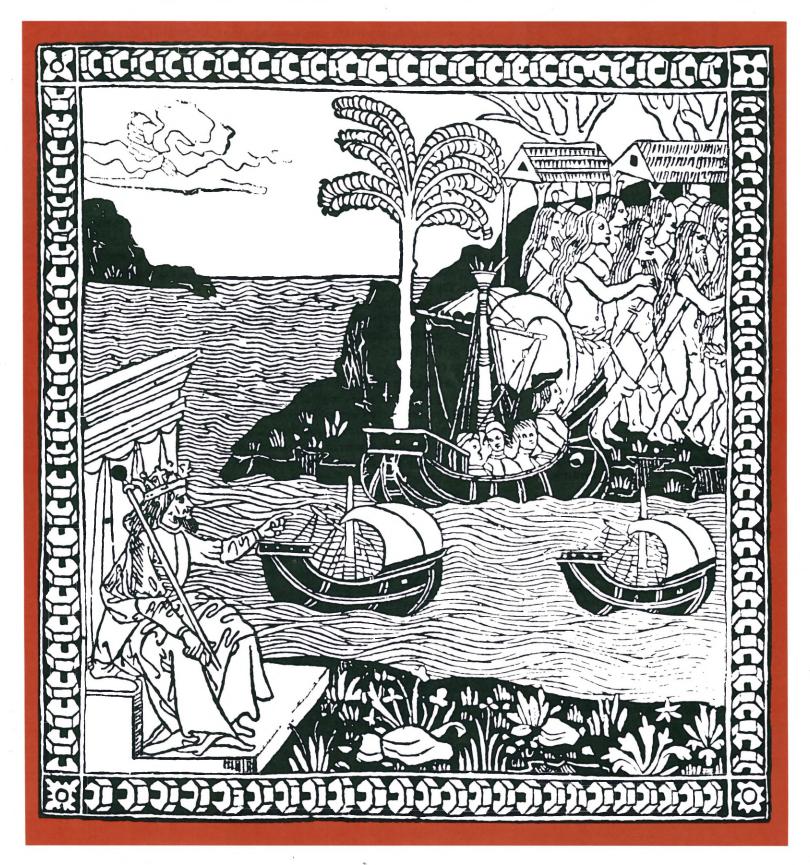
Humanities

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THE QUINCENTENARY OF COLUMBUS'S ARRIVAL

King Ferdinand points to Columbus landing in the New World. Woodcut from Guiliano Dati's La Lettera Dellisole, 1493. (Library of Congress)

Humanities

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Editor's Note

The Columbian Quincentenary

As happens with important anniversaries, the Columbian Quincentenary is bringing forth a number of historical reappraisals.

With that in mind, in this issue of *Humanities* we look at the quincentenary from a number of perspectives. Even the particular word chosen to describe what went on, says historian James Axtell, carries a particular weight and coloration, whether that word be *colonization* or *imperialism* or *settlement* or *emigration* or *invasion*. In attempting to reframe the moral imperatives of 1492 at a distance of five centuries, Axtell cautions:

"The parties of the past deserve equal treatment from historians.... As judge, jury, prosecutor, and counsel for the defense of people who can no longer testify on their own behalf, the historian cannot be any less than impartial in his or her judicial review of the past."

W. Richard West, Jr., the director of the new National Museum of the American Indian and himself a Cheyenne, says something succinct and similar: "We have to be careful that we do not try to remake history into something that it was not."

One current NEH-supported exhibition called "The Age of the Marvelous" covers the period following Columbus's journey. The next two centuries saw a passion on the part of collectors in Europe to acquire the new and unusual from America and other far-flung places. In another exhibition, we revisit cultural artifacts that remained on this side of the sea, "Objects of Myth and Memory," put together by the Brooklyn Museum and containing 250 American Indian art objects.

Michael Gannon of the University of Florida brings us up to date on the continuing scholarly work—archival and archaeological—being carried out by the Institute for Early Contact Period Studies, which he heads. The work of Gannon's institute is among more than 325 projects totalling \$22 million funded by the Endowment as part of the Columbian Quincentenary. One recently in the news involves anthropologist Arthur Demarest, who has been searching for clues to the demise of the Maya civilization in the rain forest of Guatemala; he tells about the discovery of the burial chamber of a previously unknown Maya chieftain.

Finally, we take a closer look at Columbus himself. Two professors from the University of Minnesota, Carla R. Phillips and William D. Phillips, Jr., examine American textbooks and popular histories over the last two hundred years in an attempt to separate the man from the myth.

—Mary Lou Beatty

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- The Columbian Mosaic in Colonial America by James Axtell.

