

# HUMANITIES

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1994

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NEWCOMERS TO THE AMERICAN SHORE





NEWCOMERS TO THE AMERICAN SHORE

*Immigrants arriving at Ellis Island.*

—Photo by Culver Pictures Inc.

## Humanities

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

### *The American Character*

Who are we? What national values do we share? What do we as citizens owe to each other? Endowment Chairman Sheldon Hackney raises these questions with historian John Higham, author of *Send These to Me: Immigrants in Urban America*. In a conversation in this issue of *Humanities*, they weigh the relevance of race, gender, and class in the search for cohesiveness in the society at large, and examine the difficulty in achieving a national identity.

As history tells us, from the outset America was characterized by ethnic and national and religious variety. To a continent already peopled by Indians came Puritans, indentured English servants, ostracized Quakers, blacks in servitude from Africa, Scotch-Irish Protestants, German Mennonites, Sephardic Jews from Brazil, planters from Barbados, Huguenot dissidents from France. By the 1800s the inpouring was a flood: 35 million people between 1815 and 1860, 10 million between 1860 and 1890, another 20 million between 1890 and 1930. In 1905, 1906, 1907, 1910, 1913, and 1914 alone, a million people arrived each year.

We take brief glimpses of two such groups. One is the Moravians, who came as missionaries in the 1700s and whose story unfolds in the stark words of a young woman held captive by the Munsee Indians. The other story is that of Irish immigrants arriving a century later in a more urban America; their saga from the 1800s to the present time lays the groundwork for a study of the dichotomy between economic reality and the nostalgia for a rural past. "In a sense we're all exiles," says film historian Kerby Miller, "in that society has changed so rapidly that it's very difficult for us to deal with the reality of change, using the ideas and concepts and rhetoric of the past."

Finding new concepts and a new vernacular was to take many forms. In music, the challenge brought Czech composer Antonín Dvořák to New York City in 1893 to teach and conduct at the National Conservatory of Music, and to immerse himself in what he saw as American folk music, in particular that of African and Native Americans. "The germs for the best of music lie hidden among all the races that are commingled in this great country," he wrote in *Harpers*. That December saw the debut in New York of a daring new Dvořák work, Symphony No. 9, *From the New World*.

The cultural life of the city—its concerts, its operas, its theater—was the focal point of another fledgling art form, photography. Joseph Byron, whose grandfather had founded a commercial photography business in England, moved to the United States to open a studio. From portraiture to current events, Byron and his son Percy covered the New York scene—"the banquets and the balls, the weddings and the funerals, the parties and the parades, the people and the buildings, the hospitals and the hotels, the parks and the beaches, the gilded and the sordid...."

More than 22,000 of these photographs are in the Museum of the City of New York, where they are being rehoused and converted to archival microfiche for future generations.

As our final stop in the 1890s we move west to California where a writer named Jack London was trying to learn to write short stories on an old Blickensdorfer typewriter borrowed from his brother-in-law. His struggles met with varying degrees of success. Five of the early attempts fell into oblivion—some critics say deservedly so—and lay unpublished for more than ninety years. We include an excerpt from one of them, "The Strange Experience of a Misogynist." Judge for yourself.

—Mary Lou Beatty



# HUMANITIES

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## Revisiting Biography in History

Anyone who identifies with a major approach to understanding the past ought to think the approach is vitally important, and ought to explain what this importance is. It was not surprising, then, to read Stephen E. Ambrose's recent paeans to biography as the quintessential means of grasping history in the summer issue of this magazine. After all, he's a biographer. I am a social historian and have often

written, and still believe, that social history offers the keys to the kingdom of the past. What really moves societies, what causes the fundamental patterns of the past and what spurs basic change, are the workings of groups in society and processes like work or family formation that reflect the efforts of many individuals.

Clearly Professor Ambrose and I disagree about how the past can best be understood.

We could launch a puerile shouting match about whose kind of history is king of the hill, escalating our adjectives and claims in the process. Professor Ambrose already advances one additional point for his cause—that biography is the most popularly read form of history. I grant this, but would note that the same measurement might suggest that NEH should fund commercial television or professional sports rather than either biography or social history. Popularity measures validity inadequately at best. Indeed, while the failure of social histories normally to dominate History of Book Club selections does remind practitioners of the need to consider new modes of presentation and outreach, it also suggests a problem to address, rather than a cause for complacency.

Professor Ambrose's claims are particularly troubling in their superficial rendering of complex analytical issues. The issues are worth discussion, and biographers certainly deserve their due place. But to write about causation as though no other approach to history has happened is simply irresponsible. These aspects of conceptualization, and not academic-macho chest-thumping about whose history wins significance competitions, are what really should concern us.

Individuals can have dramatic lives which naturally draw interest. This is true, though the individuals need not be simply of the elite to meet these criteria. Powerful individuals particularly attract attention, and this too is probably natural enough. But other forces shape the past and condition even powerful individuals themselves, besides the whimsical unpredictabilities of particular personalities. To project biography simply on the basis of the capacity of great

individuals to shape their environment is, frankly, a truly dangerous oversimplification. As we live in an age when the limits of individual power become ever more apparent, with the stumblings of one well-intentioned president after another, we need an approach to biography that helps readers cope with more complex understanding, not an escapist kind of mythmaking. Serious biographers should use their skills, and their appeals to readership, to further an understanding of how historical forces interact with individuals, instead of force-feeding a nostalgia for the good old days when causation seemed to radiate from the will of a great leader.

Rather than claiming the heavyweight title of history, biographers may serve a useful function in challenging social historians to reopen debates about the great man interpretation. Possibly my colleagues have relegated these debates too completely to the garbage heap of analytical irrelevancies. Certainly some aspects of the past, particularly in the area of international relations (Professor Ambrose also mentions business and a few other domains, where I think his case would be more difficult to sustain) have not been assimilable into mainstream social history because of the unusual importance of elite individuals. A new discussion of individuals and broader forces might provide a useful means of integrating a still-divided approach to the past.

To pretend, however, to a general humanities audience that big debates about historical causation do not exist, or can be overridden by mere assertion, is irresponsible. Biography may, as some social historians have believed, continue to attract popular readership despite the fact that it reveals little about the true workings of the past, winning admirers for surface drama and bustle. Or it may be able to reenter more serious historical analysis, by grappling with issues beyond individual patterns in the process. But this requires serious engagement with the relationship between individuals and wider historical forces, with the effective power of elite individuals vis-à-vis the activities of individuals in other social ranks, and with the question of what combination of causes generates long-term historical change. This analytical engagement is open to new approaches, and perhaps biographers have been kept too long at a distance. But they must for their part connect with a more complex conceptualization than Professor Ambrose seems to have patience for, and not simply attempt to bypass it en route to a general readership.

—Peter Stearns

*Stearns is dean and Heinz Professor of History at the College of Humanities & Social Sciences, Carnegie Mellon University.*

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR



# Calendar

JANUARY ♦ FEBRUARY

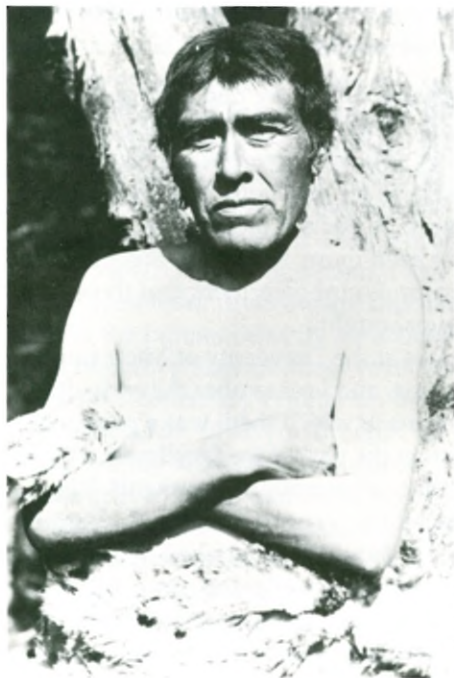
BY AMY LIFSON



—Yale Center for British Art

"Toil and Plenty: Images of the Agricultural Landscape in England, 1780-1890," which opens January 15 at the Yale Center for British Art in New Haven, depicts an idyllic world in a time of social change.

♦ A twenty-six part National Public Radio series, "Wade in the Water," traces the origins and development of African-American sacred music. Weekly broadcast begins in January; dates vary by locality.



—Phoebe Apperson Hearst Museum

*Ishi, The Last Yahi Indian* will air January 19 on PBS, as part of *The American Experience* series. The film tells the story of the last surviving member of the Yahi tribe, who appeared in 1911 in northern California. *Ishi* was named Best Film at the 1993 Munich Film Festival, and is the winner as well of a Gold Hugo award from the 1993 Chicago International Film Festival.

Renderings on ceramic pots tell the story of a lost civilization, revealed through a hieroglyphic advance. "Painting the Maya Universe: Royal Ceramics of the Classic Period" opens January 15 at the Duke University Museum of Art in Durham, North Carolina.



—Duke University Museum of Art



—Amon Carter Museum

*Thunderstorm on Narragansett Bay* is the centerpiece for "Sailor Take Warning: The Thunderstorm Paintings of Martin Johnson Heade," opening February 12 at the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth, Texas.



# A Conversation with John Higham

**W**HEN ENDOWMENT Chairman Sheldon Hackney met recently with historian John Higham of Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore the conversation turned to multiculturalism and national identity. Higham is the author of *Send These to Me: Immigrants in Urban America*. An update, "Multiculturalism and Universalism: A History and Critique," appeared in the June 1993 issue of *American Quarterly*.

**Sheldon Hackney:** You say that multiculturalism as a term began as a rather neutral descriptive term and now has become a set of ideas that have an antagonistic meaning to them. What do you mean by multiculturalism, as you use the term?

**John Higham:** Multiculturalism is used in all kinds of different ways. For a great many people, it means a wider recognition and appreciation of the different endowments that young people bring to the classroom.

**Hackney:** That's the more or less descriptive level.

**Higham:** It's more than descriptive. It's saying that historically we have not appreciated enough the degree to which people are shaped by their particular origins. It's commonly assumed that we can talk in and out of the classroom about our differences truthfully because we also have commonalities that specific education and traditions of our society have given us. I have no objection to that. In fact, I think it's desirable.

What I call academic multiculturalism is an ideology of minority rights that pays no attention to majorities. It's a belief that equality can be advanced by maximizing the cohesiveness and the power of particular groups, particular minority groups, if they will stand together, if they ally themselves with one another. So academic multiculturalism I would define as a belief in and an effort to propagate the idea of alliance between a particular set of disadvantaged elements.

**Hackney:** If one goes back twenty years to the university struggling with these issues and introducing elements of Afro-American studies or women's studies, these would be gestures of the

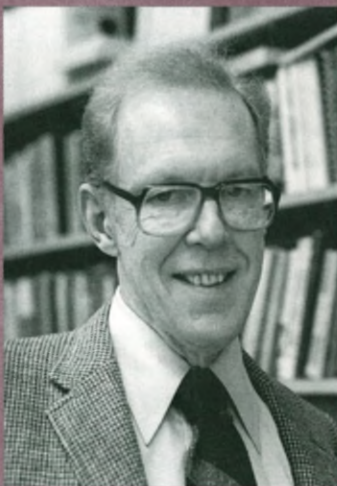
university toward the validation—validation is the term that was used—of the identities of some students who thought of themselves as being alien on the campus. You have said that you think some of that was good, necessary, and important to do. From my experience with the campus, there is a great paradox that every faculty faced, every administrator faced—I'm speaking now of large, historically white campuses—whatever one did there to indicate that members of minority groups were welcome and that their endowment identities were valued in the community also served to set them apart, thus rigidifying the boundaries of the group. I think of that as an absolute paradox. That is, I don't see a way out of it. Do you see a way out of that?

**Higham:** Well, if we had been sufficiently aware in the early years, the late sixties and early seventies, of how easy it would be for particular groups to effect closure, to enclose themselves, we would have been more resistant to some kinds of campus empowerment that those groups sought.

I was at the University of Michigan at the time, and I remember the early discussions in which there was a proper distrust on the part of the faculty about the creation of separate departments. We insisted that various new kinds of group studies should be organized in a more fluid way on an interdepartmental level as programs. I guess my point is simply that the ease with which group-focused academic programs became socially and politically institutionalized in universities has raised a problem. We've discovered that we, out of the best will in the world, have been complicit in the increase in these separations.

**Hackney:** Do you think the general public is aware of the debates raging about multiculturalism?

**Higham:** Vaguely. The general public is very dissatisfied with the universities, and so whatever is said critically about universities is picked up and amplified. Consequently, it's a little hard to adopt a



John Higham

Courtesy of Johns Hopkins University



critical stance without appearing to be a tearer-down of the academic world.

**Hackney:** Let me try to suggest a context for this debate that's occurring. Everywhere you look around the world, ethnic conflicts, communitarian violence, sectarian violence seem to be going on: In the Balkans, the original meaning of balkanization is being revised. The nationalities of the former Soviet Union are at war with each other and themselves. In South America, there are also ethnic rivalries that are being acted out, though not as much violence. South Africa one should mention as a place that is a dramatic example of racial conflict where the potential for violence is very high. As all of that is going on around the world, Americans are being told here at home that our society is becoming even more diverse and that its future is increased ethnic diversity. I think Americans are bound to wonder whether the Balkans is the future of America. That is why I think there is a good bit of public awareness and worry about the meaning of diversity for America. Is that a proper context?

**Higham:** It's certainly part of the context, but I've always felt that the United States is different, and I have never been concerned about the country falling apart. I'm an optimist, and I'd like to think that the differentiating energies of American culture have a weight of history behind them, so that fundamental and persistent divisions are not going to set in. I don't take an alarmist view. On the other hand, I feel that the apostles of diversity are much less aware of the human capacity for solidification of identities than are those of us who look to an increasingly egalitarian society.

Let me just say, since you brought up the word diversity, that this is a slogan. It's also the crux of an argument. Someone who raises some danger signals, as I tried to do recently in *American Quarterly*, is immediately seen as being opposed to diversity. Well, I am opposed to the meaning that diversity has taken on because I think that word implies a static condition. When people talk about diversity, they're talking about the institutionalization, the strengthening, of certain very particular collective identities. They want the larger society to support that institutionalization.

I would like to distinguish between diversity and differentiation. Differentiation is a process. It's a process that is full of possibilities for new things. It's a process of invention, and it is an absolutely fundamental thrust in our culture. It's an incomplete thrust because the more differentiation you get, the more you need to have unifying or consolidating influences

"I'm an optimist, and I'd like to think that the differentiating energies of American culture have a weight of history behind them, so that fundamental and persistent divisions are not going to set in."

as well. I see the big problems of America summed up in our effort to maintain and perpetuate the energies of differentiation on the one hand and consolidation on the other. And when one or the other of these gets out of control, then we have trouble, as we did with the American Civil War. There, consolidation failed and differentiation—I'm talking about the onset of the war—prevailed.

**Hackney:** I think I agree with you. One way to look at American history is that it has always had these centrifugal forces at work. It has been much more diverse from the beginning, even from the eighteenth century. And that ethnic and national and religious variety that was represented in the population has been renewed and reemphasized repeatedly by the move West, by immigration, by urbanization, by industrialization. All of those forces also tend to pull people apart. Therefore, we have always needed some countervailing forces to hold us together. The myth—and I mean that in a good sense—the myth of the Constitution and of the Founding Fathers, the Bill of Rights, has been one of the most powerful myths. You refer to the commitment to equality as being a central feature. Is that the way you see our history?

**Higham:** Exactly. I see American history as unfolding from a collection of heterogeneous small communities to a very tenuous national community, initially wired together by a set of beliefs and then gradually developing some greater homogeneous or unifying culture.

**Hackney:** The set of beliefs being belief in the political system.

**Higham:** Absolutely. The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution—that's the beginning. And, as you know, a unifying ideology that lacks any strong social base is pretty fragile. Consequently, in early American history we see secessionist movements, intense state rights, and so on. So it's been a great, marvelous feature of American history that differentiation has continued over the centuries, and yet unifying forces have counterbalanced that. We're now at a point where, unfortunately, unifying forces are anathema in the academic world.

**Hackney:** That's what worries you about multiculturalism.

**Higham:** Multiculturalism is, among other things, a very selective choice of favored identities, and either a total disregard of or a positive rejection of other identities. The identity that is targeted, the identity that's most consistently disfavored by multicult-



turalism, is a national identity. National identities are perceived almost by definition as oppressive.

**Hackney:** I was fascinated with an assumption you make that identities are malleable. You speak of certain "endowment" identities. Presumably, those are identities that we're born with, we're given: race, gender, ethnicity. If I'm white, I'm white, and that identity is fixed. But you seem to think that that's not quite true.

**Higham:** That's right. I think that all of our identities are much more malleable than we tend to suppose. It is true that these physical endowments are in an objective sense pretty much unchangeable, although we're finding out ways to manipulate those, too. What's important is what people think about and what they do with those aspects of their self that are obviously distinct from that of other people. Race becomes an identity only when a society thinks it is one. If you're not paying attention, it doesn't matter.

