for breast cancer. Earlier this year, she took an elderly neighbor with a speech disorder to the hospital and stayed with her for more than 10 hours to help her communicate with the doctor. She has also paid rent, bought groceries, done laundry, cooked and cleaned for sick and elderly neighbors.

Ms. Sandmeyer is also a champion for diabetes prevention, a cause she began supporting when her best friend died from complications from the disease at age 28. “I have witnessed the horrors of the blindness and amputations due to diabetes,” she says. “It’s a really devastating illness that can be prevented or managed if people take care of their diets and exercise and get diagnosed early.” As a volunteer with the American Diabetes Association, she urges Congress to fund medical research and prevention programs, and she spreads the word about free preventive care available in New York City. Each year on World Diabetes Day, Ms. Sandmeyer lights up her apartment with blue lights, which symbolize diabetes awareness. “They do this all around the world every November 14,” she says. “It’s a very dramatic statement that gets people talking.”

Ms. Sandmeyer has volunteered for numerous other causes, including the prevention and treatment of asthma, lung disease, AIDS and heart disease. She and her daughter Maya also spend one Saturday afternoon a month acting as ambassadors for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. “Two of my uncles died from leukemia, but that’s not why we got involved,” she says. “Every group we’ve joined has been due to a request for volunteers in the community. The need for volunteers has increased due to budget cuts caused by the economy.”

Her willingness to help others is also how she was introduced to DAR. “My neighbor, who was my mother’s best friend, had become too old to go to her DAR meetings by herself, and she asked me to accompany her,” she says. “I went to every single meeting she had for about five years.”

Ms. Sandmeyer, Regent of the Anne Hutchinson Chapter, Bronxville, N.Y., has encouraged her fellow Daughters to get involved in health causes as well. “One person alone can make a big difference,” she says, “but a group of us can really make a lasting impact.”

To nominate a Daughter for a future issue, e-mail a description to americanspirit@dar.org.
National Treasures
Step inside the DAR Museum for a closer look at its fascinating collection.

Seats of Honor

The side chair (right), with its elaborate, hand-decorated, gilt stenciling, was made in Baltimore, Md., between 1815 and 1825 out of tulip poplar and maple woods. In the neoclassical style, the gilt décor features a Roman helmet, sheathed sword and stylized floral motifs called anthemions. The distinctive shape of this chair, with its exaggerated angled back and wide tablet-form crest rail, is taken from the ancient Greco-Roman klismos design. The chair descended in the Key family of Maryland and was a gift to the DAR Museum from Martha Maddox Key. Family member Francis Scott Key wrote “The Star-Spangled Banner” during the War of 1812.

This delicate painted armchair (left) was made in England between 1800 and 1810. It was one of a set of 16 that originally sat in the Octagon, a classical-style three-story brick house in Washington, D.C., designed by Colonial architect Dr. William Thornton. Built between 1799 and 1801 for the Colonel John Tayloe family, the Octagon was the temporary presidential mansion for James and Dolley Madison after the British burned the White House in 1814. Madison signed the Treaty of Ghent, which ended the War of 1812, in the house in 1815. The chair was a gift to the DAR Museum from the Misses McKean.
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WHEN 24-YEAR-OLD Theodore Roosevelt stepped off a train and onto the Dakota Territory in September 1883, he probably never dreamed that his experiences in North Dakota would lead to him becoming president in 1901. But after hunting bison, raising cattle on Maltese Cross Ranch and exploring the Badlands, Roosevelt wrote that he would never have become president if it were not for those experiences in the West.

Today, the Badlands area is the backdrop for Theodore Roosevelt National Park, which memorializes our 26th president’s contributions to conserving America’s natural resources. On more than 70,000 acres of land, the park is home to bison, elk, deer, coyotes, badgers and wild horses in addition to more than 185 bird species. The Little Missouri River flows through the North and South units of the park (a third unit, the Elkhorn Ranch Unit, is accessible but undeveloped), changing from a tiny trickle to a powerful stream that cuts through the Badlands. Visitors can have a bird’s eye view of the river from the Wind Canyon overlook in the South unit or the River Bend Outlook in the North unit. Those looking for adventure can explore the Little Missouri by canoe or kayak.

Theodore Roosevelt National Park is open year-round, but roads could be closed in winter months. Campsites are available for a modest fee. For more information, visit www.nps.gov/thro.

Daniel Boone Turns 275

From scouting the frontier to leading militias to serving as a legislator, Daniel Boone led one of the most eventful lives in early American history. This year, in honor of Boone’s 275th birthday, Fort Boonesborough in Richmond, Ky., will hold a special celebration October 17–18. The program will include a play about Boone’s arrival in Kentucky by re-enactor Scott New, wares from 18th-century camp traders and merchants, and other demonstrations of life in the 18th century. Meredith Mason Brown, author of Frontiersman: Daniel Boone and the Making of America, and Neal O. Hammon, author of My Father, Daniel Boone and Daniel Boone and the Defeat at Blue Licks, will be on hand to describe the life of the famous frontiersman. For more information, visit www.fortboonesboroughlivinghistory.org.
Exploring the Queen City

Travelers in search of a central base for fall foliage tours often choose Burlington, Vt. The town also rewards visitors with plenty of early American history. In 1763, Benning Wentworth, New Hampshire’s Colonial governor, granted land to what is now Vermont to establish Burlington, and in 1775, settlers began to clear the land and erect log cabins for the town. The American Revolution delayed further building until 1783, but by 1785 the town was organized and functioning.

Known as Vermont’s Queen City, the town’s position on Lake Champlain established it as a port of entry and center for trade. In the 19th century, waterfront wharves drew steamboats to the bustling city, making it a center for lumbering and manufacturing. Thanks to its prosperity in the Victorian era, the city is home to plenty of historic architecture.

Burlington features lakefront paths, a pedestrian marketplace and plenty of venues for culture and arts. Be sure to check out one of the city’s tours, including Lake Champlain Cruises’ scenic lunch tours. And don’t miss the historic Ethan Allen Homestead Museum, the home Vermont founder Ethan Allen had built in 1787.

This unique destination is located within a day’s drive of Montreal, Boston and New York. For more information, visit www.vermont.org.

South Dakota’s Oldest Public Institution Faces Demolition

THE HUMAN SERVICES CENTER—originally known as the South Dakota Hospital for the Insane—is South Dakota’s oldest public institution. The 65-acre campus in Yankton, S.D., was constructed between 1882 and 1942 and features neoclassical, Art Deco and Prairie architecture. It was here in the 1890s that Dr. Leonard Mead employed his groundbreaking idea of creating a therapeutic environment to assist the mentally unstable. Up to this time, asylums for the mentally ill were sterile and frightening facilities.

After a tragic fire in 1899 killed 17 patients, Dr. Mead worked to ensure that the remaining buildings were constructed of thick stone walls, clay tile roofs and concrete for fireproofing purposes. An amateur architect himself, Dr. Mead left his artistic footprint on many of the buildings by adding large porches, arches, pillars, coffered ceilings and terrazzo floors.

Many of the buildings are constructed of Sioux quartzite quarried in South Dakota, and each boasts architectural features such as Carrara marble and granite staircases and large, sunny rooms. Now, more than 125 years after the institution was founded, the state plans to demolish many of the historic buildings on its campus. Not only does the architecture represent important periods in South Dakota history, but the legacy of the Human Services Center is important to the state’s social history as well. The center has been named to the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s 11 Most Endangered Places List. For more information, visit www.preservationnation.org.
When New York film critic Godfrey Cheshire learns of his cousin’s plans to move the family’s ancestral home, Midway Plantation, from near Raleigh, N.C., to a new location, an extraordinary story unfolds. But before he picked up the video camera, Cheshire had no way to know what kinds of twists and turns the story would take.

For starters, his cousin’s decision to uproot and relocate the historic home is a source of contention within the family. But when an African-American family approaches the Cheshire clan claiming that an affair between their great-great-great-grandfather, Charles Hinton, and a slave cook named Selanie, has linked both families to Midway, the plot thickens. “Moving Midway,” Cheshire’s documentary of the plantation’s relocation, starts as a record of moving a Southern plantation, and quickly escalates into an emotional dialogue on the history of Midway from two opposite perspectives.

Once the plantation finds a new home in a rural area away from the bustle of Raleigh, Cheshire reaches out to cousins in the African-American family, and quickly the two families form bonds. By the time the historic property is ready for reopening, the Cheshires realize that Midway’s “family” has been forever redefined. For more information, visit www.movingmidway.com.
Ever since Deborah Sampson Gannett disguised herself as a man and joined the ranks of the Continental Army (as loyal readers will remember from our May/June issue), American women have gone to great lengths to serve our nation during wartime. While most female soldiers served as medical or support staff in previous wars, many women fighting in the War on Terror serve in direct combat roles—and the documentary film “Lioness” tells their story. Made by documentary filmmakers Meg McLagan and Daria Sommers, the film highlights a group of Army support soldiers who were among the first female soldiers to be sent into direct ground combat. Told through interviews with military commanders, journal entries and archival footage, the film follows five women who served together for a year in Iraq as they defuse tensions with Iraqi citizens and fight alongside Marines in Ramadi, while integrating scenes of their lives at home. The film illustrates how the emotional and psychological strain of war can affect the women who serve our country.