 A historian looks at how the divergent races and cultures contended with each other in the Encounter.
- The Age of the Marvelous by Robin Latham. An exhibition at Dartmouth examines Renaissance Europe's awe at realizing the scope of the world's wonders.
- Objects of Myth and Memory by James S. Turner. The living artistic traditions of once-written-off native American cultures are highlighted at the Brooklyn Museum.
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W. Richard West, Jr.



talks with W. Richard West, Jr., director of the National Museum of the American Indian, about the issues of cultural diversity and repatriation of native American remains and artifacts.

Lynne Cheney: Let's begin with something simple and straightforward. Why an American Indian museum? West: I think that the National Museum of the American Indian happily is an institution whose time has come. American Indian culture has played a valuable part in the history of

this country, and we have belatedly recognized the significant contribution that Indian culture has made. To me it's entirely appropriate that the last spot on the Mall should be the National Museum of the American Indian. I think there is a growing openness to the elements of cultural diversity and the contributions that native Americans make to the social whole of this country. Indian culture definitely falls into that category.

Cheney: But why a separate museum? I think that troubles a few people, the idea that the museum is apart and separate instead of being an integral part of our heritage.

West: I think the fact that it is a separate institution has less to do with separateness than it has to do with the particular circumstances of this museum. The Smithsonian Institution has this splendid collection of artifacts and objects, clearly the largest, the most significant collection of native material from this country and the entire Western Hemisphere in the world.

Cheney: This is the Heye collection? West: The George Gustav Heye collection. It is unqualifiedly the finest collection of the material of the native peoples of this hemisphere. The magnitude of the collection alone makes it very difficult to integrate into any other institution that exists now at the Smithsonian Institution.

Cheney: In policy statements about the museum, some things in the language give the impression that you do see the museum as separate spiritually and not just as separate in the physical sense. One statement says that the museum's objects are to be considered the sole property of the "affected native American culturally affiliated group."

West: That's the repatriation policy.

Cheney: Exactly. I've always thought of objects in museums as part of our national heritage.

West: They are. These are definitely national collections that we're talking about, and it is a national institution of Indian culture. You're talking about a very specific part of a particular policy. Cheney: The repatriation policy.

West: Correct. The policy simply says that once it has been determined under the policy and existing federal legislation that certain objects belong to an Indian tribe or a successful claimant, then, indeed, those objects must be treated as the sole property of that tribe.

Cheney: So that's not a statement about all the objects in the museum.

West: Oh, no, not at all. That is simply a statement about what happens once this procedure and process outlined in the repatriation policy have been followed and a claimant has succeeded in convincing the museum that this material falls within the policy and is culturally affiliated with the claimant. Then, of course, it does become the property of that claimant. We so provided in order to give us a little more flexibility in working with successful claimants so that some of these materials might, under some kind of arrangement, possibly remain in the museum. We felt the only way we could successfully do that is to make clear that we weren't quibbling with them about whose property it was at the point a claimant had successfully prosecuted a claim.

Cheney: Some archaeologists anthropologists, I would guess, too seem a little worried that your policy is less restrictive in terms of repatriation than federal policy is. This has led to some fear that this could be the end of museums as we know them. West: I think not. I appreciate the lengthy history here full of controversy between the native American and the museum communities. But I think that, as we move forward with the implementation of this policy in a thoughtful and deliberate manner, that those fears will abate. I am truly confident of that. I do not think it means the end of collections at all.

In fact, I think it means a new relationship between the museum community and the native American community that will redound to the benefit of the entire nation. The repatriation policy is nothing less than a recognition that native American peoples continue to exist in this country and, for that matter, throughout the hemisphere; that they have made significant contributions to what we call civilization; and that there are certain limited categories of material that are vital for the perpetuation of this living culture. That is the premise of the repatriation policy. And the nation benefits, I think, from the fact that native peoples in this hemisphere continue to survive and continue to contribute ideas, philosophy, and art to civilization as we know it in this hemisphere. So I see us all as benefiting. Cheney: As you know from previous conversations we have had, I'm very sympathetic to the idea of repatriating remains. It's when we go beyond remains that I begin to get concerned. But even with remains, and even though I'm very sympathetic to it, in the back of my head is this question echoing: If we're repatriating native American remains, then what about the mummies in the Field Museum? What about the Egyptian funerary objects in the Metropolitan? Is this the first step on a slippery slope? West: I think that a distinction probably can be made between those

materials that are absolutely essential, by judgment of the Congress or the Smithsonian Institution, for the perpetuation of a living culture, and those materials that may fall into the category of national antiquities or treasures. The rationale for the repatriation policy involves those few materials that are essential for the ongoing cultural life of existing people. That allows a certain amount of differentiation between native American culture in this country and claims for "national treasures" or "national antiq-

West: Yes, and I do not think that is correct at all. The repatriation policy of the museum is constructed very much along the lines of existing legislation, Public Laws 101-185 and 101-601. That's the first fact that you have to consider. The other factor that I think is important, and about which I feel I have some standing to make observations since I am a native American, is this: I do not believe native Americans have the slightest intention of gutting national collections in this country. I think that fear is unfounded and that



I do not believe native Americans have the slightest intention of gutting national collections in this country. I think that fear is unfounded . . .