**Hackney:** So it's a social construct.

**Higham:** Exactly.

**Hackney:** That's an interesting observation, very interesting. Would you also say that, even when you start paying attention and it becomes a reality for you, a subjective reality, that its meaning can vary over time?

**Higham:** Yes. And when you have, as we do in this country, racial identities that were formed so early and on such a profound basis of inequality, altering them is the great unfinished business of our society. I happen to think that those identities have changed a lot more than our multiculturalists are prepared to recognize. We can't continue to move ahead unless we see a national identity as something that unifies us and provides a link to more universal human identities.

Another kind of identity that we don't pay enough attention to these days is a visionary identity. This develops among people who are highly dissatisfied with the world they're in and who image for themselves a new and better way of being. They can develop an identity that's constituted not by who they are at this time, but who they want to be. Throughout American history, people with visionary identities have been tremendously important in the differentiating energies of the society.

**Hackney:** An example?

**Higham:** Well, one example would be Henry Thoreau, who identified himself with humanity in general. That was very individualistic. However, we began at the

same time that Thoreau came on the scene to get visionary group identities through utopian communities. And coming down to the early twentieth century, you have many Americans responding to the great leader of the American Socialist Party, Eugene Debs, who told the court when he was sentenced for violating the Espionage Act, "Your Honor: While there is a lower class I am in it, while there is a criminal element I am of it; while there is a soul in prison, I am not free." Debs is projecting an identity quite comparable to Thoreau's, although now constructed in a more concrete way.

**Hackney:** Would you go so far as to say that certain group stereotypes that might attach to an endowment identity, as you term it, can change over time so that the meaning of being black in America is different now from what it was in 1950, say? And, indeed, I guess the meaning of being white in America is different now from what it was.

**Higham:** I think that's very, very true. I'm old enough to remember, long after I was a boy, walking down streets in southern towns in the 1950s and finding black people moving over and standing in the gutter to let me pass. I found that incredibly shocking.

Anyway, not only have our identities changed very greatly, but some of them have weakened. Some of them which I consider valuable have weakened. Family identities are weaker now. So are party identities—Democrats, Republican, and so on. Multiculturalists in general see group identities as fixed, and in that way they can resemble racists, although of course they do infinitely less harm.

Fixed identities, which we used to see as a delusion of the majority of the population, we now find idealized by minorities both on the left and on the right. Advocating fluidity rather than diversity is a difficult position to maintain. But it is enormously important to revitalize this side of our heritage. Without it, we are unlikely to reach a collective vision of where we want to go.

**Hackney:** When you tax the multiculturalists for not having a vision of what America should be in the future, I think that's a fair critique. I think that's one of the things in general lacking in America at this time. There is no commonly accepted vision of what we want to become. Do you have a vision of what the American culture should be?

**Higham:** My roots are on the left. But I also feel very much identified with American culture, and so I want to pursue and



Sheldon Hackney



enlarge its proven capabilities. Therefore, I see an extension of equality as important. I also see an extension of community as important. If asked to choose among the many different communities with which this country is blessed, I go for overlap and interpenetration. As a patriot, I think that we have a problem today with excessively narrow and fixed identities and communities.

**Hackney:** If I can project from your feelings about identities themselves—where you see people as having multiple identities, and indeed sometimes more one thing and sometimes more another, depending on the circumstances—these are very fluid. One has a perhaps religious identity and an ethnic identity and a class identity and a family identity and a regional identity and an American identity, and all of those things are quite important to an individual. Similarly, there are all those communities as well, and you are arguing for the multiplicity of communities being very good and coherent, basically. Americans should be able to live happily with the notion that those various commitments, identities, and communities are fluid with each other.

**Higham:** Exactly. And here I'm concerned about the influence of a multiculturalist perspective on American education, because there is an assumption that the affirmation of an endowment identity necessarily puts one in opposition to a national identity.

**Hackney:** You just reject that.

**Higham:** I think one has to because, if you look at life through the eyes of ordinary people who aren't defining concepts and trying to manipulate ideas, among the other things that they want is that the different values they cherish should be congruent with one another. They want their family, their church, and their country to—

**Hackney:** To be in alignment.

**Higham:** Yes, to be in alignment. And multiculturalists are telling them that's not possible because the national identity is always going to be manipulated by self-interested leaders.

**Hackney:** Indeed, I think a critique of the multiculturalists or the postmodernists would be that your view is simply a bourgeois intellectual rationalization of the existing society and the existing structure. What do you say in response to that?

**Higham:** First of all, I would acknowledge it. I wouldn't say it's a rationalization. I think there's a lot that's good in our existing society. However, I would add that,

“One has a perhaps religious identity and an ethnic identity and a class identity and a family identity and a regional identity and an American identity, and all of those things are quite important to an individual.”

aside from racism, the great evil in our society is materialistic salvations; that is, individualism in its economic dimensions. This is encouraged by the economic system. And it needs to be checked. Counterweights are needed, which we have to draw from our religious and spiritual and cultural sources and values.

**Hackney:** One of the themes of your thinking is the importance of class as well. You raise the point that multiculturalists, though they talk a lot about race, class, and gender—that is the mantra of the postmodernists—that class is not really very much present in their analysis or their work. Why do you think that's true? Why is class clearly the third in this triad?

**Higham:** I think the reason for that is historical. In the period from the late 1960s up to the early 1980s, there was quite a significant strain of Marxism in the humanities in the leading colleges and universities. By the end of the 1980s, that was breaking up. It was going down the drain, partly because people who were espousing it had never been, most of them, really committed Marxists. They had been cultural Marxists. That became more and more attenuated, and finally people ended up asking themselves, “Well, what really am I arguing?” It was like the smile on the Cheshire cat. The other great change was that Marxism as a world movement was disintegrating. Well, if you're alienated from your own society and the alternative system that you have put your faith in is falling apart, where do you go? In the particular American circumstances, with the great domestic problem that we had of under-recognized identities, of people lacking a sense of validation—that is, racial minorities, women—the outcome was a shift from cultural Marxism to a deconstructionist, postmodernist perspective.

**Hackney:** Which is to say, if you feel, for whatever reasons, a victim, you need an explanation for that, and class is becoming a less convincing explanation given what's happening in the world.

**Higham:** A feature of academic multiculturalism is the inclusion of class as a form of oppression that is characteristically contained within racial and sexist oppression. Multiculturalists think that they are emphasizing class. But they're really only looking at class as an attribute of racial or ethnic or gendered disadvantage. Multiculturalism emphasizes the points at which race and class seem mutually reinforcing. This has meant that radicals in the humanities have been able to think of

*continued on page 40*



# OUT OF



Children in Belfast, nineteenth century.

—Courtesy of Ulster Museum



# IRELAND

**I**N 1870, MAURICE WOULFE,  
an Irish immigrant living in the Wyoming Territory,  
wrote to his brother Michael: "I am in first rate health. I was  
never better in my life....I have everything that would tend to make life  
comfortable." Despite this bright assessment of the United States, Woulfe  
added mournfully: "In spite of all, I can never forget home, as every Irishman in a  
foreign land can never forget the land he was raised in."

This poignant anecdote opens the new documentary film, *Out of Ireland*, an emotionally and intellectually rich chronicle of the history and psychology of Irish emigration to America. Filmed in Ireland and the United States, the documentary examines the relationship of the two countries through Irish emigration and the creation of an Irish-American ethnic group. The tales of eight immigrants, including Maurice Woulfe, illuminate the personal sagas of Irish immigrants of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries.

BY JANIS JOHNSON





Courtesy of National Library of Ireland

A village in County Donegal.



Academy award-winning filmmaker Paul Wagner, his wife Ellen Casey Wagner, and Dorothy Peterson, all with Irish-American heritage of varying degrees, are producing the documentary for public television in 1994. Wagner won his Oscar for coproducing *The Stone Carvers*, a documentary film about Italian Americans who are artisans at Washington's National Cathedral.

Although *Out of Ireland* draws a comprehensive portrait of the Irish experience and the historical roots of the present 44 million Irish Americans, its underlying theme speaks to an even larger audience. Wagner is intrigued by the contradictory impulses between the reality of life in the present and nostalgic dreams of youth. It was his subtext, articulated in the work of historian Dr. Kerby Miller, that excited the producers about the universal appeal of the Irish-American story. "In a sense we're all exiles, in that society has changed so rapidly it's very difficult for us to deal with the reality of change, using the ideas and concepts and rhetoric of the past," says Miller, author of the award-winning 1987 book, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America*.

"And so we find ourselves in a sort of exile, and what the Irish experienced moving from the countryside to cities...is not dissimilar from the experience which so many of us still have today, constantly uprooted, constantly searching for the perfect job or the perfect house," says Miller. "Like the Irish emigrants, we all, or most of us, yearn nostalgically for some sort of fancied security that we had as children. And so, like F. Scott Fitzgerald, an Irish American, put it: We run faster and faster, hoping some day to catch up with the past which we have irretrievably lost."

The producers were inspired to delve into the history of Irish Americans in the late 1980s during yet another wave of Irish emigration to the U.S. In their research they were surprised at how little documentary or film material existed on the subject, despite the significant size and importance of the Irish-American ethnic group. But when they connected with Dr. Miller, associate professor of history at the University of Missouri-Columbia, they found their conceptual hook.

As part of his continuing interest in Irish immigration and Irish history, Miller has looked at more than 10,000 letters and memoirs that illuminate in personal detail "what ordinary Irish people felt about coming to this country." Miller, incidentally, says his own Irish heritage is only "remote family background," but a love of bagpipe music as a youth helped set him on his journey.

Miller began his research in archives, particularly in Ireland. He solicited material from hundreds of libraries and historical societies in the U. S. and Canada. During a year-long fellowship in Ireland, in cooperation with then-American ambassador William Shannon, Miller conducted a massive public appeal for letters and memoirs through the mass media, religious magazines and farm journals. Over the years, he has followed new leads and is now writing another large volume, an edited and annotated collection of Irish immigrant letters, journals, and memoirs from the 1670s to the 1980s.

"Some of the things I do are very similar to the sort of questions that genealogists ask," says Miller. "In order to make these people's lives meaningful, you've got to put them in a broad historical context. Sometimes they're unique. You can also discern patterns in their lives that relate to the more general."

Complementing Miller's material in the documentary are thousands of photographs collected by the producers and their researcher Catherine Dee, a British citizen of Irish descent. As specialists in American cultural history, Wagner and his team at American Focus, Inc. are based in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Among the other consulting scholars interviewed on film are the late Dennis Clark, who won the American Book Award for *Hibernia America: The Irish and Regional Cultures*; Hasia Diner, author of *Erin's Daughter in America: Irish Immigrant Women in the Nineteenth Century*; and Michael (Mick) Moloney, a folklorist, ethnomusicologist, and musician in Philadelphia. The director of photography is Erich





Roland, also an Academy Award winner. His historical and documentary work includes *The Johnstown Flood* and *Gospel According to Al Green*. Irish writer John B. Keane, author of *The Field*, which recently became a feature film, also is interviewed on camera. Wagner says he sounds "like the voice of Ireland" when he talks.

Emigration in Ireland, says Keane, "is a predominant way of life. It has been going on since the Melesians landed in South Kerry over 2,000 years ago, and I suspect it will go on forever."

The film begins its profile of this exodus with the massive Irish Catholic immigration at the end of the eighteenth century. After the victory of Protestant William of Orange about 100 years earlier, the British crown confiscated nearly all Catholic land and ceded them to English Protestant landlords. Deprived of their land, the only means of subsistence, the Irish Catholics began leaving. Curiously, the Irish language did not have a word that approximates the English word "emigrant," explains Miller. The word they chose, "deorai," means exile, "and so had all these negative and sorrowful and tragic connotations."

Paul Wagner, who is also writing, directing, and editing *Out of Ireland*, is assembling the documentary from about sixty hours of film of actual and generic scenes in Ireland, locator maps, archival photographs, and interviews. This material was transferred to video, and digitized into a computer format for editing on two large monitors, controlled by buttons and keystrokes, which makes the technique similar to word processing. The music, Mick Moloney's original arrangement of traditional tunes, was recorded in a Philadelphia studio. Irish actors in Dublin read the immigrants' own words.

On one trip to Ireland, Wagner was armed with details from Miller and sought to find the locations mentioned by his emigrant characters. Typically, he and his location scout sought a place that was not on any map. "So we pulled up to a farmhouse on the tip of the Dingle peninsula and a farmer was tending his sheep," Wagner recalled. "It turned out the beach we were looking for was right out his back door. It was such a thrill. The memoir we had was written in 1902 and here we had stumbled on that spot." This particular reminiscence was written by Tom Brick, who described how he lay on the rocks on the westernmost point in Ireland and looked west, toward America.

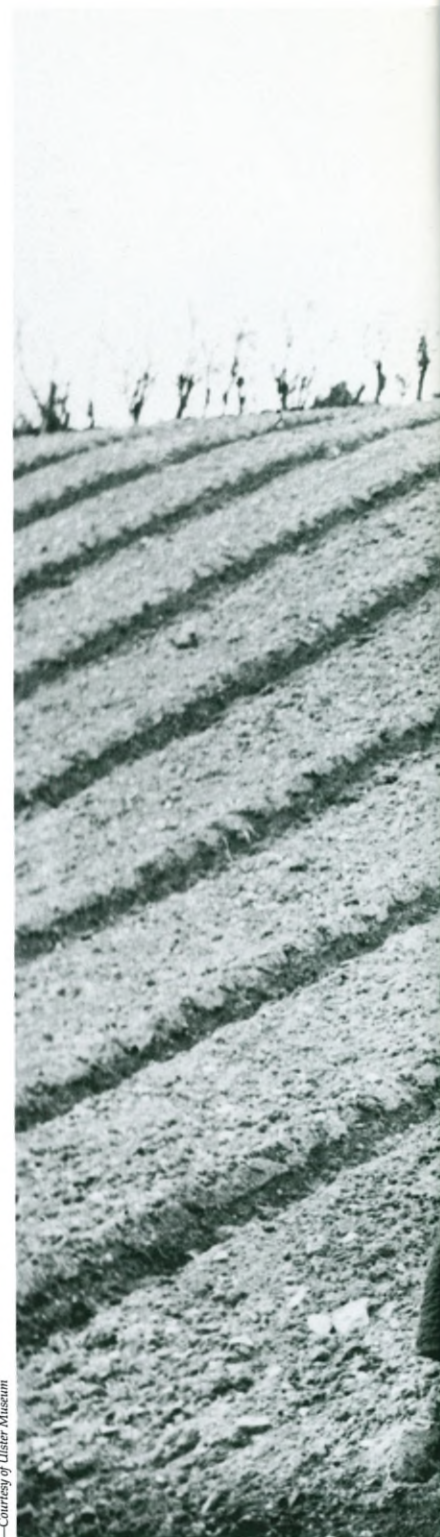
Another central theme in the film "is how people's expectations affected their lives," Wagner says.

Rural Ireland was densely populated in the early decades of the nineteenth century, too dense for the amount of land that could be farmed. The abundance of potatoes helped families like Mary Rush's survive despite their poverty. One immigrant describes the condition of these poor farmers, who lived in ramshackle buildings with little furniture, and rarely even beds. Many were so poor they had no clothes at all.

Then came the devastating potato famine of 1845. One farmer recalled the apocalyptic event: "A mist rose up out of the sea....It was the same for three days or more, and then when the fog lifted, you could begin to see the tops of the potato stalks lying over as if the life was gone out of them. And that was the beginning of the great trouble and famine that destroy Ireland."

More than a million died between 1845 and 1855; more than two million emigrated. Before the famine, the population of Ireland was 9 million. Today the island nation has 3.5 million residents.

In the fall of 1846, when the potato crop failed again, Mary Rush sent a desperate plea to her father Thomas Barrett, who had taken the rest of his family to Quebec twenty years earlier. "Now my dear parents, pity our hard case and do not leave us on the number of the starving poor. We can only say, the scourge of God fell down on Ireland, in taking away the potatoes....So, dear father and mother, if you don't endeavor to take us out of it, it will be the first news you will hear by some friend of me and my little family to be lost by hunger....P.S. For God's sake, take us out of poverty, and don't let us die with the hunger."



Courtesy of Ulster Museum





Girls working in a potato field.



It is not known what happened to Mary Rush, except that she never reached her family in Quebec. She may have been one of 50,000 who died of typhus and cholera on the "coffin ships" or in waterfront slums and quarantine camps in North America.

Meanwhile, another flood of Irish Catholics came to the U.S. looking for jobs. They went to factories and docks, followed the westward expansion, and fought in the Civil War. In fact, 150,000 Irish immigrants fought in the Union army. By 1860, as many as 20,000 Irish-born speculators had arrived in San Francisco as part of the Gold Rush.

"Nothing but work, work away," Thomas McIntyre wrote from Boston. "...I sometimes think...of the nights when we used to sit down by the fire and draw down our old fiddles. My meditations are not very pleasant. However, people need not expect a great deal of enjoyment when they come here."

The exploitation was fierce.

Immigrants discovered "that the streets of America were not paved with gold, but rather that the Irish immigrants were expected to pave the streets themselves and to do so at very low wages," says Miller. As a result, the documentary points out, the Irish became the first ethnic group to test the cultural rights and liberties guaranteed in the Constitution. Not only were they Catholics in a Yankee land, but they were perceived as a separate race, says Hasia Diner.