“Lioness” has screened at a number of film festivals and Veterans’ events around the country. For more information about screenings or to purchase the film on DVD, visit www.lionessthefilm.com.
In 1639, the namesake of the **Lady Fenwick Chapter**, *Cheshire, Conn.*, came to the settlement and fort at the mouth of the Connecticut River as the bride of George Fenwick, one of the gentlemen colonists who first came to Connecticut in 1635. The couple lived in a “faire house well fortified” within the fort, near the bank of the river. Lady Fenwick reportedly was tall and graceful, with a wealth of auburn hair. It was written of her that she loved to ride horseback and could be seen practicing with her “shooting iron.” Soon after the birth of her second child, Dorothy, Lady Fenwick died from complications of childbirth. She was buried on a small hill within the fort. In choosing its name, the Lady Fenwick Chapter honored her spirit of adventure and tenacity in the face of the unknown.

The **Lynnhaven Parish Chapter, Virginia Beach, Va.**, is named after one of the oldest designated areas in what is now the city of Virginia Beach. “Parishes” of Virginia were grants of land along rivers. The boundaries of the Lynnhaven Parish were first defined by the Assembly at Jamestown in 1642 and can be found in *Hening’s Statutes at Large*. This called for “the parish of Linhaven to begin at the first creek shooting out of the Chesopiak Bay called Little Creek, including all branches of the eastern branch of the Elizabeth River to a creek on the northward side of the said branch called Broad Creek.” These boundary lines were later used when Princess Anne County was formed out of Lower Norfolk in 1691.

The namesake of the **Elizabeth Peyre Richardson Manning Chapter**, *Manning, S.C.*, was born and lived her entire life in what is now Clarendon County, S.C. She was the daughter of John Peter Richardson and Floride Bonneau Peyre. She was the wife of Richard Irvin Manning, mother of Richard Irvin Manning, grandmother of Richard Irvin Manning, sister of John Peter Richardson and niece of James Burchell Richardson, all of whom were governors of South Carolina. Mrs. Manning lived from 1794, right after the American Revolution, to 1873, after the Civil War. She was a major influence in providing educational opportunities for women in the state.

Does your chapter name have an unusual story behind it? E-mail a description to americanspirit@dar.org.
Wedgwood: 250 Years of Artistry and Innovation
DAR Museum, Washington, D.C.,
October 3, 2009–February 27, 2010
Since the company’s founding by Josiah Wedgwood in 1759, the famous china company has created thousands of ware types, patterns and forms. The exhibit will illustrate how the china has changed since its conception, and how successive generations of the Wedgwood family, craftsmen and artists have changed the face of English ceramics. (See story on page 22.)

Museums of Old York
York, Maine, ongoing
Celebrate the legacy of York, Maine, one of New England’s earliest Colonial settlements, at the Museums of Old York, which include nine historic museum buildings, an archival library and a 17-acre nature preserve. With 37 period room settings and several galleries, the museums showcase a wealth of art, culture and architecture. The exhibits focus on the settlement that southern Maine’s men, women and children first established in the 1600s. For more information, visit www.oldyork.org.

Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness
Featuring 230 works of American art from the Yale University collection, ranging from the Colonial era to the Gilded Age, the exhibit tells the story of a nation through various mediums of art. John Trumbull’s iconic “The Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776” will be on display, as well as scenes of American life created by Winslow Homer and Frederic Remington, and silver handcrafted by Paul Revere. To learn more, visit www.artsbma.org.

On Life: Thomas Paine, The Radical Founding Father
National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C., through November 29
A single gallery devoted to Thomas Paine, this exhibit at the National Portrait Gallery tells Paine’s story from the process of writing “Common Sense,” the pamphlet that inspired Americans to demand independence, to his death as an unpopular radical. The Patriot’s tumultuous life story is told through paintings, engravings, caricatures and the gallery’s recently acquired portrait of Paine by Laurent Dabos. The exhibit coincides with the 200th anniversary year of Paine’s death. For more information, visit npg.si.edu.

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American history students at West Rowan High School in Mount Ulla, N.C., don’t have to enter Steve Suther’s classroom to get a lesson—all they have to do is take a look around their community.

“American history surrounds our school in every direction,” says Suther, who teaches Honors and Advanced Placement (AP) U.S. history and was the 2009 winner of the DAR Outstanding Teacher of American History Award. “During the Revolutionary War, General Greene and General Cornwallis marched near our school site with their armies. I never let my kids forget how lucky they are to have history literally surrounding them every day.”

Aside from its Revolutionary ties, Rowan County is home to a number of other historical sites. The nearby city of Salisbury was once home to Andrew Jackson and served as western North Carolina’s largest town in Colonial times. Daniel Boone left for Kentucky from Salisbury, and it was also the site of a POW prison during the Civil War.

It would seem that living in a historical town, Suther’s students would enter his classroom with plenty of knowledge. But that’s not always the case, he says. “You can never assume that your students already know history. I’ve had students who have no idea what the Declaration of Independence means to us. But no matter what they didn’t learn before they enter my classroom, I have a responsibility to make sure they learn as much as they can now.”

Never taking his location for granted, Suther uses West Rowan’s local history to engage students. “If I ever need inspiration, I just walk down the road and see where important events in our country’s conception took place,” he says.

After 39 years in the classroom, teaching history has become more of a lifestyle for Suther than an occupation—and he always makes sure his students are along for the ride. A former Revolutionary and Civil War re-enactor, Suther uses his uniform and equipment to give students a first-hand look at what battle was like for Confederate soldiers. By leading field trips to Civil War battlefields, showcasing items he’s found in historical North Carolina towns like New Bern, Edenton and Cherokee, and guiding students on photography projects through Rowan County’s historical churches and buildings, Suther’s lesson plans never get stale.

He also makes sure to embrace diversity in his classroom. “I use our local history to explain so much of America’s history, but I’m also sensitive to my students who didn’t grow up in Rowan County,” he says. “I have a diverse classroom, and I want my students to know I appreciate their history, too. If they’ve come from another state or another country, I make sure to devote time to their history. In addition to the American flag, I hang flags from every country represented in my classroom. No matter where my students come from, I want them to know they are welcome here.”

At the end of the school year, Suther turns the classroom over to his students. “Once we’ve made it through the school year, and my AP students have taken their exams, it’s their turn to choose what they study,” he says. During the last three weeks of school, Suther’s students work on a project about any time period in American history that interests them.

“The options are endless,” Suther says. “And they always turn out really interesting things.”

Suther’s students have done everything from dress up like Blackbeard and teach their peers about pirating off the coast of North Carolina to giving an overview of the 1960s—complete with songs by Bob Dylan.

“I can tell it’s their favorite time of year,” Suther says. “They get really involved in their projects, and it proves to me that they’ve all come to love history.”

Although Suther has earned his retirement, he doesn’t plan to quit teaching yet. “I got into this because I love history, but you meet people along the way who are really special—and that’s what makes me stick around,” he said. “When students contact me years after I’ve taught them and thank me for my work, I know my job is worthwhile. I’m not going anywhere anytime soon.”

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ClassAct
Peek inside America’s classrooms to discover ingenious ways of teaching history.

**Immersed in History**

North Carolina teacher uses local history to engage students

By MEGAN PACELLA
Photography by MARK DOLEJS

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Suther stands by the same road traveled by the armies of Greene and Cornwallis during the Revolutionary War.
Portsmouth Citizens for Peace

Amy Cates did a terrific job of distilling 400 years of New Hampshire history into her lively story on our seacoast gem (“Portsmouth” in the May/June 2009 issue). I enjoyed talking to her for the story, and thus forgive her for the one, often-made, mistake. Though President Theodore Roosevelt did win the 1906 Nobel Peace Prize for his adroit, multi-lateral diplomacy that ended the Russo-Japanese War (now called “World War Zero” for its modern warfare and web of national alliances), he never came to Portsmouth. Instead he relied on the U.S. Navy at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, where the formal negotiations were held, and the governor and people of New Hampshire who were his official hosts for the 30 days of the conference. Roosevelt met the two diplomatic delegations on his yacht Mayflower at Oyster Bay, and then he sent them “to us.”

Research during the 2005 Treaty centennial (www.portsmouthpeacetreaty.org) revealed just how much the local community helped influence the positive outcome of peace when negotiations were close to the breaking point. Sincerity, charm and engaged citizens can make a difference.

Stephanie Seacord, Information Director, Portsmouth Peace Treaty Forum
Portsmouth, N.H.

Promoting Female Patriots

I always love receiving my copy of American Spirit magazine, but the May/June 2009 issue was the best yet! Since I had just coerced my male cousin to submit our DNA to the Family Tree DNA project earlier in the year, the article “Meet Your Match” was especially interesting to me. Hopefully, after reading the article others will join this project.