---West

uities" by other countries. But it is something that I think will just have to unfold as we go along, and I do not necessarily see it as being a slippery slope for anybody. There are lots of points where distinctions can be made and probably will be made.

Cheney: I think of an exhibition we sponsored recently on the art of the Yoruba and other examples of African art that are in this country. I can imagine that tribes in Africa might well think that these lovely objects, many of which have religious significance, might be important to the ongoing life of their people. So you know people are concerned about this, that you're making the front door of museums into revolving doors.

people who try to play on that fear are being both slightly cynical and fatuous at the same time. I simply don't think the fear is justified.

Cheney: I understand that everyone has good intentions. But, under the policies established, could it happen?

West: No. I don't think it can. I really do not have those fears and I don't think Congress did when it adopted the policy that is implemented in its legislation.

Cheney: I just read a novel that came out some time ago by Louis Auchincloss called *The Golden Calves*, a book about museums and their deaccession policies, their selling of objects that have been given to them. Is there any provision in your policy or in the law

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that if an object is repatriated, it can't then be sold?

West: No. That provision is not in the law or the policy. I think the Board of Trustees' feeling was that we cannot have it both ways. If the material is determined to belong to the claimant, the claimant must be permitted to control it.

Cheney: So they could sell it.

West: Under the law, in theory, nothing prevents claimants from doing so. Again, I think that such conjecture is really not very useful because we are talking about a category of material which is very precious and very dear to the claimant to whom it is being repatriated. And to assume that the first thing that's going to happen is that it is going to be back on the art market is a proposition that does not make much sense to me.

Cheney: But you can understand people who worry about this. I do, though, subsequently ask these people, "If you were successful and you were able to attach some proviso to this repatriation policy and/or law that would prevent the repatriated objects from being sold, would you then agree not to sell those objects from your own collection?" I think that the point of Auchincloss's novel was that some museums deaccess objects in a way that is less than ethical.

West: And puts things back on the market. I think that's true.

Cheney: You get some very dear old lady to give you a wonderful collection of doilies that happen to be terribly valuable—though this isn't the best example I could have chosen—and you don't really want them, but you want her to give them to you so you can sell them and buy the lapis lazuli that you're really interested in.

West: Right. I think that does happen, probably on both sides.

Cheney: You talk about this new museum as being part history and part sociology. It's the sociology part I don't fully understand.

West: That is simply to say that culture encompasses a wide variety of components. It is art; it is history; it is sociology; it is all of the many things which go to make up culture.

Cheney: Well, you talk about exhibits, about current political controversies.

West: I don't know that I ever used the phrase "political controversies." What I meant is that politics is part of culture. Cheney: Current political controversies. West: Yes.

Cheney: And you cited the Mohawk, the controversies over gambling that have gone on between various Mohawk groups.

West: That is politics as part of culture, as far as I'm concerned. In other words, at the interface between nonnative and native life, a number of factors form culture and determines what and how it evolves. I want to be as complete in our treatment of culture as we possibly can be, and I consider culture to be comprised of many things, including politics in a broad generic sense. That is not to say that I am focusing on "political controversy" per se.

Cheney: One of the thorniest ques-

to the public about subjects of this nature. I also would point out, however, that it is not so much controversy in the sense of the juxtaposition, for example, of non-native and native interests that I am talking about. I'm really focusing on the impacts on native culture itself that may flow from certain kinds of influences. That is a little bit different, I think, from the phrase "political controversy" as you just described it. I am interested in the ongoing and dynamic development of Indian culture, and I'm interested in exploring those factors that influence that development and evolution. And I think that it is critical, since it is a living culture that we're talking about, to focus on those in a very broad way. That's really what is most important to me in terms of presenting contemporary Indian culture to contemporary audiences at the

Cheney: If you were doing an issue of contemporary political controversy,



There are viewpoints on the whole issue of repatriation different from those usually advanced by native Americans.

—Cheney

tions we face at NEH has to do with current political controversies. It's easier to deal with fifty, hundred, thousand-year-old controversies.

West: Distance helps.

Cheney: For controversies that are going on now, we have in our policy that there will be a balanced presentation of viewpoints or that there will be a variety of viewpoints presented so that you don't just get one perspective. These current issues are more difficult, but I take it you're not shying away from them nonetheless.

West: I think that we have some obligation, as you say, to present multiple points of view. I think we all have that obligation when we're speaking

would you have a non-Indian view-point represented?

West: Certainly. But, again, that really is not the focus.

Cheney: But there are viewpoints on the whole issue of repatriation different from those usually advanced by native Americans. Were a museum to put an exhibition up on this issue, it seems to me, you'd want to present the archaeologists' point of view, too, even though the native American view might be different.