Accustomed to the revolutionary fray back home, they came to a country where politics was a great, though unsavory, sport. "New York is the headquarters of political corruption," immigrant Richard O'Gorman wrote in the mid-eighteenth century. "It is here organized as a sort of university for educating the rising generation in the endless variety of means of cheating the public out of their votes."

The Irish jumped right in. Eventually they controlled the Tammany Hall political machine, which ran New York City. Richard O'Gorman became a judge on the New York Supreme Court. When he died in 1894, the *New York Times*, then fervently anti-Catholic and anti-Irish, praised him as a fine American.

One of the more distinctive aspects of Irish immigration is the significant role of women. The Irish were the only immigrant group of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in which women outnumbered men. Back home, families traditionally subdivided their farms and gave a plot to each son. The son married and the wife worked by his side. But as industrialization decreased reliance on the land and the British demand for Irish cat-

tle continued to expand the size of grazing areas, fewer lands changed hands, leaving the women with neither work nor marriage.

So they came to America seemingly bereft of opportunity. But instead, the United States offered them such great opportunity, particularly as domestic servants, that they were able to save money, support Catholic institutions and charities, and improve their status. In marrying, they weren't likely to choose Irish men, who were still at the low end of the economic ladder. "They created for themselves a culture which was highly autonomous for women," says Hasia Diner.

By the 1930s, about 35 percent of all Irish Americans held white-collar jobs, 50 percent were skilled laborers and only 15 percent were unskilled. They were so successful they could think about going home again.

"In Ireland, we've always looked backwards," says Moloney, himself an immigrant. "We have a saying that nostalgia...is a thing of the future." The sense of loss of the idealized vision of the Mother Country, he adds, remains pervasive.

But the filmmakers found one immigrant, Tim Cashman, who went home and was stunned. The camera shows a crumbled cottage, as the words of Cashman are read: "I can't get my eyes to see things as they were to me before I left." There was nothing to go home to. And so, Cashman returned to America.

Although they perceived themselves as exiles, no more than 10 percent of the Irish in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries actually returned to Ireland to live, according to Miller.

*Out of Ireland* says that the Irish set the terms of the relationship between American society and the waves of new immigrants still coming in. "America is change," sums up Dennis Clark in a filmed interview. If there's anything that the American people believe in, it is change, development, improvement. So in order to understand the novelty of America, in order to understand the impulse and the momentum that have made America a society of change, we must understand that the people who came here were ready for change....Emigration almost prefigures the way that Americans look at society." □

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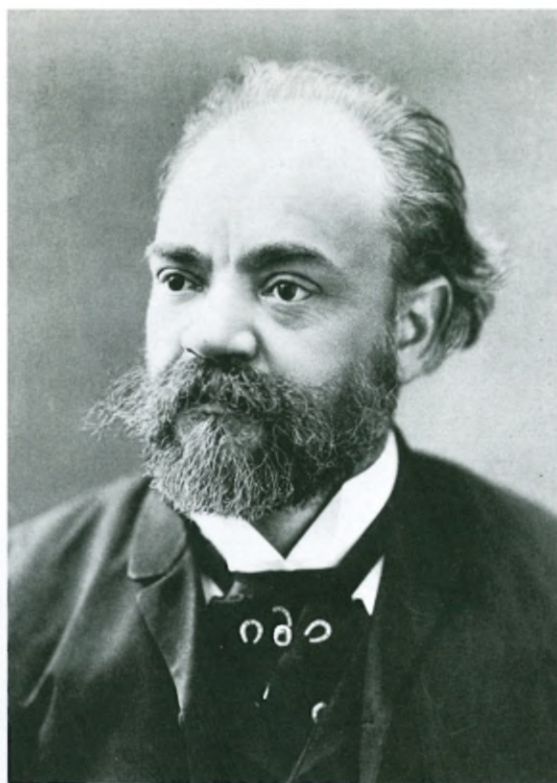
American Focus, Inc., received \$841,238 from the Humanities Projects in Media program of the Division of Public Programs.



—Courtesy of University College, Belfield, Dublin



# From the New World



ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

## DVOŘÁK IN AMERICA

BY CONSTANCE BURR

T

HE NEW YORK OF Antonín Dvořák's New World was a music capital. Premieres, concerts, and operas flourished, animating the city's intellectual climate. Into this enterprising, eclectic milieu of a century ago came the renowned Czech composer to promote the development of an American musical style. He taught and conducted in New York from 1893 to 1895.

"The new American school of music must strike its roots deeply into its own soil," Dvořák wrote in the *New York Herald*, 28 May 1893. "The country is full of melody, original, sympathetic and varying in mood, colour and character to suit every phase of composition. It is a rich field. America can have great and noble music of her own, growing out of the very soil and partaking of its nature—the natural voice of a free and vigorous race."

Dvořák (1841-1904) accepted the invitation of Mrs. Jeanette Thurber to head her National Conservatory of Music. An alternative to the conservatories in Paris and Leipzig that trained many Americans, this New York institution was dedicated to furthering American culture. "Thurber asked Dvořák if he would foster an American school of composition," says musicologist Adrienne Fried Block. "Art music was heavily influenced by Austro-German



*Sinfonia Emilie*  
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**D**raft of the opening bars of the *New World Symphony*. INSERT: *Three Iroquois Indians* by George Catlin, 1857/1869. Iroquois Indians sang and danced for Dvořák when he visited a Czech community in Iowa.

music, the dominant musical language of the time. But some people wanted to see an American idiom evolve. Thurber hoped that Dvořák would find ways of encouraging American composers to do that very thing."

His mandate was not only to teach composition but also to explore the music of African Americans and Native Americans and show how composers could incorporate their themes in a concert style. Dvořák's eminence, egalitarian nature, and

successful use of Czech folk music in his works made him an ideal exponent for the creation of a national school. Immersing himself in the music of African Americans and Native Americans, he was interviewed extensively in newspapers and *Harpers* magazine on using these vernacular American forms. "These are the folk songs of America and your composers must turn to them," he wrote in the *New York Herald*, 21 May 1893.

In composing the Symphony No. 9, *From the New World*, Dvořák showed that American folk music could be articulated in symphonic form. The New York Philharmonic Orchestra first performed this work at Carnegie Hall on December 16, 1893. Dvořák's friend Anton Seidl, New York's most influential musician for a dozen years, was the conductor.

The premiere was an artistic success and a popular triumph. The audience broke into applause after the Largo.



From the conductor, musicians, and audience cries of "Dvořák! Dvořák!" swept the hall. "Again and again he bowed his acknowledgements, and again and again the applause burst forth," reported the *Herald*. Enthusiastic reviews in the New York press, inspiring hundreds of articles nationwide, ensured Dvořák's place as an exemplar of a new movement in American music. Seidl subsequently led the premiere at the Brooklyn Academy of Music.

These performances ignited a spirited debate among composers who had anticipated, accepted, or resisted Dvořák's lead. He became a pivotal figure for those tracking folk origins of American music and for his detractors, who claimed that tribal rhythms and plantation dances were inappropriate sources of a national music.

To revisit this period, the Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra is presenting "From the New World" (January 21-23). Along with an orchestral program of music by Dvořák and composers he inspired, there will be a series of Endowment-supported panel discussions, audiovisual presentations, a program book, and a CD-ROM demonstration. They will include interpretations of how folk melodies, spirituals, Native American rituals, and Longfellow's poem *The Song of Hiawatha* are adapted in this music, and a lecture/recital that "proves" the common American origin of two of Dvořák's pieces. Programs in Brooklyn's Philippa Schuyler Middle School will bring Dvořák and folk music from various cultures to the classroom.

Controversial aspects of appropriating African-American music and the dissent among turn-of-the-century African Americans over the future of gospel music, ragtime, and jazz will be addressed, as will Dvořák's position among artists promoting late nineteenth-century nationalist cultural movements. *Antonín Dvořák*, musicologist Robert Winter's CD-ROM (Voyager, 1993) includes interactive scores, archival records, visuals, and anecdotes that portray the New World of European imagination, late nineteenth-century music, and 125,000 words of testimony of Dvořák's contemporaries during his American sojourn.

According to Joseph Horowitz, artistic adviser of the Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra, "Dvořák's interest in African Americans and Native Ameri-

**H**arry T. Burleigh (1866-1949), by Laura Waring.

Burleigh, an African-American composer, musician, and singer, studied with Dvořák and became his assistant.



National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C.

cans was anything but casual. Many of his students at the National Conservatory were African Americans," reflecting a Thurber priority. Its orchestra was composed mostly of African Americans, who were prominent at every level of study.

One of the most notable students was Harry Burleigh (1866-1944), who studied with Dvořák and became his assistant. Burleigh was a significant composer who wrote 265 songs, arranged spirituals, and compiled a collection of minstrel melodies. As a recitalist, he was the first to sing spirituals along with art songs—the forerunner of Roland Hayes and Paul Robeson. Although Dvořák's *New World Symphony* uses no actual Native American or African-American tunes, the melody of its Largo, subsequently arranged as the spiritual "Goin' Home," is believed to be inspired by spirituals that Burleigh sang.

"Dvořák perceived very clearly that the potential of African-American music as he experienced it was limitless," Horowitz states. "He mispredicted the future of that potential, thinking that it would lie in the concert hall. He didn't in any way predict jazz. But one of his composition students, Will Marion Cook, became a teacher of Duke Ellington."

For another reading, Dvořák authority Michael Beckerman puts forth the idea that the Largo and other sections were inspired by *The Song of Hiawatha* (1855), known by Dvořák in translation before he came to America. Beckerman maintains that the slow

movement depicts "Hiawatha's Homeward Journey," disclosing the composer's conception of a vast American vista. The Scherzo, by Dvořák's own testimony, was inspired by "Hiawatha's Wedding Feast."

"When he came to New York," Beckerman writes, "Dvořák clearly wished to write an American work. Yet it is sometimes forgotten that the symphony *From the New World* was not written as a first-hand response to the American prairies, but was sketched almost entirely in New York City shortly after Dvořák's arrival in the United States. Thus *The Song of Hiawatha* served as a kind of surrogate for the America he had not yet seen, and provided him...with a series of powerful images of the American landscape and those who populated it."

Dvořák did travel west, where he encountered Native Americans he had previously only imagined. He attended Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, in which they performed. He also heard native American music while on vacation in Spillville, Iowa, a Czech community, where he was regularly visited by Central Algonquins or Iroquois. At his request, they assembled on several occasions to sing and dance, according to his son Otakar. Dvořák read ethnologies on Native Americans and received transcriptions of Iroquois songs by Henry Krehbiel, a leading New York critic who was embarking on ethnomusicological research.

"From the 1880s, anthropologists and ethnologists were retrieving Native American music for the Smith-



sonian Institution, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Peabody Museum at Harvard," Block says. "A number of them collected and published this music, stating after 1893 that they wanted to make it available to composers."

"For example, anthropologist Franz Boaz's first monograph, 'The Central Eskimo,' published in 1888 by the Smithsonian, included several Inuit melodies, which Amy Beach later used in her *Quartet for Strings in One Movement*. This was one of many government publications that composers used. Ethnologist Alice Fletcher's 'A Study of Omaha Indian Music,' published in 1893 by the Peabody Museum, contained descriptive, contextual material, showing where it fit into their lives." Edward MacDowell, who wrote *Indian Suite*, was among other American composers to use Native American melodies. By the turn of the century, American composers were writing countless "Indianist" and African-American concert works.

These efforts to derive a national folk music from this dual heritage broadened Dvořák's reach and heightened the public's interest in his music. "When his *New World Symphony* appeared, it was the great event of the concert season," Horowitz states. "The premiere of a new work by a living composer was what everybody was most interested in. The amount of attention paid to this concert is simply inconceivable today, the number of long, thoughtful articles and heated discussion about the proper identity of American music. The debate over Dvořák's espousal of African-American and Native American music is an inspiration."

Horowitz says that differences in the cultural makeup of New York and Boston set the tone in this debate. He contends that "New York was a city full of immigrants with a more liberal attitude toward these issues than Boston. German singing societies, not at all elitist, met all over the city. And the Metropolitan Opera's origins, rooted in such groups, were decidedly populist. Boston, on the other hand, was a kind of Brahmin snob city. Its musicians and critics took offense at the idea that African Americans were a proper source for an American musical identity. Philip Hale, a prominent Boston music critic, actually wrote that plantation songs were inspired by

the singing of the slave-owners' wives. There was an absence of that kind of bigotry in New York. Critic Henry Krehbiel, Hale's opposite number, collected and wrote extensively on African-American, Native American, and other folk music, refuting these negative reactions."

Dvořák expanded his perspective on sources of inspiration for an American school shortly before he returned home. In addition to acclaiming tribal music and plantation songs, he came to believe that "the germs for the best of music lie hidden among all the races that are commingled in this great country," he wrote in the May 1893 issue of *Harpers*.

Composers expanded their use of other folk idioms after 1893. Block, who will give a talk on Beach at the Brooklyn symposium, states that after Beach heard the premiere of the *New World Symphony* in Boston, she wrote the *Symphony in E Minor*, drawing on the Irish and Scottish folk melodies of her own background. Known as the *Gaelic*, it will be played on January 21 and 22 by the Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra, along with the *New World Symphony* and MacDowell's *Dirge from the Indian Suite*.

Musicians will highlight vernacular melodies used by all three composers. For the middle movements of the Dvořák, Winter will present slides exploring resonances with *The Song of Hiawatha* and Native American ritual, and with African-American song and dance. Slides of paintings of the American wilderness, by Alfred Bierstadt, and of the Native American, by George Catlin, will also illustrate the music. Finally, passages from Longfellow's poem will be recited.

Elsewhere on the program, Beach will be represented by her *Eskimos*, solo piano pieces based on Inuit tunes. The pianist Alan Feinberg will perform and discuss works by Dvořák and others, such as his rarely heard *American Suite*, Harry Burleigh's songs and violin-and-piano pieces, and a series of piano rags by turn-of-the-century African-American women.

Sparked by this movement, the question arose: Could an American school of music evolve naturally, or should there be, as Dvořák espoused, a conscious attempt to create music that sounds American because it's based on folk music? In fact, during the first half of the twentieth cen-

tury—without academic validation—the rhythms of ragtime and jazz were beguiling audiences worldwide, appearing in popular songs and concert music. At the same time, folklorists were unearthing folk music from many other ethnic groups. Both sources were to appear in the music of such composers as Charles Ives, Aaron Copland, George Gershwin, and Leonard Bernstein.

"I think Dvořák had a positive effect on the United States and America on him," Beckerman states. "He sensitized musicians to different possibilities and started to reformulate his ideas about music. Informed by his American experience and by African-American and Native American themes, he went back to writing in a slightly different way. He created music that reflected his idea of American energy."

While theories differ about how the realm of tones, chords, and movement coalesced with the insights and literary images Dvořák may have used, musicians, critics, and historians defined American art music after 1893 as derived from African-American and Native American folk songs and themes. To that extent, says Block, Dvořák determined the debate over the nationalist movement in music in the United States almost to the middle of the century.

"But what was Dvořák trying to tell his American audience, or really, find out for himself?" Beckerman asks in *Dvořák and His World* (Princeton University Press, 1993). "Perhaps a clue is provided in this statement: 'I did not come to America to interpret Beethoven or Wagner for the public.... I came to discover what young Americans had in them and to help them to express it.'"

Dvořák's promotion of indigenous American music provoked a gamut of responses from the public, artists, and critics. The interaction of an Old World emissary with New World cultures advanced the young nation's search for an American cultural identity. □

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Constance Burr is assistant editor of *Humanities*.

The Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra received \$143,420 from Public Humanities Projects of the Division of Public Programs to support lectures, exhibitions, and publications for the programs "From the New World," January 21-23, and "The Russian Stravinsky," May 5-7.



# CAPTURED BY INDIANS:



Marianne Hoeht's gravestone in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.  
The "in" in Hoehtin is the feminine ending.

## Mariana's Story

**M**ORAVIANS, adherents of a Pietist Protestant faith, came to Pennsylvania in 1740 as missionaries to the Indians. There they founded the towns of Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Lititz. Each member of the Moravian church was—and still is—asked to write an autobiography summing up his or her life, both spiritual and earthly. Here is one of the memoirs.

*Our deceased sister Mariana Hoeht left the following account of her life.*

I was born in 1737 on May 24 in the duchy of Zweibrücken in the town of Lichtenberg [Saarland], where my father was a burgher and master baker. In 1748, I accompanied my dear parents to America, more exactly to Philadelphia, where we soon became acquainted with Brethren from the Congregation. It was not long before my father, who was very concerned for the salvation of his children, sent us to the Brethren's school. I soon became very fond of the Brethren and liked to hear them talk about the Saviour, which was also not without profit for my heart. I often tearfully begged the dear Saviour to have mercy upon me and give me salvation. Worldly desires, however, also grew within me in which I often took pleasure, but always with the disquiet of my heart, because my dear father, who was very strict, became concerned that we might fall too deeply into worldly ways. Thus he resolved to move out of Philadelphia over the Blue Mountains [Kittatinny, or Endless, Mountains]. There we were often visited by the Brethren. Their conversations with us were also a blessing to me. I became familiar with my sinner's heart and felt that I wanted for my Saviour greatly, and that I must change my ways and receive grace, or else I should be lost. I also thought that nothing would come of me until I joined the congregation. This I told my parents often and asked that I be allowed to visit Bethlehem. They granted me this wish and in November 1755 my mother and I visited Bethlehem. It pleased me greatly and my only wish was that I could stay there. I asked my mother for her permission, and received it. I was supposed to come as soon as my mother, who was about to give birth, could do without me. This made me very happy.