Also, the reason I’m writing you personally is that I loved the article “Uncommon Fortitude” about Deborah Sampson Gannett. I have always held an interest in the stories of female patriots. Some 16 daughters have proven their lineage to Gannett. How proud these daughters must be of their heritage!

Please continue to write stories about these ladies. And thank you for all your hard work.

Linda Davis
Amelia Island Chapter
Amelia Island, Fla.

HERCULES OF THE REVOLUTION
a novel based on the life of Peter Francisco

Born into a wealthy family in the Azores Islands in 1760, Peter Francisco would one day change the course of history for the United States of America and the World. This true story will have you hanging on the edge of your seat as Peter is kidnapped by pirates at the age of five and raised as a slave on a plantation in Virginia. By the age of 16, Peter stood 6’6” – a foot taller than the average man – and weighed 260 pounds, but his skin color had him trapped at the bottom of society in the New World.

After falling in love with a girl from a wealthy family, Peter realizes that he will never marry the woman of his dreams unless he is free. Driven with passion for freedom, he joined the Continental Army after hearing Patrick Henry’s famous words, “Give me liberty or give me death!” His owner, Judge Winston, releases him from slavery to fight for freedom, and he becomes famous throughout the colonies for his extraordinary strength, bravery, and courage on the battlefield.

At the climax of the fight for independence, George Washington has a 6’ broadsword made for Peter just in time for the most critical battles of the Revolution. But, the ruthless Colonel Tarleton from the British Army is determined to kill Peter and the woman that he loves. Ultimately, Peter’s fight for freedom becomes a fight to save the love of his life...

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- Robert Whitlow, author & film producer

“Enjoyable to read and historically accurate…”
- David Appleby, former President General of SAR

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Travis Bowman is a 6th generation descendant of Peter Francisco, and he is of similar stature standing 6’6” tall just like Peter. As an actor he enjoys telling Peter’s story through dramatic impersonations with a 6’ replica broadsword similar to the one George Washington had made for Peter. Please contact him at the number above if your DAR chapter would like him to speak at your next event.
The Bookshelf
Two books illuminate the history of the early U.S. Navy.

Two By Sea


Secret Navy’s tales of maritime encounters, of rascally sailors and captains, of the harassed Washington and of the challenges of wind-powered sailing often reads like a novel. Nelson sometimes overuses sailing jargon to describe the setting of sails and other arcane naval practices, but this does not detract from the reader’s understanding, nor the power of his narrative.

The term “covert operations” had not been coined in 1775, but it would have perfectly described Washington’s maneuvering to harass the British at sea while Congress slowly tacked toward the idea of a Continental Navy.

Washington had besieged Boston, but realized the Redcoats and Tories hemmed in on land still had access to supplies from the sea. As long as food, fuel, munitions and men could slip past the many natural navigational obstacles fronting Boston Bay, the stalemate would continue. He needed to at least partly shut that back door—and if possible, siphon off some of those supplies for his own needy troops. As Nelson describes it, the siege would become a war of matériel.

Without specific Congressional approval, he nevertheless decided that his mandate as commander in chief of the Army allowed him to attempt to add some sea power—though he was careful to make no mention of it to Congress until he had something to show for it.

Given the political structure of the United States under the Articles of Confederation and the lack of real funding for such an operation, Washington had to appeal to the New England states to outfit and dispatch ships of their own.

He would provide funding from the Army’s resources, as well as men to crew the handful of schooners converted into fighting vessels.

However, this was not a fighting Navy such as Congress would eventually authorize. These ships resembled privateers in that their mission was to capture unarmed and unescorted merchant ships and transports carrying supplies into Boston.

Not a naval man himself—Washington had made only one sea voyage, to Barbados, where he contracted smallpox (see American Spirit’s January/February 2009 issue)—he did not appreciate the expense, time and challenges of outfitting seaworthy craft. Nor did the aristocratic Virginian get on well with the ultra-democratic, canny New Englanders. Washington was also driven to distraction by captains who promised action and delivered nothing or, worse, those who ignored his orders and pursued their own profit-seeking ends.

Still, Washington’s projection of American arms into the fringes of the North Atlantic during 1775 ultimately met with some stunning successes. The first and biggest haul was the Nancy, a transport stuffed with munitions taken by Captain John Manley—one of America’s first naval heroes, though his glory was eclipsed by John Paul Jones.

As 1776 dawned, Congress had moved to create a Continental Navy, whose birth would signal the United States’ determination to break with Great Britain. Washington’s fleet sailed for a few more months, finally ending its career after the British withdrew from Boston in the spring of 1776. Privateers had largely taken over the task of seizing British prizes, and would continue to serve in that role through the war.

Ultimately, sea power in the form of the formidable French fleet would help the United States win its independence.

Ultimately, sea power in the form of the formidable French fleet would help the United States win its independence.

—Bill Hudgins
Those interested in a more detailed history of the growth of American naval power should peruse If By Sea: The Forging of the American Navy From the Revolution to the War of 1812, by George C. Daughan (Basic Books, 2009). In his introduction, Daughan laments the lack of a detailed description of the role of sea power in the Revolution, adding that his work is intended to begin correcting that lack.

He tackles the thorny question of just where and when the American Navy began by pegging that date earlier than others have done—at the Battle of Lexington and Concord. As the two lanterns in the Old North Church in Boston flashed on the night of April 18, 1775, signaling that British troops were on the move by boat, Paul Revere and two companions watched the deployment—from Revere’s 20-foot skiff. After sneaking past unwary British warships for a better look, Revere rowed into Charleston and rode into history.

In tracing the growth of the Continental Navy, Daughan weaves land and sea action together, as well as the internal and international political maneuvering that accompanied the war and the crucial role of the French Navy. The new nation’s sea battles had given the country a taste of naval experience and had taught some important lessons in building a navy.

But those lessons would be put aside for a time, as the new national government disbanded its infant Navy. The desire for peace was so keen, the resistance to a permanent military force so strong, the needs of building a country from scratch so demanding, that maintaining an expensive fleet was the last thing on most minds.

For his part, George Washington believed the United States needed a Navy. Events bore him out. The country found that it could not protect its merchants from the Barbary pirates, who preyed on the undefended ships (while leaving those of maritime powers such as Britain largely alone). Paying tribute worked, sometimes, until a pirate chief decided he’d take both the payment and the ship.

By 1794, Washington, then in his second term as president, pressed Congress to build a handful of ships to try to solve the pirate issue. He also was confronting a growing desire for another war with Great Britain, which had been intercepting American shipping, often impressing American seamen into Royal Navy service.

The Naval Act of 1794 authorized the construction of six ships—unless the United States and Algiers resolved their differences. When a treaty was hammered out in 1796, Washington sought, and obtained, the Naval Act of 1796 authorizing three ships. The resistance in Congress was led by James Madison, Thomas Jefferson and Albert Gallatin, who feared the power a Navy gave a central government and opposed the tax burden needed to build and maintain a fleet.

Washington’s successor as president, John Adams, succeeded in restoring the original order for six ships. Ironically, it was Adams’s successor, Thomas Jefferson, who would finally dispatch ships to deal with the Barbary pirates. Even more ironically, it would be James Madison who took the ship of state’s helm as British depredations continued and the two nations moved on a collision course to war.

The War of 1812, with successes at sea and on the Great Lakes, would finally remove doubt that the country needed a permanent, powerful Navy. From having been viewed as an incitement to war, the Navy would come to be seen as an inducement to peace. Daughan’s book amply demonstrates how this conclusion evolved over nearly three decades of stop-start experiments with sea power.

—B.H.
The town of Friday Harbor serves as the seat of San Juan County, a series of small islands off the coast of mainland Washington state. Visitors flock to San Juan Island in the warm season, doubling its population of 7,000, to escape big-city life in Seattle and experience the bountiful natural and historical resources the area offers.
There are several theories about how Friday Harbor got its name, but some historians believe the town was named for Joe Friday, a Hawaiian employee of Britain’s Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) who tended sheep near the harbor. After a British survey ship in the Salish Sea visited the port, it appeared on an 1859 English chart as Friday’s Bay. Officially incorporated in 1909, Friday Harbor celebrates its centennial this year. The town is marking another historic milestone as well: It’s been 150 years since the beginning of a war with only one casualty—a British pig.

The Pig War

Abundant resources drew both the HBC and a handful of American immigrants to San Juan Island by the mid-1800s. The Treaty of Oregon was signed in 1846, setting the boundary between the United States and Canada along the 49th parallel. But the language of the treaty was unclear, and tensions arose between immigrants on San Juan. Both countries had growing interests in the islands; the British had commercial interests with HBC, while the United States claimed the island as a part of the Washington Territory established in 1853.

On June 15, 1859, American Lyman Cutlar shot and killed a pig that was grazing in his garden. It belonged to the HBC. British authorities threatened to arrest Cutlar and evict all the Americans as trespassers, driving a group of them to seek military protection. U.S. Captain George E. Pickett and his 64-man infantry unit answered their plea on July 27.