West: I think that it is very risky to try to divide things along artificial lines, and I would not want to do that. I do not want, for example, to pit race against race in addressing a question

because I do not believe that is the way it divides up.

Cheney: I didn't suggest that, but I did suggest it divided up between the native American viewpoint that's most frequently advanced and that of archaeologists. In the reading I've done, it's the archaeologists that you have most worried at this point.

West: Even that is not necessarily true. It varies.

Cheney: Depending upon what museum they're in and how many objects are involved?

West: And who the archaeologists are. It is important to bear in mind as one talks about repatriation that repatriation essentially was a cultural issue that became highly politicized. I think that it is important to try to depoliticize repatriation and place it in a far larger context which I think both demystifies and depoliticizes repatriation. Repatriation is a powerful contemporary symbol, if you will, of the relationship between native American peoplesand, for that matter, other indigenous peoples—and the museums who hold their material. I think if you place it in that much broader context, it is helpful, because what it means is that we are not just talking about the return of small parts of collections—national collections or other collections—to indigenous people such as native Americans. We are talking about how the relationship between these people and the museums is struck in a way that can benefit all of us. This whole complex of issues opens the door to striking a different relationship between museums and indigenous communities. In supporting those communities and their contributions to our national cultural diversity, we really are supporting national cultural life, not the limited parochial interests of the particular indigenous community. That is what's really going on here. And that holds the promise of benefits for all of us, as far as I'm concerned, not just the native American community, because the native American community, like other diverse elements of our national cultural life, is part of a cultural whole that I think we would like to know more about.

Cheney: I come from the land of the

Plains Indians, so I certainly appreciate that view.

We go back and forth here. Sometimes you say Indian and sometimes you say native American. What's the proper term?

West: I wrote a letter to the Getty Foundation this morning on that point. I think that this distinction is a question that has always worried nonnatives far more than it has worried native peoples.

Cheney: Does any native American refer to him or herself as a native American?

West: Oh, some do.

Cheney: It seems like such an awkward formulation.

West: From my standpoint, I am comfortable with either, although also in my view, neither is particularly accurate, if you really want to get down to it.

Cheney: I would guess that you'd prefer to be called Cheyenne.

West: Yes, that's right. Indeed, you're exactly right. We see ourselves as members of particular groups. Of course, Cheyenne is sort of a corrupted French word meaning "red face." It is actually, I believe, a French interpretation of a Sioux word that means "red people," because Cheyenne sometimes painted themselves red. Most Indians simply refer to themselves in their own language as "the people." What others have called us, unless it is outright pejorative, is of less concern to us than it is to nonnatives.

Cheney: You grew up in Oklahoma? West: I did.

Cheney: On a reservation?

West: No. I grew up in eastern Oklahoma, where my dad was teaching at a small private junior college which had an enrollment that was primarily Indian, about 90 percent, and whose particular mission was the education of Indians. I am Southern Cheyenne, and we are really from western Oklahoma. But my father was teaching in eastern Oklahoma while I was growing up, and I remained there from about the time I was four years old until I went away to college.

The house I grew up in, when it was first built at Bacone College in the late

1800s, was a house where Indian students would come who had never lived in a house before. This was, if you will, a house which was a transition place for Indians who were coming to school and were learning to live in ways that were different from the ways they lived at home.

Cheney: Have you seen the exhibition at the National Museum of American Art called "The West As America"?

West: Yes, I have.

Cheney: What do you feel about it? It's been very controversial.

West: I take a slightly more dispassionate view of it all, I hope. I saw the exhibit as discussing a very important current issue in art history. As you know, art history is going through a discussion within that community as to how we interpret art. Do we interpret art as icons or do we interpret art in some kind of broader social context?

Cheney: Art as sociology?

West: Yes, that's right. That area of art history sparks some spirited conversation. And I thought that as an effort to get at that more general question, it was a very interesting exhibit. I am not an art historian, and so I don't pretend to pass any kind of ultimate judgment on that question. Personally, as I was walking through the museum, I found some of the commentary with respect to paintings about Indians fascinating in the sense that it did reflect the ways in which views of Indians changed over time. One of the things which is interesting to me, as a person who comes out of a law background, was to note the parallels between the evolution, as I saw it, of Indian law and its attitude toward Indians, and the evolution of Indians as depicted in Western art of the period. There were many more parallels than I would have suspected, and I found it fascinating from that standpoint. But that was about the only perspective from which I would feel myself in a position to judge. **Cheney:** There was one picture that

Cheney: There was one picture that had a white settlement in the background and Indians and tepees in the foreground. The commentary suggested that the painting cast aspersions on the Indians because their tepees were erected in a random pattern and the white buildings were in an orderly pattern; and I thought to myself, any tourist walking in off the street and reading this will be completely mystified. The exhibition itself needed interpretation.