As soon as we arrived back home, we heard that the Indian wars were about to break out. I was most alarmed and often begged my father to flee to the Brethren; however, he refused. He was not going to flee, for he had done the Indians no harm but rather much good. Thus he did not believe that they would do anything to us. He put his faith in our dear Lord, He would help him and his children. I thus had to yield to him, but I was in constant fear, because they were not far from our house and when I fetched animals at night I could see them close by the house. Three weeks later, we heard that the Mahony [the Moravian mission at Gnadenhuetten on Mahony Creek] had been burned down by the Indians and that many Brethren had perished in the flames, and that they had even murdered some of them. Then I said to my father, look at what happened to the Brethren, and if our dear Lord allowed that to happen to them, then we would not fare much better. I begged him again to flee but he did not want to. As I realized that I could do nothing to change my father's mind, I decided to be content but not without trepidation. I was not concerned with being captured but rather with being murdered, especially because I was not sure of my salvation. Two weeks after the Mahony was burnt down—we were sitting at supper—they came and fired shots. My father did not think that it was nearby, but rather wanted to go outside and see what and where it might be. As he reached the main door of the house he fell into their hands. They killed him straight away. Mother and we children leaped out of the back door. My mother jumped into



the water and was shot and my youngest sister was also killed immediately. They captured me and my two sisters and took us away with them. I cannot describe what I felt at losing my dear parents in such a fashion and at seeing myself among the wild, unruly Indians. I did not know what was happening to me. I had to go with them. It didn't matter what the weather was like, they showed no mercy, for they tried to torment us however they could. After we had traveled for a few days, I met Susanna Nitschmann [wife of one of the missionaries at Gnadenhuetten], who had been much maltreated and was in great need and desperation....After a rough journey, they brought us to Diuigo [Tioga (Athens)], where Susanna was killed and my two sisters and I separated. That was also very painful for me. I was given to the Indian who had captured and murdered Susanna. He was a very wild and evil Indian. I had a rough time with him; I received nothing. Others gave me food to eat, and if he saw it he took it away from me again. I also had to sew new clothes out of Susanna's things which was also very painful to me. Because many of the Indians felt sorry for me, they took me away from him, particularly because he was very dissolute. They gave me to an old mother as her child. That occurred very solemnly in the presence of many Indians. Her son also accepted me as his sister.

By Indian standards, things went well for me here. The old mother made it very comfortable for me, as if I were her real daughter. Oh, it did me so much good to have a little peace and quiet. Also, I was sometimes allowed to visit my sister in the Fort [probably Fort Le Boeuf]. She had married a Frenchman, who was well known to the Indians and they liked him, so I was allowed to stay with them for three months. In fact, I thought they would leave me there with them, which probably would not have been good for me, for there was such a bad and godless way of life there. My brother, the Indian, came to visit me often and wanted to take me away with him because the old lady asked for me a lot. However, I always begged him to leave me there. One time, however, he came and took me away with him by force. When I got back they told me that I would have to take an Indian as a husband. I refused, as I did not want to. They said that if I did not want to then I would have to, otherwise they would kill me. For eight days and nights I lay in the snow and all kinds of weather in the bush and prayed and sighed to the dear Saviour that He might help me and tell me what to do. It seemed quite impossible to me to force myself to do as they wished. I thought I would rather die. My old mother cried a great deal, and told me I should do as they said otherwise they would burn me and then she would not have a child anymore. But I stuck by my refusal. Finally, they dragged me out of the bush into the house and said I was going to be burned now because I did not want to take the Indian. I let them carry on. They tied me to a young tree with a rope. My brother lit the fire, and then, as it started to burn and the smoke caught in my throat, I made up my mind and said I would do as they wished. They unbound me straight away, and gladly brought me back to the house of the old mother, who was very happy to see me. Thus, I had to marry an Indian. It all happened very solemnly. There was a big meal with many Indians. He was a good man. He loved me very much, and I had a son with him. He often wished that I could return to the white people. He even wanted to help me do so, but he

also wanted to keep the child. I could not bring myself to do that. However, I kept on hoping that the dear Saviour would show me the way to escape. I had been true to Him under the worst circumstances. He had often given me comfort and courage. There was a certain assurance in my heart that He would yet bring me back to the congregation.

As the Indian was building himself a house in Koskoshin [Goshgoshing, a former Munsee and Delaware village at the mouth of Tionesta Creek], he wanted to take me with him. I however wanted to stay with the old mother who was moving closer to Pittsburgh. Thus he left me, and that made me very happy. I often received permission from the old mother to go to the Fort, as they thought that because I had a child I would not run away. But it turned out that the wagons, which were taking flour to Pittsburgh under military escort, took me along to Lancaster. Oh, how happy and thankful I was to see the Brethren again. I lay there very ill for three weeks, but soon as I was better the Brethren helped me to get to Bethlehem. Oh, how I am overcome when I think of the love and warmth with which my child and I were taken in by the Brethren and the tender care and attention paid me in my difficult recuperative period. As soon as I was better, I gave my child to the Nursery and moved to Nazareth to the widows. I thank the dear Saviour for all that He has done for me, poor sinner, throughout my life. I will kiss His pierced feet for His forbearance, patience, and forgiveness.

*The story of the last twelve years of Marianne Hoeht's life was told by others. In 1772, Marianne died of consumption at thirty-four years of age. Her son was four-and-a-half when he died of smallpox in 1762.*

*Translated from the original manuscript by Katherine M. Faull.*

*An eighteenth-century map of Pennsylvania showing Moravian congregations, families connected to the Moravian church, and inns. The Hoeht farm is in section Bi.*





# How the Memoir Was Uncovered

BY KATHERINE M. FAULL

In 1989, while at a seminar on German script at the Moravian Archives in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, I first came across Marianne Hoeht's memoir. The eighteenth-century document vividly described the young woman's capture by the Munsees, her life with them and the Delaware, and her subsequent escape with her son back to Moravian Bethlehem. The memoir fascinated me. Quite apart from relating a thrilling adventure story, the author, a woman from the same religious background as some of the major thinkers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, told about her thoughts, feelings, fears, and faith.

I asked the archivist, Vernon Nelson, if there were any more memoirs like this. He told me to follow him into the vaults of the archives and pointed out the boxes containing all the memoirs, none of which had ever been published. I was hooked. In the months that followed, I read hundreds of pages of

sometimes barely legible German script. As I progressed through the boxes a definite picture of the spiritual and temporal lives of the Bethlehem Moravians in the eighteenth century emerged.

## The Moravians

The Moravian church claims its origins in the church of the Bohemian Brethren, founded in the fifteenth century by some of the followers of Jan Hus, a Czech religious reformer. Although constantly persecuted, these early Protestants left many important writings, including the Kralice Bible (the first translation of the Bible into Czech) and Jan Amos Comenius's pedagogical and theological treatises. In the early eighteenth century, Christian David, an itinerant revivalist preacher, pleaded with Count Nicholas Zinzendorf to offer refuge on his estate in Berthelsdorf in Upper Saxony to the Bohemian and Moravian Brethren. Zinzendorf, who had been raised a Pietist, did not object.

Zinzendorf soon became interested in the writings of these settlers and assumed their organizational and spiritual leadership in what is known today as the Moravian church. It was not long before the Moravians established communities not only in Berthelsdorf, but in Hessen, Germany, and in Holland, Greenland, Great Britain, and Ireland. In 1740, the Moravians came to the Forks of the Delaware to found a missionary center on the North American continent in the town that later became known as Bethlehem.

The Moravians kept meticulous records of the day-to-day running of the community: documents such as bills, orders, a log of everyone passing through, correspondence, and detailed diaries of each of the communal houses. There also exist hundreds of memoirs by members of the Moravian church on the North American continent.

## The "General Economy" in Bethlehem

During the period known as the General Economy (1740-ca. 1762), Moravian Bethlehem was run on

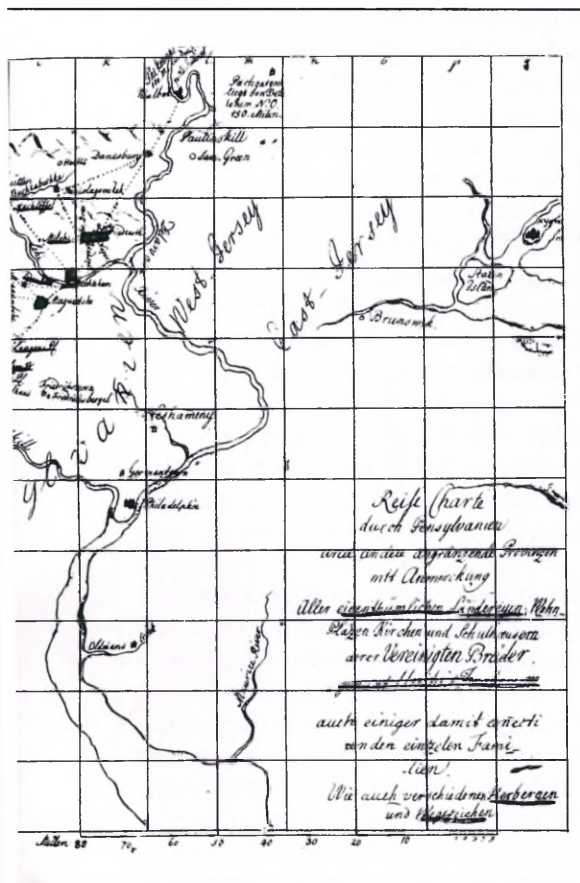
communal principles. There was no private property—all land, houses, and factories were communally owned, and there were no monetary wages. Women and men, even when married, were strictly segregated, living in common buildings or "choirs." Children were removed from their parents as soon as they were weaned and placed in the "nursery."

Both theological and economic reasons determined the communal structure of the General Economy, because Bethlehem was founded as both a mission center and as a permanent community. The purpose of the settlement was to promulgate Christianity and to act as a base for missionaries to the native North American tribes and the slave colonies in the West Indies. The communal structure of the choirs disrupted the model of the nuclear family, leaving the individual brethren and sisters free to devote all their energies to the formation of a steady religious and economic base from which satellite mission communities (both in North America and abroad) could be supported.

All members of the community were fed, clothed, and housed according to their needs and the ability of the General Economy to support them. According to a survey conducted in the mid-1750s, the members of the community were contented with the system. Single women especially were happy with their lives in the Economy. They spent their days worshipping, singing, and working. They spun, wove, washed clothes, cooked, taught the children in the nursery and schools, and nursed the sick and the elderly. Women were as economically independent as the men in the community. However, the communal principles of the General Economy were abandoned in 1762. After that time, private property was permitted, families lived together, and the choir houses remained only for the unmarried and widowed men and women.

## The Moravian Memoir

From 1747 until the present day, each member of the Moravian community has been expected to write an account of his or her life to be read at the individual's funeral. Frequently, the memoir is composed in old age, when the authors have the opportunity to look back, bearing in mind that their words will be heard only when



—Joseph Levering: A History of Bethlehem



they have died, or "gone home." In the case of women, the memoir can be composed before the author's marriage, since the dangers of childbirth make marriage a life-threatening state.

Count Zinzendorf gave two reasons for introducing the custom of composing a memoir. He believed that the deceased should have a chance to say good-bye to the rest of the community, and he saw these documents as an important part of the history of the Moravian church. Zinzendorf maintained that each individual had a different relationship with the Saviour and, therefore, every narrative added another unique piece to the overall picture of the community.

Moravian memoirs, like the personal records of other religious groups such as the Quakers, Puritans, and Shakers, provide an unusually detailed picture of the lives and faith of the early immigrants to North

America. To those who search for a peculiarly American identity, these narratives provide some of the earliest instances of autobiographical writing in the Western tradition on this continent.

It is important to add these unpublished Moravian memoirs to the extant corpus. The integration of secular detail, for example, into women's spiritual narratives constitutes a significant departure from the accepted pattern for women's autobiographies of the period. Whereas it was usually the men who wrote professional or adventure biographies and women who wrote spiritual narratives, in the Moravian memoir we find a rare mixture of all types of autobiography.

It is important to bear in mind that at one point in the eighteenth century certain women on this continent wrote about themselves as more than a mere

complement to men. Although in today's secular age it might be hard to accept the notion that a religious group enabled women to live relatively independent lives, it is clear from these memoirs that the Moravian church, for a short period of time during the General Economy, did precisely that. Not only did these women live unusual lives, but they also wrote about them in a way that is unmatched by their contemporaries. □

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*Katherine M. Faull is associate professor and director of the German program at Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania.*

*Dr. Faull received a \$50,000 grant from the Division of Research Programs to translate from German forty autobiographies of eighteenth-century Moravian women who lived in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.*

## ...Continuing the Immigrant Story...

Immigration continues to shape the American condition. Since 1987 the Endowment has funded 158 projects totalling more than \$10,500,00 to support scholarship and public programs on the immigrant experience and its affect on our culture. Here is a sampling of recent grants:

- "The Literature of Migration," a masterwork study project, will enable eighteen Brooklyn social studies teachers to augment their knowledge of immigration to the United States.
- Through the younger scholars program, fellowships have allowed individuals to pursue such topics as "Where Did You Go to School, Great-Grandpa?": "Educational Options for the Nineteenth-Century Immigrant" and "Living History: The Impact of Railroads on Mexican Immigrants in the 1920s."
- "Classic Studies in the History of Immigration," is a 1994 summer seminar for school teachers at CUNY Research Foundation/Graduate School & University Center.
- Fellowships for university teachers include "Courts, Politics, and the Regulation of Immigration, 1891-1924" and "The Anti-Chinese Movement after 1882."
- Fellowships for college teachers and independent scholars have supported research on "Immigrants and Capital: Jewish Loan Societies in the United States, 1880-1945" and "Receiving Erin's Children: The Response to Irish Immigrants in Philadelphia and Liverpool."
- Preservation projects have supported "Arrangement and Description of East European Migration Records of the Post-World War II Period" at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities and "Documentation of the Japanese American National Museum Collection" at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles.

- Summer stipends have enabled scholars to explore such topics as: "A History of Immigrant Women in the United States, 1820 to the Present," "Migration and Militancy: Italian Anti-fascist Immigrant Workers, 1919-39," and "Refugees in Resettlement: Vietnamese Musical Life in Orange County, California."

- Among the grants addressing immigration in museums are: "Eighth Avenue: Sunset Park's Chinese-American Settlement," an exhibition at the Brooklyn Historical Society; "The Spanish Revival in Puerto Rico, 1900-50," at the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras in San Juan; and "Mennonite Furniture, 1776-1812: Immigrant Traditions of the Prairie States" at the Kauffman Museum, Bethel College, in North Newton, Kansas.

- Media grants include support for *Ancestors in America*, six television programs on Asian-American history produced by the Center for Educational Telecommunications, Inc. in San Francisco; *Giants in the Earth*, a film adaptation of O. E. Rolvaag's 1927 novel produced by Vesterheim, the Norwegian-American Museum in Decorah, Iowa; and *Rebuilding the Temple: Cambodians in America*, a film produced by the Wisconsin Academy of Science, Arts & Letters in Madison.

- Research grants to support the development of reference materials include "German Literature in Exile in the U.S. after 1933" at SUNY Research Foundation/Albany and "Arab-Americans: An Annotated Bibliography" at Kansas State University.

- Among the programs supported by state humanities councils are "Meet Your Neighbor...The Asian-Indian Experience in America," four public meetings sponsored by the New Jersey Committee for the Humanities, and the reading and discussion series, "A Commonwealth of Nations," sponsored by the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and Public Policy. □



## Akemi Kikumura

### *Giving Japanese Americans a Voice*

**'M**Y PARENTS never talked about the war. They never talked about the camps. This is a common story you'll hear from many people who grew up after the war," says Akemi Kikumura, director of program development and curator of the Japanese-American National Museum in Los Angeles, discussing her father's detention at Rohwer, Arkansas, a World War II Japanese-American internment center.

"I feel what we have to offer is a voice—a voice that hasn't been heard before," she continues. Telling the story of Japanese-American immigration is her life mission. "I don't want to perpetuate stereotypes or myths. And I want to work with the people themselves who lived it and try to tell their stories from their perspective in a way that's accessible to people of all ages and backgrounds," says Kikumura.

During her tenure at the museum, the first one devoted only to Japanese-American history, Kikumura has coordinated research and developed such programs as its NEH-funded 1992 opening exhibition, "Issei Pioneers: Hawaii and the Mainland," about the arrival of the first Japanese immigrants from 1885 to 1924. Currently she is directing a follow-up exhibition scheduled to open in 1995 entitled "The Nisei Years: Growing Up Japanese American," which focuses on the children of these immigrants, many of whom were placed in internment camps during World War II.