Through the remainder of the summer, both the British and American sides built up their forces. When Washington, D.C., got wind of the standoff, President James Buchanan dispatched U.S. General Winfield Scott to calm the situation.

Scott arrived in October and through communication with James Douglas, governor of Vancouver Island, convinced both nations to withdraw reinforcements and agree to occupy the area jointly. The agreement lasted until Great Britain and the United States signed the Treaty of Washington in 1871, which referred the decision to Germany’s Kaiser Wilhelm I, a neutral figure, who ruled in favor of the United States on October 21, 1872.

Early Days on the Island

San Juan Island National Historical Park houses both the American Camp and English Camp on opposite sides of the island. Today, the park is a place where visitors can explore the history of the region and enjoy the natural beauty of the island. The park offers guided tours, self-guided walking trails, and a visitors center where you can learn more about the history of the area.
of the island. The camps pay tribute to the events of the Pig War, but they are also archeological sites that date back to when the Coast Salish people inhabited the area, around 5,000 years ago.

Many of the Americans who remained on the island after the Pig War were soldiers. Few American women lived on the island, and many men married Native women, who helped them survive in the harsh environment.

“(They) knew the medicinal herbs, how to fish and how to negotiate between the tribes here,” says Sandy Strehlou, historic preservation coordinator for the town of Friday Harbor. “These women helped them understand the culture here. The culture and humanity they brought to the settlements has permeated the island.”

These skills helped sustain islanders until the 1970s and 1980s, when tourism increased in the area and more modern-day amenities were brought to the island.

In the summer, visitors can view wildflowers from the trails at the American Camp while listening to the sounds of orca whales spouting. Dall’s porpoises, minke whales, seals, river otters and a variety of sea birds can also be seen from the park’s shores. To learn more about the park and see a schedule of events, visit www.nps.gov/sajh.

SOAKING UP A SMALL TOWN
Named one of the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s 2008 Distinctive Destinations, Friday Harbor’s history can best be discovered on foot—visitors can experience historical architecture and small-town culture firsthand with a walking tour through the pedestrian-friendly downtown.

“This is not a museum town,” Strehlou says. “These are buildings that people eat in, sleep in and work in, so we have to take care of them. We take that very seriously, and we’re proud of it.”

As one of a few marine communities in Washington that did not experience a town-razing fire near the turn of the century, Friday Harbor has been able to maintain many of its structures. The town has more than 150 historic sites, including many turn-of-the-century buildings that are still in use.

The town of Friday Harbor conducts free guided walking tours on Saturdays every May. The San Juan Historical Museum, housed in eight historic buildings, including an 1894 farmhouse and the original San Juan County Jail, has self-guided tour brochures for its grounds and buildings. Each building houses displays of early life on the island. Virtual tours can be viewed at www.sjmuseum.org.

“People often come here for the natural environment, but the history and culture of the place are equal to it,” Strehlou says. “It’s a charming, rural place that still has its identity. It’s got that small-town flavor.”

For more information on Friday Harbor’s centennial commemoration, visit www.historicfridayharbor.org.

Hannahlee Allers, a native Washingtonian, is a freelance travel writer.

Day Trip It

 WHILE ON THE ISLAND, travel northwest to Roche Harbor. On the half-hour drive, enjoy samples at San Juan Vineyards (www.sanjuanvineyards.com) and stop to see Mona the camel, a fixture on Roche Harbor Road. Stay at the Roche Harbor Resort’s Hotel de Haro, built in 1886 to house limestone traders, with a registry dating back to 1907. Stop by the Sculpture Park at Westcott Bay Reserve to see displays from local artists dispersed throughout the 19-acre wetlands (www.westcottbay.org). For more information, visit www.rocheharbor.com.
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WEDGWOOD TURNS 250

In 1759, Josiah Wedgwood, an apprentice potter in Burslem, England, left his job at an established potter’s workshop to open his own pottery business. Known for his experimentation with different pottery techniques, Wedgwood was filling orders for kings, queens and other nobility by 1763. Within a decade of founding his company, Josiah Wedgwood and Sons, Wedgwood then opened the first true pottery factory, inspired by the growth of industrialism in nearby cities.

BY NANCY MANN JACKSON

This year, Wedgwood’s company celebrates 250 years of ceramics production. During the past two and a half centuries, Wedgwood has not only fired china to grace the tables and cabinets of the world’s most visible nobles (and plenty of regular people as well), but the company has also produced practical ceramic pieces used in everyday tasks and commemorative works to mark special occasions and honor individuals.

To celebrate this anniversary, the DAR, in partnership with the Wedgwood Society of Washington, D.C., and Waterford Wedgwood Royal Doulton Holdings, Ltd. (WWRD), will present the “Wedgwood: 250 Years of Innovation and Artistry” exhibition at the DAR Museum in Washington, D.C., from October 3, 2009, through February 27, 2010. With nearly 200 diverse pieces dating from the 1700s to today, lent by private collectors and museums across the United States, the exhibit will illustrate the story of a talented visionary and his company that has been revered by international consumers for two and a half centuries.

“There are so few companies in the world that have survived 250 years, and Wedgwood is still hanging in there,” says Adele Barnett, president of the Wedgwood Society of Washington, D.C., and co-chair of the exhibit. “Its products are so interesting, no other company in the china and ceramics business has produced such a wide array of items. And Josiah Wedgwood was not just a potter; he was a marketing genius.”
A Revolutionary Company

Born into a long line of potters, Josiah Wedgwood suffered a childhood bout with smallpox, weakening his knee and eventually resulting in the amputation of his leg. Because of his handicap, Josiah was unable to work the foot pedal of a potter’s wheel—and so from an early age, he focused on designing pottery rather than creating it. His innovative designs resulted in his most famous development, jasperware, a type of stoneware noted for its matte finish. Wedgwood’s jasperware is still most popular in its original blue—a color developed by Josiah Wedgwood himself after experimenting with more than 3,000 samples. But Wedgwood made much more than jasperware.

While Wedgwood is famous for its tableware and ornamental items, the company has long applied its craftsmanship and design to more practical items as well. It traditionally supplied dairies with dairy ware (pails, butter churns and other utensils) and supplied apothecaries with mortars and pestles. The company even made toilet articles and sinks.

The company built its reputation by linking its name with the names of its famous customers. “Josiah Wedgwood perfected his cream service, which became very fashionable and drew the attention of Queen Charlotte,” says Lord Wedgwood, an eighth-generation direct descendant of Josiah Wedgwood who has been employed by the company for nearly 30 years. “Then he was able to style himself ‘Potter to Her Majesty,’ and he called that product Queensware. It was the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, and people wanted to fill their houses with beautiful tableware.”

Josiah Wedgwood “realized there was an opportunity to compete with expensive foreign imports. This he did very effectively with Queensware,” Lord Wedgwood says.

In 1774, Empress Catherine the Great of Russia ordered a custom-made, hand-painted collection of cream-colored earthenware from Wedgwood. The collection came to be known as the Green Frog service, and every dish had a different design. “Before shipping it off to Russia, Wedgwood invited the aristocracy to come into his showroom and preview the creamware, by invitation only,” says Diane Dunkley, director of the DAR Museum. “He then started [mass-producing] basically the same pattern with less decoration, and suddenly everyone wanted the same dishes as Catherine the Great.”

That ability to use celebrity to sell a product made Josiah Wedgwood a businessman ahead of his time. “What we think of as branding and marketing today was a brand-new concept,” Dunkley continues. “He would rename something to give it this famous connection, and suddenly Jane and John Doe on the street would pick up on that and buy it.”

For generations before him, Josiah Wedgwood’s family had been making and selling china locally, but Wedgwood was the first to take his product beyond his own community, becoming “a national sensation, then an international sensation,” Lord Wedgwood says.

For instance, when the first British fleet arrived in Australia in the 1780s, Captain Arthur Philip sent back samples of clay found along the beaches. Wedgwood used those samples to create the Sydney Cove Medallion. “It was the first time something was made specifically for a geographic market,” Lord Wedgwood says.

It turned out to be a stroke of marketing brilliance.
Wedgwood in Early America

THE SAME STRATEGY OF CREATING UNIQUE pieces for a specific market helped Wedgwood build a strong following in early America. Josiah Wedgwood befriended Benjamin Franklin, with whom he shared abolitionist views. He created medallions depicting the shackled hands of slaves and the words, “Am I not a man and a brother?” and sent them to Franklin in America, where they became popular among anti-slave trade groups as some of the first abolitionist paraphernalia distributed in the states.

Wedgwood items sold well in the states. Company records show that Martha Washington’s agent in England shipped lots of Wedgwood items to her in America, Lord Wedgwood says.

“When you look at American newspapers from the late 18th and early 19th century, you find many references to Wedgwood ceramics for sale, including tea sets, vases, inkwells, mortars and pestles, and figures,” Dunkley says. “There really was no other company that was receiving that sort of recognition. Wedgwood was the epitome of fashion and elegance.”

And while Wedgwood had to remain faithful to his royal customers, the king and queen of England, Barnett says he personally sympathized with the revolutionaries.