There was another painting of three cowboys riding across the plains and the wall label presented them as Jesus Christ and two thieves on Calvary. I think the average museumgoer might well conclude, "Well, if this is Western art, I'm never going to understand it—therefore, I don't want any part of it."

West: I do not remember the paintings you are referring to.

Cheney: I speak the truth. Well, I suppose what troubled me most was the lack of any sense that there was something heroic about settling the West. There was much that was tragic about it. But there was another dimension.

West: I agree with that; it is multifaceted. I think it would certainly be hard for an Indian to look at that and say that there was not, indeed, a lot of tragedy. There were other elements which, of course, are components of Indian history and American history; what I saw as interesting was its effort to at least open up the discussion on some of those questions. And whether each of us individually would have approached it in exactly that way is something about which reasonable people can differ, and I am sure that there will continue to be discussion about that.

Cheney: My daughter gave me for Mother's Day a book of photographs of a woman named Evelyn Cameron who went to Montana in the late 1890s and was there still in the early part of the twentieth century. It's clear that for some women the movement West was absolutely liberating. She would have had a much easier life had she not gone West, and she had perhaps more choices than most pioneer women. But the idea of being able to ride horseback in a split skirt, the idea of being able to sweat and test herself physically was so uplifting to her—that's a part of the westward movement that you don't get when you declare the whole thing to be a capitalist plot.

West: That may very well be. I don't

think it's pure happenstance that—wasn't it actually a Wyoming congress-woman who was one of the first to argue in favor of women's suffrage?

Cheney: Wyoming was the first state that did grant women's suffrage.

West: It's not pure happenstance, I think, that some of those elements of what we call progressive late nineteenth and early twentieth century political developments or, not just political developments but . . .

Cheney: Social.

West: Social developments were definitely in the West. I don't think that's pure happenstance.

Cheney: We are coming upon 1992 and the Columbian Quincentenary. If the National Museum of the American Indian were up and running right now, what would you be doing for the Columbian Quincentenary?

West: I think there are a number of things that we could be doing. Even if we don't open our facility in New York until sometime in 1993, there will still be elements of the quincentenary to be reflected upon.

As you might understand, in the Indian community the arrival of Columbus is not viewed as being a cause for unmitigated celebration. It is an event in our history which drove much of a history that is not all good from our standpoint, and we certainly can't dodge that. I think that we have to accept history for what it was. Truth is the best policy in all of this.

What I think is also important, though, on the occasion of the quincentenary, is that we also point out a couple of other things. First of all, the civilization and cultural development which existed here at the time of contact needs to be understood sufficiently both in terms of its ideas and its material culture. That's one thing I think that is appropriate for the occasion. Second, we need to focus on the fact that native culture continues to exist and to live, even if under difficult circumstances. That, indeed, is a cause for celebration on the occasion of the quincentenary, to celebrate the cultural survival of the native peoples of this hemisphere and to document the ways in which our culture continues to evolve and to develop. Those are

both elements, the occasion of the quincentenary, which I think deserve commentary from the National Museum of the American Indian.

Cheney: It seems to me that we certainly should concentrate in this time on many of the tragedies that befell native America as a result of the European exploration of this continent. At the same time, we have to stop short of saying the Europeans should have stayed home.

West: You cannot change history. We have to be careful that we do not try to remake history into something that it was not. The fact is that the Europeans did arrive in this hemisphere and there are many cultural developments—I don't mean just devastation, although we cannot ignore that because it did happen; it was a devastating experience in many ways. There are certain orders of cultural life that simply vanished forever.

But there is continuing development which goes on as a result. James Clifford, who is an anthropologist at one of the branches of the University of California, commented in a book that there were other responses which were very inventive in nature, and that's what we need to get to. I feel very comfortable speaking about that from my own personal standpoint because my father is an Indian artist. I saw what came out of his art as the result of the encounter between traditional native American art and the influence and impact of European art. And what comes out of that is cultural evolution, which is fascinating and which is a valuable, valuable as a means of documenting the response of culture, in this case native American culture, to other dynamic impacts. **Cheney:** Many of the scholars who are working on the Columbian Quincentenary project with NEH support are also looking at the way in which the encounter changed Europeans, the kind of artistic flowering that came out of this event that not only was physically challenging but spiritually transforming.

West: I absolutely agree with that, and I'm glad that you mention it because that is something which really has been lost here. The influence did go both ways, and you can see it

going back to Europe, I think, in terms of an artistic flowering of sorts that was related to things seen with respect to native peoples of this hemisphere.

Another subject closer to home which has been suggested in terms of our own exhibitions, which I would love to address sometime, is the impact of native American life on the cultural life of the frontier—the impact that native Americans at the frontier had on cultural life even as it began to touch them in often adverse ways. It is this intercultural dynamism which I think is exciting and is certainly a legitimate subject matter of a national museum of Indian culture.

Cheney: What will your opening exhibitions be?