As part of the Nisei exhibition, the museum is planning to assemble a panel of survivors to tell their stories about life in the camps. "They have stories that they want to share, and they want others to know what life in camp was like," she says. She wants visitors who participate in the exhibition to know that the evacuation and internment did happen, was redressed, and shouldn't happen again.

"Much of that history gets buried," Kikumura says. Objects related to the evacuation and internment and the



Akemi Kikumura

Nisei soldiers' story will expose this chapter of American history.

Working with state historical societies has allowed her to spread this newly revealed history to people outside of her local area. "As we work with communities around the nation, we have been able to impart a sense of empowerment among the people by helping them to preserve and document their own histories to share with a wider audience," she states. She worked with the Oregon Historical Society to develop a Japanese-American Oregon Trail exhibition. Also, the museum designed a traveling exhibition of paintings done in the internment camps, titled "The View From Within."

"Museums today can offer so much in terms of education, because we're educating the young and the old in a way that's interactive—in a way that's not the traditional classroom situation," says Kikumura. An upcoming 65,000-square-foot expansion will include more exhibition space and a resource center.

Museum work never occurred to the child actress Kikumura, who starred in such television movies as "Farewell to Manzanar," until she received her Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of California, Los Angeles, in 1979. Her frustration with Holly-

wood stereotypes and a professor's suggestion that she study her own culture's history fueled her interest in Japanese-American studies. "It really changed my life—looking at my own family, looking at my own roots."

While studying her own background, Kikumura wrote a biography of her father, *Promises Kept*, published in 1992 and nominated by the Association for Asian-American Studies for outstanding book of the year. She wrote this book to find out more about her father, who died when she was nine. "He was a mystery character for me, so for me it was finding out 'Who was this man?'" she says.

As part of her research, she traveled to her father's native Japan and interviewed some of her older sisters. The youngest of thirteen children, Kikumura realized that she had more in common with her older siblings than she once thought. "Just as women you go through similar experiences," she observes.

In addition to *Promises Kept*, Kikumura has written other award-winning books, articles, short stories, and plays. Such fictional works as "The Gambling Den" and "The Suitor," based on historical data, make Japanese-American history relevant to people's lives, she says, because she believes that people of all races and backgrounds can relate to her characters. "If other people can empathize and understand and feel 'I know that person,' then I have accomplished one of my main missions."

Whether through an exhibition, a play, an article, a short story, or a lecture series, Kikumura is encouraging other Japanese Americans to tell their story to those who are willing to listen, look, or read. "What I'm trying to do is reach as many people as I can using different forms of media," she states. "It goes back to my passion of making this story accessible." □

*Elizabeth Horne was a 1993 NEH summer fellow in the Office of Publications and Public Affairs.*



— FROM —

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# HIGH SOCIETY

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— TO —

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# HESTER STREET

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*by Hayes Jackson*  
*-Photos from Museum of the  
City of New York*







*Dinner by or for Harrison Grey Fiske, 1900-1901.*





DEEP IN THE HEART of the Museum of the City of New York lies one of the little known treasures of twentieth-century urban history. This hidden resource is the Byron Collection, more than 22,000 photographs of New York City and its environs taken by the commercial photographers of the Byron Company between 1888 and 1942, spanning the Victorian era to the onset of World War II. The images in the collection document a stunningly broad cross section of the city in those years—from its bars, cafes, and hotels to its hospitals, churches, factories, and parades. “Because of the diversity and scope of these images, the Byron works comprise an unparalleled collection of New York photographs from this period,” says Leslie Nolan, curator of prints and photographs at the Museum of the City of New York and overseer of the Byron restoration effort.

Although the Byron Collection is used by more than six hundred

...access to it has been limited by the fragile state of the photographs and the rudimentary cataloguing system...

researchers every year, access to it has been limited by the fragile state of the photographs and the rudimentary cataloguing system under which they have been filed. Even the best intentioned researcher poses a risk to the Byron photographs in their present state, as most of the

prints have been stacked in thumb envelopes since the collection was first acquired in 1942. Simply examining the images is likely to cause them further damage.

Fortunately, all this is about to change. Aided by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the museum is in the process of rehousing the entire collection and cross-referencing it on *Minaret*, a software cataloguing system. Once the cataloguing is complete, the museum will then reproduce copies of each print on continuous tone archival microfiche, copies of which will be available for purchase by other museums and libraries. By 1995 the Byron Collection will be accessible to researchers all over the world.

The commercial photography company that would eventually amass the Byron Collection was founded by the grandfather of Joseph Byron in Nottingham on the Trent, England, in 1844. The firm chiefly traded in “carte-de-visite” portraiture in its early days, but when grandson Joseph joined the business, the Byrons broadened their interests and became involved in more documentary forms of photography.

In 1888, Joseph Byron moved to the United States to open a New York studio and was joined in business by his son Percy. The firm’s early New York commissions included work for *The Illustrated American* magazine and *Once A Week* (later known as *Collier’s Weekly*). As their client base grew, the Byrons were soon working for other magazines, newspapers, book publishers, and businesses. The firm also secured commissions from a variety of private sources. This diverse patronage base took the Byron photographers to almost every imaginable corner of New York City.

Grace Mayer, the former curator of photography at the Museum of the City of New York, described in her book *Once Upon a City* the diverse subjects that the Byron photographers covered in their work. “There were news events,” she wrote, “the banquets and the



balls, the weddings and the funerals, the parties and the parades, the people and the buildings, the hospitals and the hotels, the parks and the beaches, the gilded and the sordid....” Some of the firm’s notable commissions include a portrait of President Harrison (1890), pictures of the Edison Projecting Kinetoscope (1912) and the







"That's what is most awe-inspiring—you just can't get over how much they cover," says Nolan. "They're a wonderful document of New York for this almost sixty-year period."

The collection's value as a historical record is so great that the

"They're a wonderful  
document of New York  
for this almost  
sixty-year period."

Museum of the City of New York has used Byron images in almost every exhibition it has mounted since the photographs were first acquired, including its shows on the Gibson Girl and homelessness in America. Other Byron photographs,

such as the Billings horse party, have become familiar to the public from their appearances in print advertisements, television commercials, calendars, and greeting cards.

It is not just the diversity of the photographs, however, that makes them so valuable. "I think the Byrons are right up there with the best photographers," says Nolan. "The quality of their work is excellent." It is testament to that quality that Dover Publications has produced four books on the collection's images alone, and a wide range of popular publications have also made use of the Byron prints. Other museums and historical institutions, including the High Museum of Art in Atlanta and the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth, have included Byron photographs in their own exhibitions.

Another measure of the collection's value is the variety of researchers who have made use of its photographs. Thousands of historians and professional researchers have visited the collection over the years, while Hollywood designers have sought out the collection as a visual record of old New York's architecture, interiors, and fashions. Documentary filmmakers have

also found the Byron images particularly useful. Ken Burns, the producer and director of *The Civil War*, will use several Byron images of Brooklynites dodging traffic—hence the name Brooklyn Dodgers—in his upcoming documentary on the history of baseball.

While the greatest asset of the Byron photographs is their thematic diversity, two subjects of great personal interest to Joseph and Percy Byron—theatrical productions and ocean liners—dominate the collection. Joseph Byron's career as a stage photographer began with his early attempts to perfect the flashlight technique that would eventually allow photographers to work indoors and at night (Joseph, in fact, is credited with taking the world's first flashlight photograph, a picture of a nighttime crowd gathered to celebrate the 1863 wedding of the Prince and Princess of Wales).

Legend has it that the great actress Sarah Bernhardt was reluctant at first to be photographed by the flashlight and would only grant the Byrons fifteen minutes of her time. When her picture appeared in print the following day, however, she was so pleased with the results that she pleaded with the Byrons to return for more work. Celebrity attitudes toward publicity, it seems, were no different at the turn of the century.

Although that story may be apocryphal, the legacy of the Byron stage photographs is lasting. By 1902, lantern slide shows of the company's theatrical work, complete with accompanying music and textual readings, were being shown in theaters and music halls throughout the Northeast, popularly billed as "Byron's Gigantic Illuminated Stage Pictures."

By the 1950s, the art of photography was changing, and Percy Byron had retired to New Jersey. Although he continued to work on his own, his departure effectively closed the door on the family busi-

ness, which would, sadly, die along with him. At the time of Percy's retirement, some of the Byron stage photographs had already made their way to the Museum of the City of New York and were housed along with the rest of the museum's Theater Collection. During a visit to the Byron studio, the museum's theater curator noticed the vast company holdings and told Grace Mayer, then Curator of Photography, about the spectacular trove of New York images. Mayer met with Percy Byron and convinced him to give the collection to the museum, which he did in a series of gifts that were featured as museum exhibitions during the 1950s.

At the time of the acquisition, the Byron photographs were in good condition, but over the years many have been damaged, primarily due to the way in which they have been housed. "The original photographs have been deteriorating beyond belief, and a lot of this is because of the way they were filed and handled," says Nolan. The current restoration will address this significant problem.

In the meantime, the restoration project is turning up many questions of its own. While preparing to catalogue the entire collection, researchers uncovered a previously unaccounted-for set of non-New York photographs. These new images included photographs of an unnamed North Pole expedition, the Panama Canal pictures, and a series of shots of Bermuda and the Caribbean. These images had been off-limits to researchers since they were not listed in the original Byron catalogue.

While the Byron photographs themselves are rich in detail, specifics about the collection as a whole remain somewhat sketchy. Its images represent the personal and professional work of Joseph and Percy Byron and the other photographers on their staff, but





*Horseback dinner hosted by C.K.G. Billings at Sherry's Restaurant, 1903.*

exactly who those employees were and how many of them worked for the Byron Company is still not known. "The Byrons were interested in everything, and there are some real questions as to who commissioned some of these photographs," explains Nolan.

Once the restoration is completed, the museum will be able to give the Byron photographs, which have been used for so many other exhibitions over the years, a new show of their own. In conjunction with that exhibition, Nolan would like to mount a modern-day recreation of "Byron's Gigantic Illuminated Stage Pictures," complete with actors and celebrities reading from the appropriate theatrical texts. It is easy to imagine such a revival taking place at one of New York City's many public forums and drawing the same eager crowds and rave reviews as the original shows.

But the greatest impact of the Byron restoration effort will be felt by researchers who will soon have access to this little-known collection. In the past, those that sought out these photographs have been hampered by the collection's inadequate catalogue, which is still based on the Byron's original numbering system. The appointment book to see the Byron Collection is regularly filled two to three weeks in advance, but entering the photographs onto *Minaret* and printing them on microfiche will make them available to significantly more researchers than before. "Once this is on microfiche, the collection will be more accessible," explains Nolan. "Our mission is that we're open to the public, and now people won't have to travel to New York to see the collection. It will also be much easier for people to order from our rights and reproductions office."

In his 1903 article "New York as the American Metropolis," architectural critic Herbert Croly wrote of New York: "A city must not only reflect large national tendencies, but it must sum them up and transform them. It must not only mirror typical American ways of thought and action, but it must anticipate, define and realize national ideals. A genuine metropolis must be...both a concentrated and selected expression of the national life." This is the New York that has been preserved in the Byron Collection. □

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*Hayes Jackson is a free-lance writer in New York City.*

*The Museum of the City of New York received \$187,539 from the Division of Preservation and Access to preserve and catalogue the Byron Collection.*



# a place of their own

Boston's Children

Children play  
hopscotch in  
four languages  
in the Kids  
Bridge Exhibit  
at the Boston  
Children's  
Museum.



**I**n 1913 when the Children's Museum in Boston opened its doors, it was only the second of its kind in the nation. Its stated goal was to provide new ways to teach science, and the entire contents of its collections took less than one day to assemble.

The museum today contains a 35,000-object cultural collection representing people and cultures from around the world and a 20,000-object natural history collection. It includes fourteen major interacting exhibitions including "The Kids Bridge," which focuses on multicultural Boston; "We're Still Here," featuring Native American culture; and *Kyo No Machiya*, a two-story silk merchant's home from Kyoto, Japan.

children's

Museum

By Maggie Riechers

**N**ot a place for quiet observation, the Children's Museum is alive with sights and sounds, exhibits the museum goer experiences, buttons to push, objects to hold, and places to explore. The Boston Children's Museum, established after the Brooklyn Children's Museum, was one of the first to use the interacting exhibition format. It showed that direct access to real objects and materials can help children both learn and develop a perspective on issues from historical and cultural points of view.

"'Hands-on' makes children's museums sound like playgrounds," says Patricia Steuert, acting director of the museum. "It is very much a museum, but we know that children learn differently from adults." That's why Steuert and her staff are continually coming up with new ways for children to understand the world around them.

Although originally begun with a focus on science—the founders were members of the Science Teachers' Bureau—humanistic themes have been fundamental to the museum since its inception.

"Our mission is to help kids enjoy and understand the world in which they live, including the richness of culture," says Steuert.

The humanities programs at the museum focus on three areas: East Asian and Native American cultures

and multicultural Boston. Language, literature, ethics, religion, and history are important components. The programs are designed to show multiple perspectives and to encourage visitors to examine the ways in which culture and history affect their lives and the lives of people around them.

One of the largest programs is the Japan Program, which blends traditional Japan with modern Japan. The centerpiece of the Japan Program is the *Kyo no machiya*, a two-story merchant's house from Kyoto's silkweaving district. A gift to the museum from Boston's sister city, Kyoto, the *Kyo No machiya* is the only example of domestic middle-class Japanese architecture in the United States. Permanently on display, its six rooms occupy 1,584 square feet, and are entered from a replica of a small street whose facade of buildings is typical of its original environment.

The home gives visitors a chance to experience traditional life in Japan, including an understanding of the close intimacy of the Japanese family which eats and works in energy-saving, efficient space. Throughout the year, the house is maintained as if a family were living in it, with important holidays celebrated using objects from the museum's collections.

The *Kyo no machiya* is a traditional Japanese home, and in the museum's continual interest in bridging cultures, it also sought a way to highlight

modern Japanese culture. With support from NEH, it developed "Teen Tokyo," which focuses on today's Japanese youth.

"We began hearing from Japanese visitors that the *Kyo no machiya* was more like grandmother's house, that it was not reflecting current Japanese life," says Leslie Bedford, director of the Japan Program and developer of the Teen Tokyo exhibit.

"We wanted to teach young people about another culture focusing on similarities, not differences," says Bedford, who spent a year in Tokyo as a Fulbright senior research fellow. Bedford came up with the idea of using the international youth culture with Japanese teens as the cultural example.

"The contemporary youth culture is international—the exhibition could as easily have been Teen Beijing or Teen Mexico," says Bedford. The exhibition is geared to the ten- to fifteen-year-old age group and covers fashion, sports, animated film, comic books, and home and school life.

Bedford formulated the idea for Teen Tokyo during her stay in Japan, when she noticed how much her own children were taken in by contemporary Japanese culture.

"They loved all the modern, high-tech stuff—the new subway cars and video games," say Bedford. The exhibit, in fact, contains a real Tokyo subway car. Bedford stresses that segment of the exhibition presents an



idea somewhat similar and somewhat different to our own culture.

"In Japan, subway car seats are plush—a surprise to American kids," she says. The exhibition uses sounds that were recorded in Japan, including conductor announcements in the subway. According to Bedford the reaction from the visitor sitting in the subway car is "I get this—it's like home but really not."

That same kind of response is repeated as visitors watch Japanese Saturday morning cartoons, listen to Japanese rock groups, meet a lifesize, styrofoam-stuffed, play Sumo wrestler, and study Japanese baseball paraphernalia—all symbols of the country's pop culture.

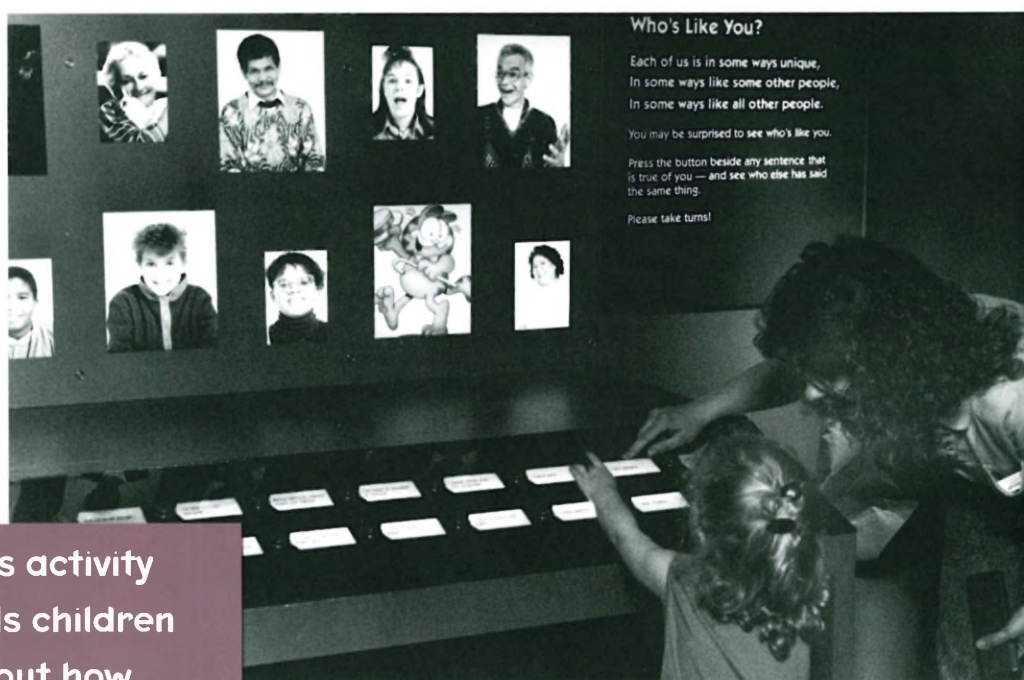
Contemporary Japanese home life is portrayed through a recreation of a Tokyo teenager's bedroom shared by three boys. It portrays the small spaces in Japanese homes and the interest in consumer goods and pop culture. The room is designed like a theater set with different parts of it lighting up during a seven-minute presentation in which the viewer is introduced to family members.