“He was delighted when the war of independence came to an end because it meant he could resume sending products across the Atlantic,” Lord Wedgwood says.

The transatlantic ties continued. In the 20th century, Wedgwood also created a series of plates depicting scenes from the American Revolution and busts of many early presidents.

Wedgwood Today

AFTER MORE THAN TWO CENTURIES, Wedgwood ceramics continue to be among the most sought-after in the world—and the market continues to expand. According to Lord Wedgwood, the company’s ceramics remain highly popular in the United States, United Kingdom and across Europe. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, Lord Wedgwood says the company has enjoyed increasing business in Russia, and Asia is currently the strongest growing market for its ceramics.

“We have an extraordinarily strong heritage,” Lord Wedgwood says. “The legacy of Josiah Wedgwood was one of quality craftsmanship and distinctive design. Many of the craftsmen who still create Wedgwood ceramics are descendants of craftspeople who worked for Josiah Wedgwood himself. And through distinctive design, we have managed to remain relevant to every generation since the 1700s.”


Coffee pot: Creamware, with partial green glaze, about 1760. DAR Museum, Friends of the Museum Purchase. Popularly referred to as “cauliflower ware,” vessels like this one were molded and colored to imitate cauliflower and other vegetables and fruit. This coffee pot displays the clean brighter green glaze created by Josiah Wedgwood and considered to be one of his finest early achievements.
Traditionally, the Wedgwood company has engaged great designers and artists of each period to develop pieces that fit the needs of the current culture. And that tradition continues: Today, designers including Vera Wang, Martha Stewart and Jasper Conran lend their insight into trends and fashions to help Wedgwood pieces remain current.

Celebrating Ceramics History

THE “WEDGWOOD: 250 YEARS of Innovation and Artistry” exhibit will celebrate the genius of Josiah Wedgwood, the longevity of his company and the enduring craftsmanship and design of the work he set into motion. The exhibit will open on October 2 with a private ceremony for lenders, benefactors, sponsors and dignitaries hosted by Lord Wedgwood. At that ceremony, the British Ambassador to the United States will present a “Gift Between Nations”—a three-foot Wedgwood jasper masterpiece, which includes a replica of the Washington monument and vignettes of historic people and events in British and American history—to a senior official in the White House as a gift to the United States.

“In the exhibition, there are some amazing pieces, including some fabulous 18th-century vases and other decorative wares, but also pieces from the 19th century and 20th century that are very different from the stereotypical blue jasper look associated with Wedgwood,” Dunkley says. “There are pieces that reflect Art Deco and ultra-modern styles.”

Some of the noted pieces to be included in the exhibit include a piece of drabware from Martha Stewart’s private collection; a vase from the early 1900s collection, Fairyland Lustre, from Whoopi Goldberg’s private collection; a large jasper trophy presented to golfer Tiger Woods; and a black basalt vase decorated to look like an antique Greek vase, which is from the DAR Museum’s permanent collection. Pieces will also be loaned by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, the Smithsonian Institution, members of the Wedgwood family and numerous private collectors.

In addition to enjoying the collection, Museum visitors will have opportunities to learn more about the history and importance of Wedgwood china through several educational options. A lecture series will feature noted Wedgwood authorities discussing the history of the company, its importance in the consumer revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries, collecting Wedgwood and other topics. A catalogue featuring all the objects in the exhibit and Wedgwood historical essays will be for sale, along with special prestige ware, commemorative objects and books.

“While Wedgwood collectors and aficionados will find this fascinating, we are really aiming the exhibit at the general public, who may not be familiar with the history and products of Wedgwood,” Dunkley says. “We hope to create a new generation of collectors.”

Nancy Mann Jackson profiled DAR members in a story on DNA testing for the May/June 2009 issue.
More Masterpieces

The Wedgwood exhibit at the DAR Museum won't be the only place to celebrate the company's historic milestone in the United States this year. In November, the Birmingham Museum of Art in Birmingham, Ala., will unveil its new Buten Wedgwood Collection of more than 8,000 pieces. The new collection joins the museum's existing Beeson Wedgwood Collection to create the largest collection of Wedgwood pieces outside England.

“The Buten Collection includes many objects made for the American market or to commemorate American historical events,” says Anne Forschler-Tarrasch, Ph.D., the museum's decorative arts curator. “We also have a number of objects that are of the type that were made for or used in America, especially early creamware tablewares.”

Lord Wedgwood will unveil the Birmingham Museum of Art's new collection at an event on November 19. For more information, visit www.artsbma.org.
ALMA MATER
OF A NATION

The College of William and Mary’s contributions to the new republic

By Lena Anthony
By the time the first shots were fired in the American Revolution, the College of William and Mary had already experienced its fair share of conflict. The war would prove to be a trying time for a school founded by a royal charter by King William III and Queen Mary II in 1693. But trying times were nothing new for the college that, since its founding, had struggled to balance the demands of its founders across the Atlantic with the needs of its students—sons of the Virginia elite.

Fighting among the faculty, who consisted mostly of British emigrants, and the school’s Board of Visitors, who were chosen by Virginians, is a consistent theme in the college’s early history, as is the inextricable link between the school and the goings-on in its town—Williamsburg, which was one of Virginia’s Colonial capitals.

“Some among the students profited positively from the tensions around them,” wrote J.E. Morpurgo in Their Majesties’ Royall Collège (College of William and Mary, 1976). “It was this indoctrination of contentiousness to which they were subjected in youth which brought them so early and so readily to political maturity.”

It is no wonder, then, that the College of William and Mary educated so many of America’s Founding Fathers.

“The fabulous score sheet of those troubled years includes a president of the United States, two signers of the Declaration of Independence, a United States senator, seven members of the Continental Congress, three governors of Virginia … [and] one justice of the Supreme Court,” Morpurgo wrote.

Among the school’s scholastic ranks were Thomas Jefferson, James Monroe, John Marshall and John Tyler.

A College for Virginia

For upper-class boys in mid-18th-century Virginia, there were few choices for higher education and only one that really made sense—William and Mary. “These students couldn’t afford to go abroad to England to be educated, and the other colleges in the Colonies were largely in New England, which was not a particularly attractive place to the Virginia boy or his father,” says Beatriz Hardy, Marian and Alan McLeod Director of the Special Collections Research Center at the college.

While Hardy says the school was in large part founded to produce Anglican clergy for the Colony, students like Thomas Jefferson, who graduated in 1762, sought an education—and a little fun.

“The sense I get looking at student letters was that it was a fairly informal college,” Hardy says. “I don’t think the students necessarily had to work all that hard, and there was a good amount of partying going on, despite the apparent religious affiliation.”

Jefferson was not one to miss a party during college. He was a member of the F.H.C. Society (also known as the Flat Hat Club)—the first known secret college society in America. And in Their Majesties’ Royall Collège, Morpurgo explained that Jefferson once wrote about a hangover he experienced: “I never could have thought the succeeding sun would have seen me so wretched.”

The future president of the United States also took education very seriously, and he was a student who made “teachers seem much greater than they are,” according to Morpurgo. One of his favorite teachers, and someone he would later reference many times throughout his life, was William Small, professor of natural philosophy.

While there is little known about Small, Morpurgo wrote, “there is reason to suspect that his was the genius that responds most readily to genius in others … In him, the College had a Professor of Natural Philosophy of rare quality, a new man, an apostle of the
Enlightenment, a teacher who could pass on to those a sense of wonder and a need to question all dogma." Small provided his pre-Revolutionary pupils their introduction to revolutionary thought.

_Torn Between Two Worlds_

In the years leading up to the American Revolution, administrators, faculty and students were acutely aware of the uprising around them, but they struggled with their reactions to the patriotic fervor. "The college was intended for the rearing of gentlemen ... and loyalty was intrinsic to gentlemanly behavior, but the definition of loyalty ... had suddenly been thrown into question," Morpurgo wrote.

Despite the identity crisis, the Revolution had very real consequences for the college, says Hardy. For starters, Reverend John Camm, the president of the college at the start of the war, was a Tory. "There were a couple of other faculty members who were Tories as well," she says. "But a great many faculty members and students were patriots. The college even formed a company for the Virginia Militia. There was some tension at the college because of that."

The war also had financial consequences for the school, which had received some of its funding from taxes and fees assigned to it by the royal government. Once the war broke out, the funding dried up. The student body disappeared, too. Those students who didn’t quit school to join the war

Despite the college having suffered at least three major fires in 1705, 1859 and 1862, the College of William and Mary’s collection of historical documents remains robust. Beatriz Hardy, director of the Special Collections Research Center at the college, shares some of the most interesting items:

_John Marshall’s notebooks:_ "Looking at his portrait, he always looks so stern, so you would never really think of him as a lovelorn youth," Hardy says. "But we have a notebook of his where he’s written ‘Polly Ambler’ all over the place. She later became his wife. It’s actually quite cute.”