West: The National Museum of the American Indian actually comprises three different facilities. One is a new facility in New York that we will be moving into, the old U.S. Customs House in lower Manhattan, at the foot of Broadway. We hope to have our own opening exhibitions there in 1993.

We will have two facilities here in Washington—a storage and research facility in suburban Maryland, and the centerpiece facility, the museum on the mall, which will open toward the end of this decade.

Needless to say, we are already in the process of planning the New York exhibitions.

The opening exhibition will have three components. The largest is an object-based show whose working title is "Points of View," with objects initially to be selected by native peoples from this hemisphere—from Canada, from the United States, from Central and South America. They will act in the capacity of cocurators and will be responsible, as I said, for the initial selection of objects. The process then provides for responses and commentary from our own curators, who are mostly non-native at this point, and from other commenters, who will be both native and non-native. I think this approach reflects the sweep of our philosophy and of how we are trying to open up cultural interpretation.

The second exhibition is one we will be bringing from the Heard Museum in Phoenix called "Shared

Visions." It is a fine arts retrospective of Indian painting and sculpture from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to today. That is a wonderful way of looking at painting and sculpture in the Indian community, and seeing the cultural dynamism and interconnectedness and influence between Europe and the native peoples of this hemisphere.

Cheney: If you were one of the cocurators, which three objects would you pick? were really elements of daily life.

Let me also tell you quickly about the third element of our exhibit because it also gives you a sense of our direction. We are going to pull together ten, or about that number, contemporary Indian artists. They will include filmmakers, writers, playwrights, and poets, in addition to painters and sculptors. And we are going to ask them to select an object, or objects, and to respond both individually and collectively to those objects.



This intercultural dynamism is exciting and is certainly a legitimate subject matter of a national museum of Indian culture.

-West

West: I would probably gravitate toward my own materials, which is to say Cheyenne materials, simply because I know them best. And what I would actually pick are things which fall into the category of elements of our daily life. It could be clothing, it could be moccasins. Buffalo robes and their decoration are a particular fascination of mine.

Cheney: They tell stories.

West: They tell stories; they reveal things about our life and our spiritual and philosophical outlook. That's why they would be fascinating.

Cheney: The buffalo robes and the richly beaded moccasins and so on that I see in the Plains Indian museums seem almost too beautiful for daily life. West: I know. We did wear beautiful things on a daily basis.

Cheney: Every single day?

West: Every single day. We did not always have fully beaded moccasins, and there may have been some that we thought were for special occasions, but, when you're looking at buckskin shirts, at buckskin leggings, at moccasins, you're looking at things that

Cheney: That sounds like a lot of writing on the wall.

West: What do you mean, writing on the wall?

Cheney: How will these responses take place? It sounds as if you're going to have the most amazing labels ever seen.

West: No, no. That's why we want all kinds of different artists. It may not be just writing. The response could be film, it could be video, it could be a painting, it could be a new sculpture. We want to be quite graphic in many different ways.

Cheney: I see. So you mean artistic responses.

West: What we are trying to do with respect to the artistic community is to be sure that we also give some sense again of the movement of Indian culture, as not being just a static but a dynamic phenomenon which continues to evolve. Therefore, we want an exhibit that takes past and present cultural experience and tries to project it forward; I think that's a very exciting idea. □

las pour le ayunt de proféguer gafin ballon Tuevos.11. 90 umbri SPANISH PATHWAYS BY MICHAEL GANNON FIRST ENCOUNTERS IN THE CARIBBEAN AND THE SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES palitle labrard also possena con prerro In heave do com: Lothe League à mare En lierra: y bonn tattilla los sho carate la nijua intrien vreno opus sindes de 17 Ton palible rangent sofrarkonsposio - Androso en efe em hape pre forte sel. 27. Cepuso. migue al queste: nu sarian soze ligente mit men ora & halfa los oras Despues som cira mosson / yporta commerca pinon era mas velora le yba Montre de almyrate hallo tioner y higo las senos qualing atin nero o scopa vido de mann: purso de alung: alactros estamos e estambo cuil rapillo de popa vido lubre alung fix orsa



HRISTOPHER Columbus may not have been the first European or African to put a craft in the water and, after a long voyage, find

himself upon the continents that came to be called the Americas. But he may be said to have been the first true overseas discoverer of the Americas, in that he returned to them repeatedly and set in motion an unbroken stream of contacts between the Old World and the New. To Columbus, then, are owed the first encounters of which we have any record, when European and native Americans beheld each other's works and pomps, and, as historian John Fiske said in the last century, there "mingled the two streams of human life which flowed from countless ages apart."

The first encounters brought in their wake a sea change in the story of humanity, for the Spanish voyages inaugurated a new era in world history, setting off a vast array of changes—cartographic, cultural, demographic, economic, political, and religious. European exploitation and settlement of the Americas transformed the human and natural environments of whole continents, and, as historian William McNeill has said, in ways never anticipated or intended by any of the participants.