Titled "Tetsuo's Room," the presentation includes a slight earthquake during which the room shakes a bit, a battle of animated stuffed animals scattered on the floor, and the sounds of many family discussions. Although the voices are speaking Japanese, it is easy for the listener to understand the universal language of family life. Again, the message, "We're all somewhat the same and somewhat different" is conveyed.

The museum's continuing interest in teaching cultural similarities and differences extends to its Native American collection. Here the differences and similarities are shown between past and contemporary Native American culture of the surrounding New England area. With assistance from members of the northeastern Native American community, the museum was able to understand better the richness this culture and help teach it to children. That teaching process has changed over the past few years, moving away from just displaying the beauty of the objects to explaining how these people have been viewed in different area of history.

Steuert points out how direct involvement from the Native Ameri-

**This activity tells children about how they resemble and differ from others.**



can community affected the museum's planning. "They wanted to see an exhibition that said, 'We're still here and this is what we do

today," says Steuert.

The resulting permanent exhibit, "We're Still Here: Indians in Southern New England" is the most visible part of the museum's Native American program. The exhibition strives to show a continuum between past and present. It occupies more than 1,200 square feet of space and contains a full-scale seventeenth-century wigwam and a representation of a contemporary Indian home.

The wigwam is furnished with traditional objects such as pots, baskets, bed, and mortar and pestle. Visitors learn that a wigwam was a functional and useful home, with insulation provided by bullrush for warmth in winter and coolness in summer. Children experience the space and role-play some of the things seventeenth-century Indians would have done, such as cooking, grinding corn, drying fish, and sleeping in beds.

The contemporary rooms show that present-day Indian homes have modern conveniences along with tribal objects. The objects affirm the contemporary Native American's identity as one who is still Native American, although he or she may live

and function in a non-Indian as well as an Indian world.

Another way of juxtaposing past and contemporary Native American culture and arts has been to enlarge the museum's collection of older objects with some newer ones. Through a sharing program with the Peabody Museum of Harvard University, the museum added twenty older objects. Now, for example, a nineteenth-century Penobscot cradleboard is shown alongside a contemporary Narragansett cradleboard.

The museum also used its Native American advisers in planning its celebrations for the five-hundredth anniversary of Columbus's voyage to the Americas.

"They said so much had been done to represent Columbus's side with so little done to tell the other side," says Steuert. The exhibition they presented was through the eyes of Native Americans and included reaching out to the city of Boston by holding an intertribal powwow attracting some 20,000 local residents.

"It was an example of explaining different points of view of historical events and gearing it to children," says Steuert. "Part of any cultural study is understanding the richness of it and also that it is interpreted differently by different groups.

"Those are pretty sophisticated concepts for children," says Steuert. "Half of our visitors, however, are adults—parents—who a lot of times are the first teachers of our children and if they learn new con-



cepts they will try to present them to their children."

One concept the museum feels strongly about is educating children about our multicultural society, focusing on the Boston community. An exhibition called "The Kids Bridge" introduces visitors to three concepts for understanding multiculturalism: learning about and valuing their own race and ethnicity; viewing cultural diversity as an enrichment of their lives; and trying to work against racism, discrimination, and prejudice.

The exhibition uses several kinds of displays to teach children, all of which have involved community representatives. In "Neighborhood Windows," for example, visitors peer in windows to view dioramas created by local individuals of various holiday celebrations. "Speak to Me" is a language laboratory in which Boston-area bilingual children use interactive videos to teach the user words and phrases in Spanish, Khmer, Cantonese Chinese, Haitian Creole, and English.

The most innovative section of the exhibit is the "Community Gallery," a changing display in which people in the Greater Boston area are invited to work with staff in creating a presentation of their own culture.

"It's an attempt to present a more authentic look at different cultures," says Steuert. A replica of "The Kids Bridge" was recently exhibited at the Smithsonian Institution and is now traveling to children's museums around the country. In each city where it appears, the exhibition takes on the cultural identity of that particular city with the help of community advisers.

As the exhibitions in the museum are ever-changing, so too has the

physical plant of the museum changed over the years. In 1979, with attendance booming, the museum moved to its present home, a nineteenth-century brick and timber wool warehouse on Boston's waterfront. Known as Museum Wharf, the building holds both the Children's Museum and the Computer Museum.

The two museums recently joined forces, announcing plans to build a waterfront project on Fort Point Channel, in front of the museums' existing building, which will include a floating

—Photos courtesy of Boston Children's Museum.



urban education center, a forty-five foot, wave-shaped building, and a public waterfront park.

The urban exhibition and harbor education center will float on Fort Point Channel year-round, built on a pile-anchored barge that will rise and fall with ocean tide levels in the channel. Inside the center, children will explore urban development and the harbor environment through several programs, including an interactive water exhibition, a glass-enclosed "cloud room" on the center's top floor, and a dock adjacent to the center that will be used as an outdoor learning laboratory. With challenge grant support from NEH, the museum is

**Making giant bubbles helps children explore the basic principles of physics.**

also expanding its lobby and waiting area to better accommodate its 500,000 annual visitors.

From its start eighty years ago, when its collections consisted of one exhibit case of birds and another of shells and minerals, and its programs a variety of natural science activities, the Children's Museum has sought to reach out to the community and give the children

of Boston an exciting approach to learning.

"I think the way we listen to families and figure out the needs of each decade has remained constant," says Steuert. "We're just doing it bigger than we've done before." □

*Maggie Riechers is a free-lance writer based in the Washington, D.C. area.*

*The Children's Museum received \$750,000 from Public Programs Challenge Grants of the Office of Challenge Grants. This grant is to be matched four-to-one by private contributions for the renovation of the museum's entry and an endowment for humanities programs.*



JACK LONDON'S  
LITERARY APPRENTICESHIP:  
THE EARLY  
UNPUBLISHED STORIES

By Earle Labor

IN LATE OCTOBER, 1916, less than a month before his death, Jack London received a letter from Waldo Frank, who "had heard through several friends—Nina Wilcox Putnam and Theodore Dreiser among others" about "some short stories which are so good that you have been unable to sell them." In reply to Frank's request to publish one of these in his new monthly magazine *The Seven Arts*, London laconically replied that "there ain't no such short stories," then confessed in a more serious vein: "I do not mind telling you that had the United States been as kindly toward the short story writer as France has always been kindly, from the beginning of my writing career I would have written many a score of short stories quite different from the ones I have written."

London's confession was both honest and significant. The truth is, while the handful of previously unpublished stories which appear in *The Complete Short Stories of Jack London* (3 vols., Stanford University Press, 1993) were scarcely good enough—much less too good—to sell, they are nonetheless important in revealing the young writer at work in trying to master the tools of his trade. Moreover, even as imitations of the kind of second-rate stuff that flooded the turn-of-the-century literary marketplace—i.e., as third-rate fiction—they provide helpful insights into the values of that marketplace.

London learned those values in the writer's school of hard knocks, and his literary education is vividly reflected in his confessional treatise *John Barleycorn*. As early as the fall of 1893, shortly after his return from a seven-month Pacific sealing voyage, the seventeen-year-old author had won first prize in a contest for young writers sponsored by the *San Francisco Morning Call* with "Story of a Typhoon off the Coast of Japan." Two years later, he had published a half-dozen stories in *The Aegis*, the student literary magazine at Oakland High School, where he resumed his formal education after two years of learning the tougher

ropes of the factory "work beast," the hobo, and the prison inmate. But it was in the spring of 1897, after completing a semester at the University of California and before departing for the Northland, that he launched himself into his first major effort to become a professional writer. He knew that if he were to raise himself out of society's "submerged tenth," he must choose a career. Although music was his first preference, he rejected that as impracticable, throwing all his resources, simultaneously, into his next three choices: poetry, essays, and—"last, and least," the writing of fiction. "Heavens, how I wrote," he reminisced:

Never was there a creative fever such as mine from which the patient escaped fatal results. The way I worked was enough to soften my brain and send me to a mad-house. I wrote, I wrote everything—ponderous essays, scientific and sociological, short stories, humorous verse, verse of all sorts from triolets and sonnets to blank verse tragedy and elephantine epics in Spenserian stanzas. On occasion I composed steadily, day after day, for fifteen hours a day. At times I forgot to eat, or refused to tear myself away from my passionate outpouring to eat.

The intensity of his creative passion may be further appreciated in the light of the mechanical forces he was working against—namely, the ancient Blickensdorfer typewriter he had borrowed from his brother-in-law. "That machine was a wonder," he painfully recalled:

It must have been a first model in the year one of the typewriter era. Its alphabet was all capitals. It was informed by an evil spirit. It obeyed no known laws of physics, and overthrew the hoary axiom that like things produce like results. I'll swear that machine never did the same thing in the same way twice....



How my back used to ache with it! Prior to that experience, my back had been good for every violent strain put upon it in a none too gentle career. But that typewriter proved to me that I had a pipe-stem for a back. Also, it made me doubt my shoulders. They ached as with rheumatism after every bout. The keys of that machine had to be hit so hard that to one outside the house it sounded like distant thunder or some one breaking the furniture. I had to hit the keys so hard that I strained the first fingers to the elbows, while the ends of my fingers were blisters burst and blistered again.... My manuscripts made amazing round-trip records between the Pacific and the Atlantic. It might have been the weirdness of the typewriting that prevented the editors from accepting at least one little thing of mine. I don't know, and goodness knows the stuff I wrote was as weird as its typing.

Unfortunate as were the results of compounding amateurish enthusiasm with mechanical intractability for the young writer, the consequences for the scholar/critic have been salutary: it is now possible to confirm approximate dates of their composition by the fact that most of London's few surviving early manuscripts are typed in all-capital letters: viz., "O Haru," "The Mahatma's Little Joke," "The Plague Ship," and "The Strange Experience of a Misogynist." The only existing manuscript for the fifth unpublished story, "A Dream Image"—though typed in regular letters and first submitted to *Harper Brothers* on September 29, 1898, according to London's Magazine Sales record—bears the stylistic marks of his pre-Klondike compositions: choppy plot, flimsy characterization, pretentious diction, and inconsistent tenses and point of view.

All of these stories surely deserved rejection, but they are nonetheless interesting to the scholar inasmuch as they illustrate the various types of short fiction London thought would appeal to the contemporary market. "O Haru" is the poignant tale of a lovely Japanese *geisha* who commits hara-kiri after being disgraced by an unfaithful husband who has fallen in love with a "white devil" half-cast prostitute (like two other Japanese sketches published in *The Aegis*, "O Haru" was evidently inspired by London's 1893 visit to Yokohama). "The Mahatma's Little Joke" is a fragmented piece about two friends who use the services of a sorcerer to switch identities and thereby ingratiate themselves each with the other's sister. "The Plague Ship" is a clumsy amalgamation of mutiny and disease aboard what ultimately proves to be a "love boat" for a couple of heroic young doctors. More readable than any of these others is "The Strange Experience of a Misogynist," which we have selected for this issue of *Humanities*. A whimsical blend of Poe and Wells with London's own youthful whimsy, this little fantasy may please even the casual reader who is willing to suspend a modicum of disbelief—and it may further intrigue the London scholar who wishes to perceive in it glimmerings of London's later fictional glorifications of women.

What is most significant, however, is the enormous contrast between the quality of these early tales and the kind of fiction London began writing after he returned from the Northland. "It was in the Klondike I found myself," he testified. "There you get your true perspective. I got mine." The achieving "true perspective" involved not only his finding fresh new fictional materials but also his absorbing

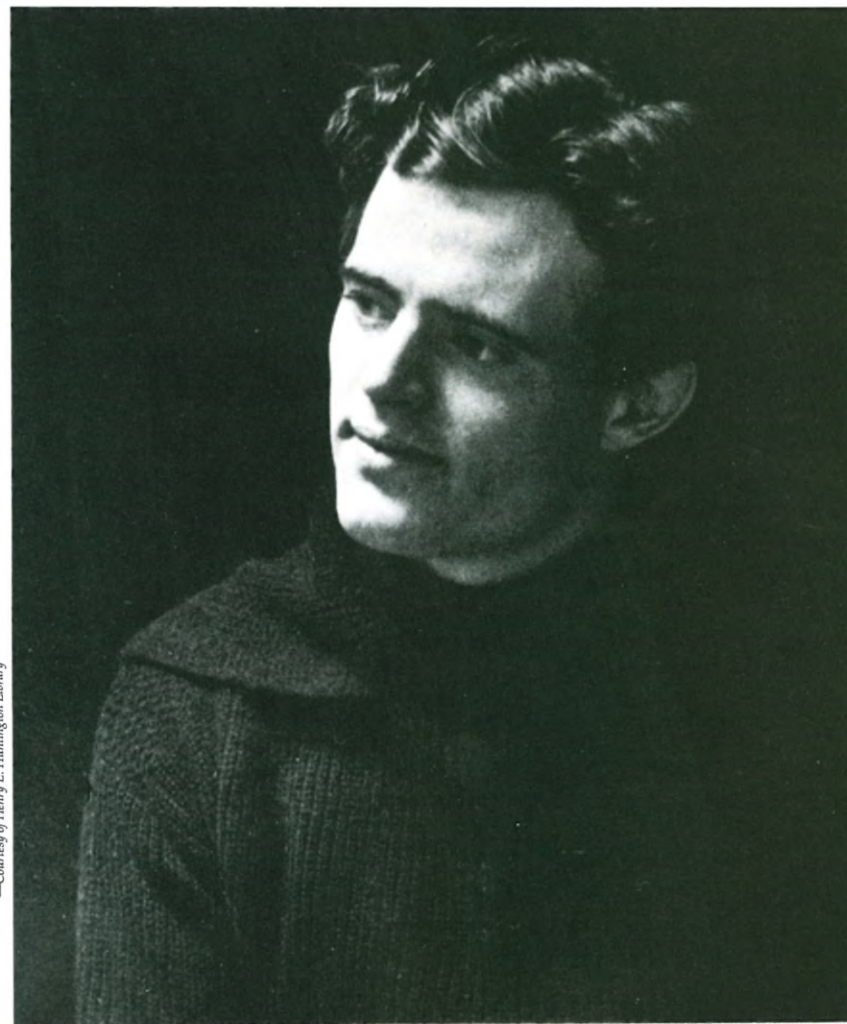
the very atmosphere of the Northland and learning that the resultant "felt life" rather than banal plot was the key to effective narration. "And get the atmosphere," he preached to his fellow literary aspirant Cloudesley Johns in articulating his new-won principle: "Atmosphere stands always for the elimination of the artist, that is to say, atmosphere is the artist; and when there is no atmosphere and the artist is still there, it simply means that the machinery is creaking and that the reader hears it."

We hear very little creaking in the stories London wrote thereafter, many of which have become world classics, ranking alongside the works of such other masters of short fiction as Chekhov, Maupassant, Poe, Crane, Kafka, Hemingway, and Borges. In view of the singular qualities of lesser-known works like "Samuel," "War," and "Told in the Drooling Ward"—all of which London was hard-pressed to sell even at the height of his career (and which are included with his neophyte narratives in the new complete edition)—we cannot help wishing that America's literary marketplace had indeed been somewhat kindlier toward the short story writer. Regardless, the near ten score of stories London did succeed in writing constitute one of this country's most extraordinary literary legacies. □

Earle Labor is Wilson Professor of American Literature at Centenary College of Louisiana.

To give three seminars on the works of Jack London, Centenary College received a total of \$191,934 from the Summer Seminars for School Teachers program of the Division of Fellowships and Seminars.

Jack London during his Oakland High School days.



Courtesy of Henry E. Huntington Library



## THE STRANGE EXPERIENCE OF A MISOGYNIST\*

**THIS EARLY JACK LONDON** piece lay unpublished for ninety-six years. It, together with four others, appears in the new *Complete Short Stories of Jack London*, published by Stanford University with support from NEH. What follows is an excerpt.

...I had asked to be called at six sharp, and here it was seven-thirty. It was evident that I had missed my train, so canceling the engagement with a slight manifestation of irritation, I whistled down the speaking-tube for my customary kettle of hot water. No reply. I listened: the house was as silent as a tomb: apparently, no one was stirring. Strange thoughts flashed to my mind. Visions of bloody horrors, burglars, thugs, hidden mysteries, murder, and what not, rose before me. This was a very strange, an unprecedented occurrence. I decided to investigate.