_The Library Collection, Circa 1705:_ For the past several years, Hardy has been rebuilding the collection of books on hand in the William and Mary Library in 1705, before the first fire destroyed it. “We know most of the books that were in the library were given by Governor Francis Nicholson, so we have been working on rebuilding the collection, edition by edition,” Hardy says. “The collection was heavily religious, but not entirely. There were also books on business, history and politics.”

_Bursar’s records:_ “Thomas Jefferson was here for two years and three months,” she explains, “and in that entire time, he never paid his bill. He paid several months after he graduated, but later on Jefferson was notorious for being in debt. Perhaps that started early in his life.”

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*These calculations are for illustration purposes only and should not be considered legal, accounting or other professional advice. This chart reflects rates for a single annuitant based on a $10,000 CGA. Your actual benefits may vary depending on the date and amount of the gift.

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Sir Christopher Wren Building as it appears today on its west facade.

(U.S. President James Monroe was a student and became a young soldier) were forced off campus once fighting moved to Virginia in 1781. The school closed and was converted into a hospital for wounded French officers. One of the school’s buildings—the President’s House—subsequently burned down.

In 1779, in an attempt to revitalize the school, Jefferson, who was then governor of Virginia as well as a member of the college’s Board of Visitors, proposed a series of sweeping changes to the school’s curriculum. “He thought the school was too religious, so he had the divinity school discontinued,” Hardy says. “He was trying to modernize the college, so he created some new professorships of anatomy and medicine, as well as chairs of law and police and modern languages.”

Jefferson also introduced an elective system of study—the first in the states. But his proposals to separate the college from the church were not well received by the college’s president, James Madison (cousin of U.S. President James Madison), who was an Anglican minister and later became a bishop. “Jefferson grew increasingly upset with the college,” Hardy says. “That’s part of the reason for his founding the University of Virginia.”

But perhaps the most dire consequence of the war for the college was the relocation of Virginia’s capital from Williamsburg to Richmond. “It was a huge blow to the college,” Hardy says. “Instead of being in the capital, it was in this little backwater town. Williamsburg had been a very lively space, which was attractive for both faculty and students. Suddenly after the Revolution, that was gone.”

While it achieved many firsts in American higher education (see sidebar), the college remained largely unchanged from the late 18th century until World War I—when the Board of Visitors voted to make the school co-educational. From that point, it morphed into the college it is today—a cutting-edge university with a deep-rooted past.

Lena Anthony wrote about the U.S. Forest Service’s Passport in Time program for the July/August 2009 issue.

First in the Nation
While the College of William and Mary cannot claim to be the first institution of higher education in the United States—that honor goes to Harvard University—the school is home to many firsts:

* Completed in 1699, the College of William and Mary’s Sir Christopher Wren Building is the oldest academic building in continuous use in the United States.

* In 1750, the F.H.C. Society—the country’s first known secret college society—was founded at the College of William and Mary.

* In 1776, Phi Beta Kappa, the country’s first college Greek-letter society, was founded at the College of William and Mary.

* In 1779, William and Mary became the first school in the nation to teach law in a university setting.

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Our infant nation was also a nation of infants: America’s population boomed during the Colonial era as settlers, eager to seize land and opportunity, created the labor force that was so lacking. Never again would the United States experience such explosive growth. But once independence was won, reproductive fervor began to fade away.

By Stacey Evers  Illustration by Zela Lobb
In the 1750s, Benjamin Franklin estimated that the average Colonial woman bore eight children, a birthrate that gave him glee when he considered the substantially lower rate in England. “There are suppos’d to be now upwards of One Million English Souls in North-America, (tho’ ‘tis thought scarce 80,000 have been brought over Sea),” he wrote in Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind, Peopling of Countries, etc. (1751). Within a century, he predicted, “the greatest Number of Englishmen will be on this Side of the Water.”

Compilation of state birth statistics date only to 1890, but population experts confirm Franklin’s estimates. In his time, the U.S. population doubled about every 24 years, reflecting a remarkable annual growth rate of 3 percent, says Dr. Raymond L. Cohn, economics professor emeritus at Illinois State University and a noted U.S. population historian. About 2 percent of that annual growth was due to births and 1 percent to immigration.

Even as the labor-hungry early Colonies began to give way to an established and united republic, the typical woman gave birth to seven live children, Cohn says. To better understand the impact of that many babies, consider this: At the peak of the post-World War II baby boom, the birthrate was 3.77 births per woman, or about half the Colonial pace.

At the time in England, women faced dwindling marital prospects. The mother country was transitioning from an agricultural to a mercantile economy, and thousands of rural laborers were losing their jobs and their ability to support a family. In 1620 the Virginia Company was able to lure a pool of 90 potential brides to Jamestown. In internal records, the company’s secretary noted the decision to send “Maids young and uncorrupt to make wives to the Inhabitants and by that means to make the men there more settled and less moveable … the Planters minds may be the faster tied to Virginia by the bonds of Wyves and Children.” By 1622, all 90 had husbands.

The shortage of women in the Southern Colonies meant women married young, giving them many years to bear children. Some women became wives as early as 13 years old, “and She that stays till Twenty is reckoned a stale Maid,” wrote North Carolina Surveyor General John Lawson in The History of Carolina, published posthumously in 1714. “… The Women are very fruitful, most Houses being full of Little Ones.”

If a woman’s life were cut short by disease or childbirth complications, her husband remarried. Healthy, hardy women who outlived their husbands also remarried, easily, sometimes having a handful of husbands during their lifetimes. Families were large, albeit a mishmash of British colonies. She came into the New World on August 18, 1587, on Roanoke Island (now in the Outer Banks of North Carolina). Her parents, grandfather and about 100 other settlers were trying to establish a colony amid the ruins of a site that had failed years earlier. Even though that settlement also perished, it’s fitting that the first baby born in the Colonies was a girl, given the tremendous demand there would be for women in the initial years of American growth.

The earliest settlers, heading to what would become the Southern Colonies, tended to be young men who had launched for North America to make money and planned to head back home eventually. This didn’t sit well with Colonial visionaries who wanted to ensure the settlements would be permanent. But permanent settlements needed laundresses, cooks, caretakers and homemakers, whose skills hadn’t been developed by most men of the time. Colonial leaders and British entrepreneurs tried a variety of methods to lure women to the New World, some sinking as low as abduction. But one of the most persuasive tactics to convince women to voluntarily head West was to assure them that they could find good husbands in the Colonies.

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Elaine Tyler May writes in *Future Chief Justice John Marshall had 14 siblings. William Byrd III had 15 children within two marriages, and widows, widowers, stepchildren and half-siblings. In Virginia, the onus for providing children to sustain the community and the Colonies fell on women. Not surprisingly, the onus for providing children was a religious imperative as well as an economic necessity. In Genesis to “be fruitful and multiply.” Reproduction was a religious imperative as well as an economic necessity. Not surprisingly, the onus for providing children to sustain the community and the Colonies fell on women.

“In Puritan New England, most women arrived already married and often with children. But there was no birth dearth there, either. Colonists took seriously the command in Genesis to “be fruitful and multiply.” Reproduction was a religious imperative as well as an economic necessity. Not surprisingly, the onus for providing children to sustain the community and the Colonies fell on women.

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“Labor [in North America] is ... so well-rewarded that a numerous family of children ... is a source of opulence and prosperity to the parents,” Scottish economist Adam Smith wrote in *The Wealth of Nations* (1776). “The value of children is the greatest of all encouragements to marriage. We cannot, therefore, wonder that the people in North America should generally marry very young.”

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Addressing his Boston congregation in 1714, Harvard-educated Presbyterian minister Benjamin Colman said, “A mother with a train of children after her is one of the most admirable and lovely Sights in the visible Creation of God.”

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Northern mothers were the first to be relieved of heavy child-producing responsibilities. In the late 1700s, incidents of epidemic and war died down, the infant mortality rate improved, and most important, the economy began shifting from a domestic to a market one. Increasingly, money was being made in small “manufactories” and shops instead of at home.

“Before the Birth of One of Her Children”

This 1659 poem by British colonist and poet Anne Bradstreet reflects the fear women may have felt about giving birth at a time when childbirth was high-risk (although more women died from infectious diseases than complications from childbirth). The poem concludes with Bradstreet’s appeal to her husband to protect their children from an unkind stepmother.

"Before the Birth of One of Her Children"

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All things within this fading world hath end,
Adversity doth still our joys attend;
No ties so strong, no friends so dear and sweet,
But with death’s parting blow are sure to meet.
The sentence past is most irrevocable,
A common thing, yet oh, inevitable.
How soon, my Dear, death may my steps attend,
How soon’t may be thy lot to lose thy friend,
We both are ignorant, yet love bids me
These farewell lines to recommend to thee,
That when the knot’s untied that made us one,
I may seem thine, who in effect am none.
And if I see not half my days that’s due,
I may seem thine, who in effect am none.
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became more investment than asset. The philosophy on childbearing reversed itself: Now a better quality of life was to be gained by having fewer children.

Parents nurtured their “lovely children, to perpetuate our names; to enjoy the fruits of our honest industry, and to derive to us a sort of new existence ...” M.L. Weems wrote in 1821, in The New Matrimonial Tattoo for the Old Bachelors.