The constancy of the process of change has dominated world history

Bartolomé de Las Casas's abstracted version of the Diario of Columbus, 1530s. Translation (below, courtesy of National Geographic Society) by Eugene Lyon, director, Spanish Florida Research Center at Flagler College.

Until sunset this day they went 27 leagues.

After sunset, he sailed on his first course, to the west: they went 12 miles each hour and up to 2 a.m. they had gone 90 miles, which are 22 1/2 leagues. And because the caravel Pinta was swifter and went ahead of the Admiral it found land and made the signals which the Admiral had ordered. A sailor named Rodrigo de Triana first saw this land, although at ten at night the Admiral, being in the sterncastle, saw light, even though it was such a dim thing that he did not wish to assert that it might be land.



Michael Gannon, director of the Institute for Early Contact Period Studies at the University of Florida, holds a laminated document from an early Spanish site in the Americas.

during the past half-millennium; and understandably so, since nothing less than tectonic revolution had occurred: As University of Texas historian Alfred W. Crosby trenchantly put it, Columbus and his successors reversed several score million years of continental drift by bringing the continents back together again. What a man, repairing the ruptures of geologic time. Except for the first twenty days of March in 1943 when German U-boats effectively severed seaborne communications between the Old World and the New, the continents have remained joined together to become, in our day, parts of a larger global village.

True, there were evils connected to this story: the violence of the sword and the greater violence of disease. The native peoples were faced with cultures of higher technologies and with major communicable diseases. Abuse killed comparatively few native Americans compared with the destruction wrought by viruses and germssmallpox, measles, tuberculosis, the plague—pathogens unwittingly introduced by the Spaniards and the Portuguese, to which the native people had no immunities. Think of it: half the population of Florida dead in a tenyear span, half the population of Mexico lost in a single year. That biological

Michael Gannon is professor of history at the University of Florida and the director of the Institute for Early Contact Period Studies. catastrophe has a claim on our conscience and on our historical memory.

That is why Laurence Towner, long-time head of the Newberry Library in Chicago, said: "We should greet 1992 not with celebration but with *cerebration.*"

The state of Florida is appropriately situated to play a role in that cerebration. The peninsula juts southward into Columbus's newfound waters, where in 1513 it was discovered by a companion of the admiral's on his second voyage, Juan Ponce de León. Indeed, it is common among historians and archaeologists to speak of sixteenth-century Florida as an integral part of the Circum Caribbean, that geographic region that comprises the greater and lesser Antilles, east Yucatan, east Central America, the north coasts of Colombia and Venezuela, the peninsula of Florida, and the chain of Bahama Islands.

Accordingly, researchers at my institution, the University of Florida, realized that the Columbian Quincentenary presented a special opportunity to investigate the remains, documentary and archaeological, of the first contacts of Europeans and native Americans that took place within the Circum Caribbean theater. Some of our scholars, among them the historian Eugene Lyon and the archaeologist Kathleen Deagan, began working on projects related to the *descubrimiento*

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THE COLUMBIAN MOSAIC IN COLONIAL AMERICA

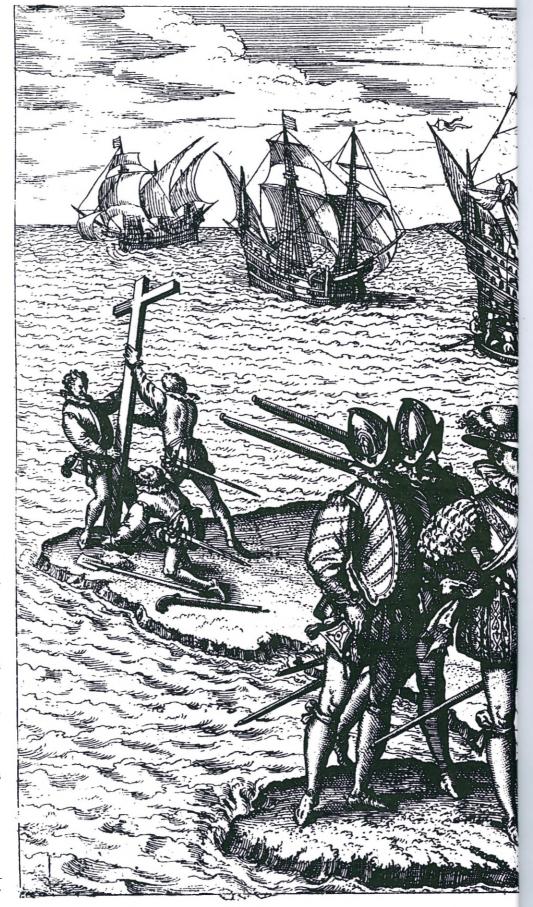
BY JAMES AXTELL



E MIGHT WELL call America a *Columbian* mosaic because it was the Italian admiral who effectively bound together all of the