But first, a word for myself. I am a young fellow of twenty-eight or thirty; comfortably, though not more than so, endowed with the world's goods; and alone upon the face of the earth, save for some distant, very distant relatives. The further to satisfy my modest but somewhat expensive tastes, I devote an occasional hour to literary drudgery—but a drudgery which permits me to be wholly my own master, little caring whether school keeps or not. It is now some two years or more that I have resided at my present quarters, which, for various reasons, are very satisfactory. The house, a cozy, two-story suburban residence, is the possession of a nice widow-lady, who, with her three spinster daughters, manages to eke out a comfortable livelihood from a small annuity and the sums they receive from me every quarter. I am the sole lodger, in fact, boarder too, though I more often dine down town or at the club. My feminine friends unite in calling me the "crusty young bachelor" and my jovial, bohemian comrades, "the misogynist." Why I have been given these respective appellations, I can readily understand; but how I have earned them I cannot conceive. I am not a woman-hater, as you may by this time have supposed me to be, far from it. Still, I must confess, I am not a woman-lover. Yet in this case I see no reason why the absence of the positive should imply the presence of the negative. I have never loved nor loved in vain, have never experienced anything which should condition me as I am—perhaps I was born that way. In short, while I do not like woman, I do not dislike her; but with such an object of neutral tints, I neither go out of my way to cultivate nor to avoid. "Confound it! How that quaint, little song rings in my ears!"

"If the women were transported, far beyond the northern sea."

Mentally cursing the composer, I descended the stairs. No sign of life: the kitchen just as it was left last evening. It was evident that they were still a-bed. Filled with gloomy forebodings, I first knocked, then successively forced the doors to the three chambers. Each was deserted. The beds had all been slept in; but I noted with surprise, the presence of the garments, shoes, etc., which had been discarded on disrobing the previous evening. So accustomed was I to every dress in the household, that I ransacked the wardrobes, closets, and chests of drawers. Nothing was missing and I smiled to myself as I pictured their flight, clad in nothing but their sleeping robes. Imagine my consternation when I discovered in each bed, the night-dresses of their respective occupants. "Shameful!" I thought; but at the same time, I found myself entertaining a malicious desire to have been a witness of the event, to have beheld the three attenuated spinsters and their ebom-pointed mother, fleeing like veritable Eves—whither, I knew not.

A myriad hypotheses suggested themselves but I could entertain none of them. I had never suspected my sedate landlady nor her sober daughters of any wildness, and this very unconventional procedure took me quite a-back. Perhaps something serious had occurred? I would lock up the house and inform the chief of police.

On the front steps I found the morning paper, still as tightly rolled up as when it left the carrier's hand. "What's this? Phew!" These were the staring headlines which met my astonished eye:

A world catastrophe!!!

The scientific world astounded!!!

The femininity of the earth is no more!!!

All people have felt the heavy hand of horror!!!

The confutation of all religion, science and philosophy!!!

A universal wail of sorrow!!!

Special session of congress!!!

And much more which I dashed through to get to the pith of the matter. Impossible as it seemed and more like a gigantic hoax, here it is, in substance:



Some time last night, it had been generally agreed upon as midnight, in some mysterious, unaccountable way, every woman, the whole world over, had suddenly disappeared. There had been no warning: there had been no remains. It was total annihilation or total translation. Very graphic was the description of a great state ball in Berlin. A thousand couples were whirling in giddy waltz when twelve o'clock struck. A shudder, like the flapping of a great sail, was heard, and a thousand astonished men were rooted to the floor, speechless, each clasping the empty costume of his partner of the previous moment. Thus it had happened everywhere: none were spared, not even the female babes in the cradle. Nor had the shock been less severe among the rest of the animal kingdom. The male gender of all species remained, but the female had vanished. ("Ah," I mused, "that accounts for the sparrows.")

I hastily skimmed the account. This dreadful holocaust had put all the world aghast. Science was speechless as was also philosophy. Religion, while, on the whole, dumbfounded, among several sects there was whispering of the fulfillment of prophecy. There was no accounting for it. The immutability of natural law, the towering fabric of philosophic speculation, the dizzy atheistical negation of all supernaturalism, the adamant division, between the knowable and the unknowable, of agnosticism; these, all these, and every system of thought and mode of action, had been overthrown, confuted by this one fell blow. A blow, so light, that the sleeper awakened not in the passing.

I could hardly trust my senses. Was I dreaming? Had the editors or the printers gone mad? Or was it nothing but a gigantic American sell? With my mind awirl, I was just preparing for the acceptance of the latter when I suddenly paused at the gate, remembering my deserted house and the sparrows. Hardly daring to think, I hurried down the street. At the corner, I stumbled into an excited group, evidently discussing the situation.

They were local acquaintances so I did not hesitate to join them. I was amused, however, at their appearance. Their attires indicated hasty and indiscriminate dressing. Shoes were dirty, cravats missing or all awry, clothes

unbrushed—in short, a general air of seediness was the most conspicuous feature. And there, I could have sworn to it, was old Dottlyboy, the precisest and neatest man of the neighborhood, without his face washed.

"Oh! Its terrible! I can hardly collect myself. What's going to become of us? The cook has gone, too, and I haven't had my breakfast. I don't see why she couldn't have stayed. O my! O my! And at my time of life too!" Thus chattered the old gentleman who lived across the way from me, mumbling and chewing his words as though his mouth were full of hot mush—he had forgotten his false teeth.

"Is it true," I asked, "that woman is no more?"

"It is true," they gasped in solemn chorus.

"Hurrah! Hurrah!" I shouted. But evincing no sign of jubilancy, I looked at them, then asked "Why don't you rejoice? Come, give a hearty three times three and a tiger with me. Now—hip—hip—"

But just then I was so violently kicked from behind that other emotions claimed my attention. I whirled about with the intention of planting my deadly right in the most vulnerable portion of my assailant's anatomy, when—thwack!—old Dottlyboy's cane descended on my pericranium with periculous energy. I had a hazy impression of being suffocated in a cloud of invective, buffets, kicks and blows; of being tossed about in the bowels of a gregarious maelstrom; and of being vomited forth, a disintegrated mass, to recline in the contumely of the gutter. □

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*"The Strange Experience of a Misogynist" was published in The Complete Short Stories of Jack London, ed. Earle Labor, Robert C. Leitz, III, and I. Milo Shepard.*

*(Stanford University Press, 1993). Permission to reprint granted by the Trust of Irving Shepard, I. Milo Shepard, trustee.*

*Stanford University received \$7,000 from the Subventions program of the Division of Research Programs to support the publication of the first complete edition of the short stories of Jack London.*

## OTHER NEH-SUPPORTED JACK LONDON PROJECTS

**LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY**, Shreveport, received \$126,950 from the Editions program of the Division of Research Programs to edit *The Letters of Jack London*. The collection consists of some 1,200 letters and photographs.

Stanford University Press received \$20,427 through the Subventions category of the Division of Research

Programs to publish three volumes of *The Letters of Jack London*.

Harmon Middle School teacher Daniel Dyer of Aurora, Ohio, received a \$30,500 Teacher-Scholar grant from the Division of Education Programs to prepare an illustrated, annotated edition of London's *The Call of the Wild*. □



*continued from page 9*

themselves as standing against class oppression, though actually they're not paying any attention to the great class divisions in society. No one is writing any books on the social elites. There are scholars who are writing books about the middle class, but not from a multiculturalist perspective. So we lose sight of how much class configures our world. If academics were more attentive, they would see their own class position more clearly.

**Hackney:** One thinks of William Julius Wilson's work on inequality, with particular attention to racial inequality, but emphasizing the class origins of that. He is unusual in that aspect. The argument between race and class within the civil rights community has been raging for decades. It was very virulent in the late 1960s, and it split the movement quite fundamentally. Do you have a position on whether the inequality that is still evident in various measures of well-being between whites and blacks in general is more dependent on class or race?

**Higham:** Well, I like the way you put it because we have to start out by recognizing that class and race do strongly reinforce one another in the degradation of urban ghettos.

**Hackney:** There has been a convergence in the last twenty years.

**Higham:** Yes, to the disadvantage of lower-class blacks. My position there is, I suppose, consonant with my general culturalist perspective. I think that race is much more important than class, and that Wilson has overemphasized class. But at the same time I feel that our recent history has demonstrated that whatever progress we can make in this respect at the present time is not going to come through remedies focused specifically on race. I think we're going to get improvement in this area of very real racial oppression through a wider recognition that people of all colors at a lower-class level have a very difficult time.

**Hackney:** Some people would argue, still, that if the goal is individual equality—a real chance for every individual to fulfill his or her potential—that that is not going to be achievable if their group identities, their endowments, are not somehow recognized by the culture as being legitimate.

**Higham:** I would want to make a distinction between cultural recognition and political recognition. I feel that our society can give legal recognition and guarantees to particular endowment groups only in quite exceptional conditions. If we do not have some kind of a fundamental orienta-

**"The argument between race and class within the civil rights community has been raging for decades. It was very virulent in the late 1960s, and it split the movement quite fundamentally."**

*—Sheldon Hackney*

tion in favor of liberty as an individual possession, we're going to increase rather than diminish the divisions between the groups. There is no way of creating a society-wide standard for group rights and prerogatives. Those always have to be negotiated through political confrontations, and the more of that we have, the more we're entrenching inequality.

**Hackney:** Indeed, I think that is the real dilemma that Americans are now wrestling with without quite knowing it. It is an extension of the fact that all of our rights and our entire governmental system is based on individual rights and privileges. Yet there is also the reality of group differences and the importance of group membership—endowments, as you are calling them. And figuring out how to bring those two together is a real problem.

I've been also very interested in your apparent clear faith that there is a commonality, that there is a real American identity that is a bit different and distinct from one's individual or group endowments. Some people would doubt that there is.

**Higham:** It can't be described completely, but it is an important presence in our lives. First of all, it contains this political core that we've been talking about, an American political ideology. Secondly, it contains a very large component, a moral component, that has to do with notions about fairness. Thirdly, it has a social configuration that's based in the experience, as I see it, of moving around, of being mobile. We've been willing to allow the bonds of community to be relatively weak in order to provide the vistas of opportunity that are, I think, historically related to migration.

**Hackney:** That is a trade-off, isn't it?

**Higham:** Yes, but the fact that this American identity I'm talking about is not fixed can allow it to change in a communal direction. I think we need more of a sense of obligation to one another. I want more of a willingness to make sacrifices, less of a tendency to think of ourselves in terms of very confined obligations.

**Hackney:** Do you find yourself sympathetic to the work of Charles Taylor, Amitai Etzioni, Bill Galton?

**Higham:** Yes, I do, but I must say that I'm disappointed with Taylor on the subject of multiculturalism, because there he carries the communal orientation far in an essay called "The Politics of Recognition."

**Hackney:** Yes, I've seen it.



**Higham:** There I think he is reflecting his origins as a Canadian. I have the greatest admiration for his general way of looking at things, but when he tells us that—I'm not quoting him exactly—we have to stand for distinctness not just now, but forever, he is speaking from Canadian experience. This comes out of the experience of a national identity that contains no universalistic dimension. Ethnic identities are therefore indissoluble. That's where the U.S. is different.

**Hackney:** Well, he and other theorists are apparently trying to find a way to embrace a multicultural perspective and yet also emphasize community or commonality, and it's an interesting exercise.

**Higham:** But I was disappointed. I had been saying that there's no really coherent theory of multiculturalism, and I expected him to provide one. And what he provides seems to me to reveal the root problem of a multiculturalist perspective: an inability to trust in the widening of human communities.

**Hackney:** Let me see if I understand you completely: Your opposition is to endowment distinctiveness that is perpetual. You think that's the wrong way to think about it. But you probably wouldn't think of yourself as an assimilationist either, that is, that in the distant future we are all going to actually mix up so much with each other, that is, intermarry, that there will be no distinctive subgroups within America.

**Higham:** I actually do think of myself as being on the assimilationist side, but I don't foresee or would not desire any such vision of the future as that. I don't regard assimilation as something static. I see assimilation as one side of what I call pluralistic integration. Assimilation counterbalances the differentiating forces in our history. When we bad-mouth assimilation, we're failing to appreciate that it goes on at all levels of life. People are constantly moving out of one class and becoming assimilated into another. Ethnic groups are changing their boundaries. People of Hispanic descent, for example, are trying to assimilate to one another in order to become more than Dominicans, Cubans, and so on, and therefore acquire a larger and more powerful identity. They might not make it. Assimilation doesn't always work. But it's part of change. And it's a part of change that is exceedingly important in a society that has to be bound together in the presence of such extraordinary heterogeneity as we have.

“When we bad-mouth  
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constantly moving out  
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becoming assimilated  
into another.”

—John Higham

So my book, *Send These to Me*, concludes by offering an overall vision of pluralistic integration, by which I mean that we want and need a society that is integrated but yet provides space for an appreciation of differences.

**Hackney:** I presume the individuals can roam back and forth among various groups.

**Higham:** Yes.

**Hackney:** And you would also see a future that is very fluid. Though differences may persist indefinitely in America, those groups that are different are going to be different groups in the distant future. They're going to be changing.

**Higham:** Yes. A lot of this change is quite slow. On the other hand, as I have said, it occurs more rapidly than we often appreciate. As I look at the future, I see national differences between the United States and other countries diminishing, so that the processes will and should extend beyond national lines. So we can and should look forward to greater capabilities all around the world for people to relate to one another, which actually is occurring. In fact, that seems to be occurring faster than any other form of integration.

**Hackney:** That's right. Modern communications makes distant events not only contemporary but global as well.

As you think about America now wrestling with its own internal differences against the backdrop of your notion of America being committed to equality, how would you grade America's achievements in the area of equality? In relation to some world standard, have we done well, have we not done well, have we done better than others, less well than others?

**Higham:** We do some things very well and other things quite poorly. We have been good at promoting individual rights and opportunities, in spite of major setbacks, major reactionary movements, etc. We have, on the other hand, been laggards in the development of what I think is an essential concomitant of equality, namely fraternity. In other words, we haven't been very good at widening the sense of the individual's frame of reference. But the point where I would say we are almost unique is that we have found ways in which an incredible variety of people can coexist, and I think that we Americans have given a demonstration to the world that a political system can contain these enormously different elements and survive over a long period of time.

**Hackney:** Well, thank you very much. □



# The Numbers Game:

BY JEFFREY THOMAS

## Philanthropic Foundations Give Record \$9.2 Billion

**F**OR ORGANIZATIONS receiving help from U.S. philanthropic foundations, 1991 was a good year. These foundations contributed a record \$9.2 billion to nonprofit organizations in this country and abroad, an increase of 6.2 percent over 1990's total of \$8.7 billion. (Adjusted for inflation, the increase totaled 1.8 percent.)

Continued gains in foundation giving are likely in the years to come. Total assets held by U.S. foundations grew 14 percent from 1990 to 1991. Among the contributing factors is the growth in the number of foundations—more were formed in the 1980s than in any other decade.

Not all the news is bright, however: Grantmaking by company-sponsored foundations failed to keep pace with inflation, increasing by only 3 percent between 1990 and 1991. In addition, the amount of money contributed by companies to their foundations was less than the amount of grants awarded by those foundations, making an increase in corporate giving unlikely in the near future.

**TABLE 1**  
GRANTS BY MAJOR SUBJECT CATEGORY, 1991

Subject	\$ Amount	%	Number
Arts and Culture			
Policy, Management and Information	\$13,620	0.3	127
Arts-multipurpose	58,268	1.2	767
Media and Communications	58,001	1.2	843
Visual Arts/Architecture	22,555	0.5	289
Museum Activities	195,363	4.0	1,550
Performing Arts	220,059	4.5	3,889
Humanities*	105,126	2.2	1,155
Other	17,558	0.4	325
<b>Total, Arts and Culture</b>	<b>\$682,549</b>	<b>14.1</b>	<b>8,945</b>
Education	\$1,210,083	25.0	13,350
Environment and Animals	\$236,325	4.9	3,091
Health	817,142	16.9	7,473
Human Services	\$687,766	14.2	12,339
International Affairs and Human Rights	\$195,935	4.0	1,952
Public/Society Benefit	\$505,546	10.4	6,582
Science and Technology	\$277,879	5.7	1,826
Social Science	\$133,231	2.7	1,157
Religion	\$98,133	2.0	1,382
Other	4,021	0.1	121
<b>Total Grants</b>	<b>\$4,848,611</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>58,218</b>

NOTE: Dollar figures expressed in thousands; due to rounding, figures may not add up.

\* All grants whose primary subject code is in the humanities are counted in this category. This includes any humanities-related grants drawn from such categories as "Education" and "Social Science."



The information comes from the recently released 1993 edition of *Foundation Giving: Yearbook of Facts and Figures on Private, Corporate, and Community Foundations*. Published by the Foundation Center, the book analyzes the rate of foundation formation, tracks the growth of assets and the number of grants awarded, and documents the giving priorities of grantmakers.