Instead of being vital for survival, children now were key to family pleasure and the forging of a new national identity. Statesmen called on citizens to supply the new nation with worthy progeny; specifically, they declared, the republic’s mothers should raise sons who loved liberty and daughters who aspired to “Republican motherhood” themselves.

Despite the political exhortations, though, women began limiting their number of pregnancies, which allowed them to devote more time and money to each child and cease childbearing earlier. A number of birth control methods had been available in the Colonies, of which the most preferred was breastfeeding to suppress ovulation. Abstinence, primitive condoms, withdrawal and cleansing with water and a spermicide like alcohol or vinegar were also used to prevent unwanted pregnancies. These methods had been practiced somewhat during the Colonial years, but often haphazardly. It wasn’t until the late 18th century that American couples began to employ them effectively.

Historians don’t know which exact methods were used to reduce family size, but the results are “impressive,” historian Catherine Clinton writes in The Other Civil War: American Women in the Nineteenth Century (Hill and Wang, 1999). Although birthrates varied by class, region and race, there is a “steady pattern of overall decline starting with the Revolutionary generation.”

By 1810 all parts of the United States were experiencing a decline in birthrate. By the mid-1800s, most families had only five or six children. A birthrate free fall had begun that wouldn’t end until our nation’s only other baby boom, the post-World War II event that continues to shape our society and laws today.

As data from the U.S. Census Bureau above shows, the nation saw a distinct percentage increase in population during Colonial times and the post-WWII baby boom. Even though population is growing exponentially, the rate of growth is actually declining. Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Population and Housing Unit Counts (CPH-2) and unpublished data.

Stacey Evers is a freelance writer in Falls Church, Va.

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Preserving the American Spirit
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Caught up in the optimism of the new republic and talk of liberty permeating political halls and parlors in the 1790s, conversations taking place in print, in the theater and in private letters challenged outdated notions about women. Despite the Constitutional drafters' refusal to heed Abigail Adams' warning to "remember the ladies," there was no turning back—certainly not for Judith Sargent Murray.

Using a skillful blend of wit and logic, Murray (writing as "Constantia") dismissed the prevailing view of women's inherent inferiority in her essay, "On the Equality of the Sexes," pointing out that women's lack of education created this impression.

"Are we deficient in reason?" she asked. "We can only reason from what we know, and if [the] opportunity of acquiring knowledge hath been denied us, the inferiority of our sex cannot fairly be deduced from thence ... I would calmly ask, is it reasonable, that a candidate for immortality, for the joys of heaven, an intelligent being, who is to spend an eternity in contemplating the works of Deity, should at present be so degraded, as to be allowed no other ideas, than those suggested by the mechanism of a pudding, or the sewing [of] the seams of a garment?"

Murray's essay, published in the prestigious *Massachusetts Magazine*, is considered the earliest printed assertion of female equality in the American public and was among the growing number of appeals for quality female education in the 18th century.
“I may be accused of enthusiasm,” Judith Sargent Murray wrote in 1798, “but such is my confidence in The Sex, that I expect to see our young women forming a new era in female history.”
THE WOMAN BEHIND
the PSEUDONYM

A
fter several tumultuous years spent dealing with her first husband’s bankruptcy, his escape from Gloucester, Mass., to avoid debtor’s prison, and his subsequent death in the West Indies, Judith began a long-hoped-for and happy marriage to Universalist preacher John Murray. In 1792 she resumed her political writing, developing a two-column series for the Massachusetts Magazine. The first installment of “The Gleaner” appeared in February under the pen name “Mr. Gleaner” because, as Murray explained, “observing ... the indifference, not to say contempt, with which female productions are regarded, and seeking to arrest attention ... I was thus furnished with a very powerful motive for an assumption, which I flattered myself would prove favourable to my aspiring wishes.”

“The Gleaner” was a smashing success. Everyone wanted to know the man behind insistent calls for improved education for girls, employment opportunities for women and equality in marriage.

“When the [female] mind is judiciously balanced,” Mr. Gleaner wrote, “it renders the possessor not only more valuable, but also more amiable, and more generally useful ... should she, in her career of life, be arrested by adverse fortune, many resources of relief ... open themselves before her.” Mr. Gleaner also celebrated “the genius of liberty, invigorated in this younger world,” decried the horrific violence of the French Revolution, and hoped that, in America, “the shackles of superstition are thrown off, ignorance and bigotry give way, the benignant agency of toleration is established, and a spirit of equality, and of free enquiry, is abroad.”

Later that year, Murray, as Constantia, created her more philosophical “Repository” series to discuss nature, loyalists, Universalism, friendship and death. In one particularly courageous column, she wrote, “What a censorious world says of me, cannot offend or permanently hurt me. Was it to commend me, it would do me no real service. I had rather be possessed of an unspotted conscience, the acquitting plaudit of my own breast, and the rational award of a serene mind, than to have world for admirers ... I despise then the low manners of an injured multitude—it is poor, poor indeed, and I will shield myself in the fair asylum of conscious innocence.”

MURRAY on STAGE

Murphy decided to bring her ideas to the public arena of the theater when Boston lifted its ban on theatrical entertainment in 1794, the same year she moved there. Playhouses from Philadelphia to Boston were eager to stage works by Americans that contained patriotic or political themes. Murray’s comedy, “The Medium, or, Virtue Triumphant,” performed in 1795, was the first play by an American produced in Boston, and Judith used her work to promote marriage equality. The character of Eliza was virtuous by refusing to marry Charles until she could meet him on equal financial terms and not become a “slave to his master.” Murray’s second play, “The Traveller Returned,” staged in 1796, presented the independent-minded character of Harriot—the “rising generation” of the “younger world” that would “refute [outdated] sentiments” and “contend for the quantity, as well as the quality, of the [female] mind.”

Another first for Murray came in 1798 with the publication of her book, The Gleaner, which contained previously published and newly composed “Gleaner” columns along with her two plays. In The Gleaner, Murray provided a continuation of “On the Equality of the Sexes,” citing examples throughout history of female courage, leadership and abilities. “The idea of the incapability of women is, we conceive, in this enlightened age, totally inadmissible,” she wrote, “and we have concluded, that establishing the expediency of admitting them to share the blessings of equality, will remove every obstacle to their advancement.”

Murray secured John Adams’ permission to dedicate The Gleaner to him, as well as George Washington’s early endorsement. Both men agreed to support the project, enabling Murray to attract subscribers from among America’s most prominent citizens. “Accept, illustrious Chief, my utmost gratitude for the dignity and importance you have conferred upon my publication.”
Murray wrote to Washington after she received a letter indicating his approval. More than one year later, two aspiring American writers, Henry Sherburne and Sally Sayward Barrell Keating Wood, paid tribute to The Gleaner's historical importance and Murray's role in opening doors for the next generation of American writers. "I am persuaded ... that years hence, when the admirable author sleeps in the dust ... The Gleaner will be universally read and admired," Wood predicted.

THE LEGACY of Her LETTER BOOKS

What Wood and Sherburne could not have known was that Murray was securing her place in history not only through her essays, but also by keeping letter books—blank volumes into which she copied approximately 2,500 letters written to family, friends and political figures. As far as historians know, these are the only 18th-century letter books kept by a woman in a systematic way, and they document Murray's ideas and influence in private settings. The letters confirm her dedication to women's rights, such as this letter she wrote to a politically influential cousin in 1776, in which she rejected the biblical story of the fall of Eve: "That Eve was the weaker Vessel. I boldly take upon me to deny—Nay, it should seem she was abundantly

Murray dismissed the prevailing view of women's inherent inferiority in her essay, "On the Equality of the Sexes."
the stronger vessel since all the deep laid Art, of the most subtle fiend that inhabited the infernal regions, was requisite to draw her from his allegiance, while Adam was overcome by the softer passions, merely by his attachment to a female.”

Murray’s letters also offer a female eyewitness account of daily life, events and personalities of the 18th century. In 1790, shortly after “On the Equality of the Sexes” appeared, Judith and John Murray traveled to New York, where they met President George Washington. She later told her parents, “My eyes had never before beheld him—but it was not necessary he should be announced—that dignified benignity, by which he is distinguished, could not belong to another … his figure is elegant beyond what I have ever seen … his countenance is benignly good, and … there is a kind of venerable gravity inscribed upon every feature … Mrs. Washington,” she added, “was condescendingly attentive to me … As a stranger I was constantly by her side”—including the next morning when Martha paid her a surprise visit, with “one whole hour condescendingly devoted to [Murray].”

In Philadelphia, Murray attended a session of Congress where her initial “reverential feelings” were “considerably abated” as she watched “many of the members … walking to, and fro—their hats occasionally on, or off—Reading the News papers … picking their nails, biting the heads of their canes … ogling the Gallery, etc., etc.” In Boston, she wrote about her friends John and Abigail Adams, “several Gentlemen in Boston, whose character, and influence, are high in the political world—declare that was the President called out of time, they should rather see Mrs. Adams in the Presidential chair than any other character now existing in America.”

Murray wished for “affectionate posterity” by creating her letter books and joining national public conversations to improve the lives of women and girls. Indeed, her work should be seen as an integral part of the continuum that led to everything from Sarah Grimké’s book *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes* in 1837, to Margaret Fuller’s 1845 book, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, to the 19th-century movements for women’s suffrage and equal rights. For Judith Sargent Murray, the ideals of liberty and equality that were “abroad” in the “younger world” applied to everyone. It would just take time for her vision to be realized.


Judith Sargent Murray was born in 1751 in Gloucester, Mass., the oldest daughter of Winthrop Sargent, a wealthy merchant, and Judith Saunders Sargent. While she received rudimentary lessons in reading and writing, she was a self-taught student of history, philosophy, literature and Universalist theology. Her first marriage to ship captain John Stevens Jr. was childless; her second marriage to the Reverend John Murray of England, who is considered the founder of organized Universalism in America, produced a son who died in childhood and a daughter, Julia Maria.

Judith’s first published work (and the first by an American Universalist woman) was her 1782 Universalist catechism, written for children, which taught them that women and men were equal in the eyes of God. Her essays and poetry began to appear in 1784, as she continued her calls for equality, improved female education and women’s economic and political rights. In 1794 the Murray family moved to Boston, where Judith’s two plays were produced and where her book, *The Gleaner*, was published. In the early 1800s, Murray helped to open a female academy in Dorchester, Mass.

Several years later, after John Murray’s death, Judith, her daughter and granddaughter moved to Natchez, Miss., to be reunited with Julia Maria’s husband, a native of Natchez. Judith died there in 1820; the 20 volumes of letter books she brought with her were not discovered until 1984. The letter books were preserved and published on microfilm by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History a few years later.
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For centuries, family historians had to rely on their stories being passed down in spoken, oral tradition. When Thomas Alva Edison patented sound recording technology in 1878, it ultimately revolutionized this pattern of family storytelling, making it possible to record memories in a more permanent, less ephemeral way. The technological descendants of Edison’s tape recorder now make it easy for historians and families to preserve the voices from their past. All it takes to capture the oral history in your family is a recording device, a list of questions and a willing participant.
PROMPTING MEMORIES

As you prepare to interview your family member, develop a list of specific questions that encourage reflection and storytelling (and more than one-word or yes/no answers). Warm up your interviewees with easy questions, starting with the basics: name, age, date of birth, parents, spouse and children. Move on to questions about places they’ve lived and worked. Ask specific questions regarding important milestones in their lives and urge them to talk about where they were when certain historical events occurred. Use prompts such as objects or photographs of people and places to encourage spontaneous stories.

Members of the Association of Personal Historians assist individuals in telling and writing their histories. Consult their Web site (www.personalhistorians.org/preserving) for interview tips.

LEARNING FROM STORYCORPS

One national model for preserving family history is StoryCorps. Founded by award-winning radio producer Dave Isay, the organization was established in 2003 when Isay built a booth in Grand Central Terminal in New York with the goal of interviewing passersby. (NSDAR awarded its Motion Picture, Radio and Television Award to Dave Isay in 2006.)

There are two ways to utilize StoryCorps:

1. Rent a do-it-yourself kit. StoryCorps (www.storycorps.org) offers a StoryKit for approximately $200 for a seven-day rental plus a security deposit. Each kit comes with a professional recorder, two 40-minute memory cards, a professional-quality microphone, studio-grade headphones and a StoryKit User’s Guide.

2. Stop by a StoryCorps booth or mobile trailer in your area. Reserving is easy: Go to the Web site, click on “Participate,” followed by “Record an Interview” and set up an appointment for yourself and a

By Megan Pacella

BEN PATTON LEARNED THE importance of archiving family history at a young age. When Ben was just 21, his father—George Patton, the son of famous World War II General George S. Patton, who served in the Korean and Vietnam wars—lost decades of memories preserved in scrapbooks and diaries in a devastating house fire. “My father had volumes of bound books filled with photos, scraps of paper, letters and notes,” Patton recalls. “It was like a piece of him died in that fire. He just didn’t have the energy to start over.”

A year later, Ben came up with a simple idea to help his father preserve his lost memories: He recorded his father’s stories with a tape recorder. “I felt it would be redemptive to allow him to sit down and retell some of those memories to someone who cared,” Patton says. “I wanted to hear the stories in his own voice and his own words.”

Now that his father has died, Ben is grateful to have recordings of his stories on hand. “Those recordings are their own reward, and they are more important than ever,” he says. “The same way he relived his experiences through scrapbooks and diaries, I can relive my life with him through these audio recordings. My son will never meet my father, but by seeing videos and hearing the sound of his voice, I’ll be able to illustrate what he was like.”

Patton was so moved by the experience of recording his father’s oral history that he started his own production company, Patton Productions, which helps other families record and preserve their memories. “My clients are the daughters and sons of older generations,” he says. “The kind of people you want to interview are almost always too humble to open up. These esteemed generations often don’t see the need to record the same stories they’ve been telling for years. You have to communicate that these recordings aren’t about ego; their purpose is to preserve and pass along the wisdom and life experiences that senior members of our society have.”

You don’t have to pay a production company to record the legacy of your family members. Even an inexpensive camcorder or tape recorder can capture the stories you want to save, Patton says. “The loss of a life is like burning down a library—when it’s gone, it’s gone,” Patton says. “That’s why you have to record these stories now. Everybody has an interesting life. You don’t have to have the name Patton to have a history that’s worthy of being remembered.”

For more information on Ben Patton’s production company, visit www.pattonproductions.com.
relative. When you arrive, a StoryCorps facilitator will get you started and explain the interview process. For 40 minutes, you’ll have the chance to ask your loved one questions you’ve been curious about, from fun stories (Who were your best friends growing up? What was your favorite game to play? What was the worst job you’ve ever had?) to more serious remembrances. In the end, you’ll leave a piece of history behind. A CD of the recording goes home with you and another goes to the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress.

HONORING SOLDIERS AND THEIR STORIES
Many organizations are collecting oral histories to document their pasts. For instance, the Center for Oral History (www.westpointcoh.org) at the United States Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., is collecting the personal stories of American service men and women of all ranks beginning with those returning from Iraq and Afghanistan and going back to Vietnam veterans. The site, open to all users, also functions as a teaching tool: Today’s cadets learn crucial lessons from the service men and women who preceded them. The center’s online features include high-definition video and digital audio files with excerpts of soldier interviews.

FINDING INSPIRATION ONLINE
If you need further inspiration from existing oral history projects, tune into the sound recordings made by the Federal Writers’ Project of the Works Progress Administration, which was implemented to create employment opportunities for historians, teachers, writers and librarians. Many of the Federal Writers’ Project’s 300,000 items, such as correspondence, oral testimony and folklore, are accessible through the Library of Congress’ American Memory site: http://memory.loc.gov/wpaintro/wpahome.html.

One example of the recordings available on the site is “Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives From the Federal Writers’ Project, 1936–1938.” This project has more than 2,300 first-person accounts of slavery that were transcribed and are part of the 17-volume Slave Narratives: A Folk History of Slavery in the United States From Interviews With Former Slaves.

And don’t miss the “American Life Histories Manuscripts from the Federal Writers’ Project, 1936–1940.” The collection holds close to 3,000 documents from 300 writers in 24 states. These life histories describe the interviewee’s education, income, religion, political views and other observations.

You can also find inspiring oral history collections through the History Matters site (http://historymatters.gmu.edu) as well as American Folklife Center’s online archive, which includes “After the Day of Infamy: Man-on-the-Street Interviews Following the Attack on Pearl Harbor.” Field agents of the Archive of American Folk Song gathered the reactions of Americans immediately after the 1941 attack.

Learn more at www.loc.gov/folklife/archive.html.

Pick up an inexpensive digital recorder and start saving your family stories now. And don’t forget to preserve them by following tips from the Library of Congress (www.digitalpreservation.gov/you/digitalmemories.html). Your descendants will thank you for rescuing a piece of their past.

Maureen Taylor’s article on heritage gardens appeared in the March/April 2009 issue.

Valuable Voice Mail

ORAL HISTORY can come from some unexpected places. Ever wish you could save a sweet, funny or touching message on your voice mail or answering machine? VoiceQuilt.com’s innovative offering has made that possible.

“In July 2006, we did an online survey of 400-plus U.S. women,” says Hope Flammer, VoiceQuilt.com’s founder, “and discovered that 68 percent of the respondents said that they had a voice mail they were replaying over and over again—primarily because the message made them happy or reminded them of a loved one.” Flammer turned that idea into a new product—Recording Rescue, a service that saves voice mail from home answering machines or cell phone systems.

“Sometimes, it’s an adorable voice message from a child,” Flammer says. “Other times, it’s a romantic message from a spouse. But every now and then, it’s a voice message from someone who has passed away.”

Recording Rescue became such a success that the company now offers a way to rescue older tape recordings as well.
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