Included is a detailed analysis of foundation grants by category, type of support, population group served, and geographic area. This analysis was derived from the records of more than 58,000 grants of \$10,000 or more made by 846 foundations, including the 300 largest. Under a contract from the Endowment, the Foundation Center isolated humanities-specific data from its 1991 records. Among the findings:

- The 846 foundations awarded almost \$5 billion in grants in 1991. Of this figure, \$683 million was awarded in support of projects in "Arts, Culture, and Humanities." This amount accounted for 14 percent of all of the grants these foundations awarded that year. (See Table 1)
- In the category of "Arts, Culture, and Humanities," \$105 million was awarded for grants whose primary focus was in the humanities. This amount represents 2 percent of all the foundations' awards, and 15 percent of awards in the "Arts..." category. By comparison, funding for the performing arts was twice that, totaling \$220 million. Funding for nonhumanities-related museum activities accounted for \$195 million.

- Of the \$105 million in humanities funding, \$37.5 million (36 percent) was for historic preservation, \$22.1 million (21 percent) for history-related museum activities, and \$15.5 million (15 percent) for unspecified humanities projects. (Table 2)

Historical societies were the recipients of nearly \$42 million or 40 percent of grant funding, followed by history museums at \$15 million (14 percent), higher education institutions at \$13.8 million (13 percent), and "humanities organizations" at \$7.5 million (7 percent).

\$41 million was awarded for "program support" (half of which went for "program development"), and \$38 million was awarded for capital support (with a little less than half directed toward "building/renovation"). These two categories accounted for more than half of all humanities funding. Additionally, general support and student fellowships each accounted for about \$16 million; curriculum development \$3.4 million; research \$2.8 million; and film/video/radio projects \$2.4 million.

Very little was set aside for specific beneficiaries. About 4 percent of grants were designated for "children and youth," and 3 percent for minorities. □

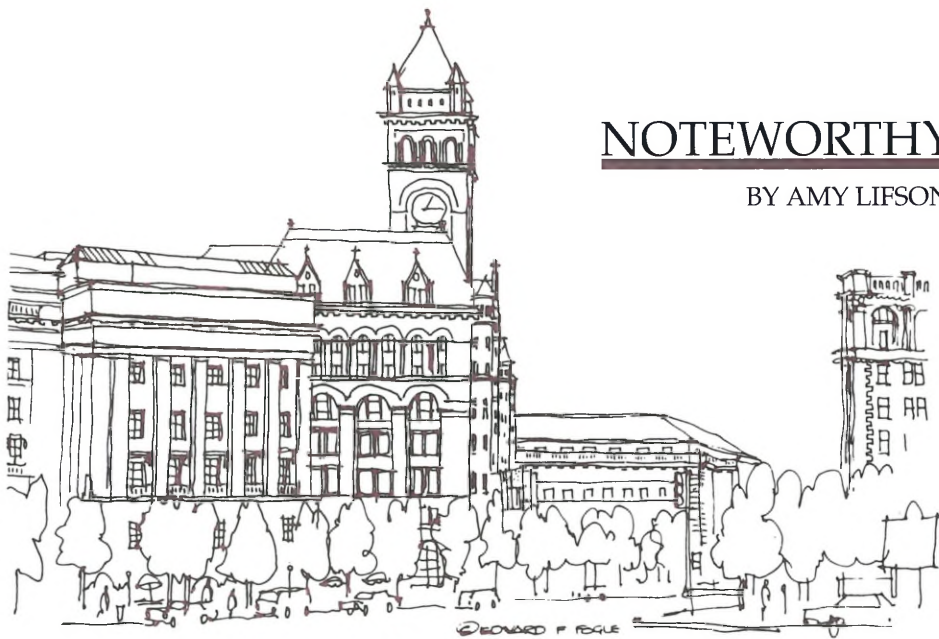
*Jeffrey Thomas is assistant director for Humanities Studies in the Office of Planning and Budget.*

**TABLE 2**  
DISTRIBUTION OF HUMANITIES GRANTS BY SUBJECT CATEGORIES, 1991

Subject	\$ Amount	%	Number
Art history	1,733,233	1.6	67
History/archaeology	6,346,404	6.0	110
Classical languages	300,000	0.3	2
Foreign languages	4,712,030	4.5	45
Language/linguistics, other	1,028,675	1.0	15
Literature	9,794,636	9.3	96
Philosophy/ethics	2,569,718	2.4	34
Theology/comparative religion	2,072,836	2.0	17
Museum (history-related)	22,143,039	21.1	185
Historic preservation	37,503,712	35.7	471
Centennials & commemorations	1,372,756	1.3	39
Humanities (general)	15,548,567	14.8	74
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$105,125,606</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,155</b>

NOTE: Due to rounding, figures may not add up.





## NOTEWORTHY

BY AMY LIFSON

### Sports in Philadelphia

From the 1920s through the 1950s, sports was a glue that helped hold Philadelphia's African-American communities together. "When African Methodists were displaced during the great migration by large numbers of Baptists, other Methodists, and different religious groups coming to the city, a certain degree of fragmentation occurred within the black communities. Sports worked in some ways to consolidate those communities," says Robert Gregg.

Gregg is project director for "Healing the Body and the Mind: African-American Sport in Philadelphia" an exhibition opening April 6 at the Afro-American Historical and Cultural

Museum in Philadelphia. The exhibition includes photographs, artifacts, and oral histories from sixty African American sports figures.

"Healing" examines the influence of organizations such as the Christian Street YMCA and YWCA, the Wisahickon Boys and Girls Club, and recreation centers that nurtured black youth. The clubs fed students to black colleges such as Lincoln, and players to many of the Negro semi-pro baseball and basketball leagues before integration.

When integration arrived in the 1950s, Gregg says, it undermined the sports organizations that had flourished in the black communities. Former all-white universities began recruiting black students, and professional sports teams took the few best players from the Negro leagues. "One of the problems we're highlighting is that not only has this part of African-American history been overlooked, but also that no structure really developed in its place for the communities."

*Connie Morgan, a native of Philadelphia and one of three women who played professional baseball in the men's Negro leagues, poses with Jackie Robinson in 1954.*



### Frankels Honored at White House

This year's winners of the Charles Frankel Prize were honored with a South Lawn award presentation and a dinner at the White House. The five, recognized by NEH for their contributions in bringing public understanding to the humanities, were anthropologist Ricardo E. Alegría, historian John Hope Franklin, educator Hanna Holborn Gray, philanthropist Andrew Heiskell, and historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich. They, together with twelve winners of the Medal of Arts, received their awards from the President as part of Arts and Humanities Month.



*John Hope Franklin receiving Frankel Award at the White House.*

President Clinton said, "Throughout history, the arts and humanities have been the cultural signature of this great nation. They have enabled Americans of all backgrounds and walks of life to gain a deeper appreciation of who they are as individuals and who we all are as a society, stirring our minds and our senses, stimulating learning and collective discourse, the arts and humanities teach us in ways that nothing else can about the vastness and the depth of human experience." □



# HUMANITIES GUIDE

**O**BJECTS OF MATERIAL culture provide a record of the ideas and activities of civilizations past and present, and thus constitute an invaluable resource for research, public programming, and education in the humanities. Over the last century, museums and historical organizations in the United States have been actively acquiring these collections. Now the sheer magnitude of these holdings and the formidable expense of providing adequate space and proper environments for them have made their preservation a tremendous challenge. The process of deterioration is an active one; it cannot be halted. It can, however, be slowed, thereby extending the useful life of collections. Today we know that conservation treatment, once viewed as the primary means of preserving objects, is not in itself the solution. Treatment fails when objects continue to reside in overcrowded storage rooms and in environments that expose them to extreme and fluctuating levels of relative humidity and temperature. And treatments do nothing to protect objects from irreversible damage of loss due to fire or theft.

In recognition of the preservation problems posed by the millions of material culture objects housed in America's museums and historical organizations, Congress provided funds in 1990 for NEH to establish a grant category for the stabilization of these collections. Based on testimony from the field, the National Heritage Preservation Program was conceived to provide support for those activities which have the greatest impact on long-term preservation: the rehousing of collections and purchase of storage furniture, the improvement of environmental conditions, and the installation of fire protection, security, and lighting systems. Furthermore, in response to a critical need for trained personnel, support is available to implement or enhance national and regional educational programs in the care and conservation of material culture collections. Three years into this twenty-year initiative, the Division of Preservation and Access has

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## The National Heritage Preservation Program

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BY LAURA WORD

awarded sixty-eight grants totaling more than \$20 million to help preserve more than twenty-one million objects.

The Laboratory of Anthropology / Museum of Indian Arts and Culture in Santa Fe has, for example, received \$146,632 to replace the lighting and storage systems for 30,000 archaeological and 7,000 ethnographic objects. Focusing on the Native American cultures of the Southwest, the museum's collection includes ceramics, baskets, beadwork, jewelry, and textiles. The Hanford Mills Museum in East Meredith, New York, was awarded \$24,306 to install fire and security systems in the nine buildings that house the museum's historic collection of industrial and agricultural equipment and machinery. NEH has funded projects at the Shelburne Museum in Vermont and the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities to improve the environmental conditions in historic structures where collections of decorative art, folk art, textiles, and the everyday objects of domestic life are stored and exhibited. These two projects recognize the competing preservation needs of collections and historic structures and promise to advance the field's knowledge about the complex issues involved in estab-

lishing and maintaining environmental conditions that will protect collections without causing damage to a building's structural fabric.

The annual deadline for applications to the National Heritage Preservation Program is November 1. Institutions may apply for grants of up to \$1,000,000 and are expected to contribute their own resources or third-party gifts on a one-to-one cost sharing basis. The period of a grant may last up to five years. Awards are not made for projects that involve new construction; however, renovation costs associated with rehousing collections and the installation of environmental control, security, fire prevention, or lighting systems are eligible for support. Applications for stabilization projects (which are evaluated by scholars who use material culture collections in their research, museum directors and curators, and conservators) are expected to include a description of the collection that is to be preserved and a discussion of its significance to the humanities. Current conditions that endanger the collection and the planning which has prepared the applicant to undertake the proposed project must also be discussed. It is expected that a general conservation assessment of the collection has been performed and that this report will be part of the application. The application must also include a detailed plan of work that encompasses all activities necessary to bring a project to a successful conclusion. For example, in a proposal for a rehousing project, an applicant needs to explain the entire sequence of steps required to accomplish the actual relocation of collections into the new storage systems. Those who are interested in submitting an application to the Division of Preservation and Access are encouraged to contact the division's staff to confirm a project's eligibility. Draft proposals may be submitted six weeks in advance of the deadline for staff comment. Guidelines may be obtained by writing to NEH or calling the division at 202/606-8570. □

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*Laura Word is a Program Officer in the Division of Preservation and Access.*



# DEADLINES DEADLINES DEADLINES

## DIVISION OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS *James C. Herbert, Director • 606-8373*

Area code for all telephone numbers is 202.	Deadline	Projects beginning
Higher Education in the Humanities • <i>Lyn Maxwell White 606-8380</i> .....	April 1, 1994	October 1994
Institutes for College and University Faculty • <i>Barbara A. Ashbrook 606-8380</i> .....	April 1, 1994	Summer 1995
Science and Humanities Education • <i>Susan Greenstein/Deb Coon 606-8380</i> .....	March 15, 1994	October 1994
Core Curriculum Projects • <i>Fred Winter 606-8380</i> .....	April 1, 1994	October 1994
Two-Year Colleges • <i>Judith Jeffrey Howard 606-8380</i> .....	April 1, 1994	October 1994
Challenge Grants • <i>Thomas Adams 606-8380</i> .....	May 1, 1994	December 1994
Elementary and Secondary Education in the Humanities • <i>F. Bruce Robinson 606-8377</i> .....	March 15, 1994	December 1994
Teacher-Scholar Program • <i>Annette Palmer 606-8377</i> .....	May 1, 1994	September 1995
Special Opportunity in Foreign Language Education .....	March 15, 1994	October 1994
Higher Education • <i>Lyn Maxwell White 606-8380</i>		
Elementary and Secondary Education • <i>F. Bruce Robinson 606-8377</i>		

## DIVISION OF FELLOWSHIPS AND SEMINARS *Marjorie A. Berlincourt, Director • 606-8458*

	Deadline	Projects beginning
Fellowships for University Teachers • <i>Maben D. Herring 606-8466</i> .....	May 1, 1994	January 1, 1995
Fellowships for College Teachers and Independent Scholars • <i>Joseph B. Neville 606-8466</i> .....	May 1, 1994	January 1, 1995
Summer Stipends • <i>Thomas O'Brien 606-8466</i> .....	October 1, 1994	May 1, 1995
Faculty Graduate Study Program for Historically Black Colleges and Universities .....	March 15, 1994	September 1, 1995
<i>Maben D. Herring 606-8466</i>		
Younger Scholars • <i>Leon Bramson 606-8463</i> .....	November 1, 1994	May 1, 1995
Dissertation Grants • <i>Kathleen Mitchell 606-8463</i> .....	November 15, 1994	September 1, 1995
Study Grants for College and University Teachers • <i>Clayton Lewis 606-8463</i> .....	August 15, 1994	May 1, 1995
Summer Seminars for College Teachers • <i>Joel Schwartz 606-8463</i>		
Participants .....	March 1, 1994	Summer 1994
Directors .....	March 1, 1994	Summer 1995
Summer Seminars for School Teachers • <i>Michael Hall 606-8463</i>		
Participants .....	March 1, 1994	Summer 1994
Directors .....	April 1, 1994	Summer 1995

## DIVISION OF PRESERVATION AND ACCESS *George F. Farr, Jr., Director • 606-8570*

	Deadline	Projects beginning
Library and Archival Preservation Projects • <i>Vanessa Piala/Charles Kolb 606-8570</i> .....	June 1, 1994	January 1995
Library and Archival Preservation/Access Projects • <i>Karen Jefferson/Barbara Paulson 606-8570</i> .....	June 1, 1994	January 1995
National Heritage Preservation Program • <i>Richard Rose/Laura Word 606-8570</i> .....	November 1, 1994	July 1995
U. S. Newspaper Program • <i>Jeffrey Field 606-8570</i> .....	June 1, 1994	July 1995

To receive guidelines for any NEH program, contact the Office of Publications and Public Affairs at 202/606-8438. Guidelines are available at least two months in advance of application deadlines.

Telecommunications device for the deaf: 202/606-8282.



# DEADLINES DEADLINES DEADLINES

## DIVISION OF PUBLIC PROGRAMS *Marsha Semmel, Acting Director • 606-8267*

Area code for all telephone numbers is 202.	Deadline	Projects beginning
Humanities Projects in Media • <i>James Dougherty 606-8278</i> .....	March 11, 1994	October 1, 1994
Humanities Projects in Museums and Historical Organizations • <i>Fredric Miller 606-8284</i> .....	June 3, 1994	January 1, 1995
Public Humanities Projects • <i>Wilsonia Cherry 606-8271</i> .....	March 11, 1994	October 1, 1994
Humanities Projects in Libraries • <i>Thomas Phelps 606-8271</i>		
Planning .....	February 4, 1994	July 1, 1994
Implementation .....	March 11, 1994	October 1, 1994
Challenge Grants • <i>Abbie Cutter 606-8361</i> .....	May 1, 1994	December 1994

## DIVISION OF RESEARCH PROGRAMS *Guinevere L. Griest, Director • 606-8200*

	Deadline	Projects beginning
Scholarly Publications • <i>Margot Backas 606-8207</i>		
Editions • <i>Douglas Arnold 606-8207</i> .....	June 1, 1994	April 1, 1995
Translations • <i>Helen Agüera 606-8207</i> .....	June 1, 1994	April 1, 1995
Subventions • <i>606-8207</i> .....	March 15, 1994	October 1, 1994
Reference Materials • <i>Jane Rosenberg 606-8358</i>		
Tools • <i>Martha B. Chomiak 606-8358</i> .....	September 1, 1994	July 1, 1995
Guides • <i>Michael Poliakoff 606-8358</i> .....	September 1, 1994	July 1, 1995
Challenge Grants • <i>Bonnie Gould 606-8358</i> .....	May 1, 1994	December 1994
Interpretive Research • <i>George Lucas 606-8210</i>		
Collaborative Projects • <i>Donald C. Mell 606-8210</i> .....	October 15, 1994	July 1, 1995
Archaeology Projects • <i>Bonnie Magness-Gardiner 606-8210</i> .....	October 15, 1994	April 1, 1995
Humanities, Science, and Technology • <i>Daniel Jones 606-8210</i> .....	October 15, 1994	July 1, 1995
Conferences • <i>David Coder 606-8210</i> .....	January 15, 1994	October 1, 1994
Centers and International Research Organizations • <i>Christine Kalke 606-8210</i>		
Centers for Advanced Study .....	October 1, 1994	July 1, 1995
International Research .....	April 1, 1994	January 1, 1995

## DIVISION OF STATE PROGRAMS *Carole Watson, Director • 606-8254*

Each state humanities council establishes its own grant guidelines and application deadlines. Addresses and telephone numbers of these state programs may be obtained from the division.

## CHALLENGE GRANTS PROGRAM

	Deadline	Projects beginning
Applications are submitted through the Divisions of Education, Research, and Public Programs	May 1, 1994	December 1994



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