world's continents with the shipping lanes of one continuous ocean sea. When Columbus bumped into America en route to Asia after a maritime apprenticeship in Europe and Africa, he made it likely—indeed, inevitable that the peoples of the world's insular continents would no longer live in splendid isolation but would soon become a single global village, due largely to European colonialism, technology, and communications. Although he never set foot on the North American continent, he was personally responsible for introducing Europeans to America and Americans—albeit in chains to Europe. It was left to Nicolàs de Ovando, his successor as governor of the Indies, to introduce African slaves in 1502, just as Columbus set sail on his fourth and final voyage. The paternity of triracial America is not in doubt; the only question is, how did the new American mosaic of 1790 come about?

James Axtell is the William R. Kenan, Jr., Professor of Humanities at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia, and the author of After Columbus: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America. A new book, Beyond 1492: Encounters in Colonial North America, is to be published in October 1992 by Oxford University Press.



One short but hardly sweet answer, which is increasingly heard as we approach 1992, is that Columbus and his European successors found a "virgin" paradise of innocence and harmony and proceeded to rape the land, kill the natives, and pillage

Africa to replace the American victims of their "genocide." There is, of course, some truth to that, but not enough to be morally useful or historically truthful. If we can take our itchy fingers off the trigger of moral outrage for a spell, we might be able to view the



human phase of what is being called the Columbian Encounter less as an excuse for passing judgment than as a vehicle for understanding. For in the ideological climate of the 1990s, where our collective skin is paper-thin and intolerance has been raised to an art form, we stand in sore need of some critical distance from the irreparable problems of the past. Instead of picking through the bone heaps of history for skeletons to line the closets of our current nemeses, we might better cultivate a little disinterestedness toward

"Columbus, arriving in the Indies for the first time, is received by the inhabitants with great gifts." Theodor de Bry, Americae pars quarta, 1594.

both the failings and successes of our predecessors in hopes of taking courage and counsels of prudence from their struggles and solutions. Since their circumstances—their field of experiences, opportunities, and limitations—are never the same as ours, we cannot draw universal laws from their example, good or ill. We can only try to emulate their good example and to avoid their worst mistakes by paying close attention to the historical circumstances in which they acted, by recognizing that their time is not our time, and that we must be equally alert to the complexity and uniqueness of our own circumstances as we strive to thread a moral path through the present. Perhaps then we can recognize that the social mosaic of the 1990s is the lineal descendant of the 1790s, and that, although in one sense we cannot change the facts of history, we can, through a critical and disinterested examination of its causes, suggest a few ways to improve the personal and group relations we continue to fashion in the modern American mosaic.

A test of our moral mettle and patience arises as soon as we begin to discuss the influx of Europeans or "white" people into monochromatic Indian America. On the simplest level, what do we call the process and the participants? Since all language is loaded with value judgments, it makes quite a difference whether we refer to the process as colonization, imperialism, settlement, emigration, or invasion. By the same token, were the newcomers imperialists, conquistadors, invaders, trespassers, and killers, or were they, on balance, only Europeans, whites, colonists, strangers, and settlers? If modern Indians ought to have their wishes respected as to the generic names by which historians refer to their native ancestors, surely the descendants of European colonists should be accorded the same courtesy (recognizing, of course, that there may be stylistic or other reasons for not fully granting either group's wishes). It has been one of the cardinal rules of the historical canon—one I see no reason to lay aside—that the parties of the past deserve equal treatment from historians—equal respect and empathy but also equal criticism and justice. As

judge, jury, prosecutor, and counsel for the defense of people who can no longer testify on their own behalf, the historian cannot be any less than impartial in his or her judicial review of the past. For that reason, I suggest, we should avoid language that is inflammatory or prejudicial to any historical person or party, which is not to say that, once we have proven our case, we may not call a spade a spade, an imperialist tool, or a killer of innocent worms. If we have presented the pertinent evidence on all sides of the issue with fairness and accuracy, our audience can make up their own minds about the judiciousness of our verdicts.

OW, THEN, DID the face of America become so blanched when only three hundred years earlier it had been uniformly brown? The short answer is that Europeans emigrated in great numbers to the Americas and, when they got there, reproduced themselves with unprecedented success. But a somewhat fuller explanation must take account of regional and national variations.

The first emigrants, of course, were Spanish, not merely the infamous conquistadors, whose bloody feats greatly belied their small numbers, but Catholic priests and missionaries, paperpushing clerks and officials who manned the far-flung bureaucracy of empire, and ordinary settlers: peasants, artisans, merchants, and not a few hidalgos, largely from the cities and towns of central and southwestern Spain. Since permission to emigrate was royally regulated, "undesirables" such as Moors, Jews, gypsies, and those condemned by the Inquisition reached the New World only in small, furtive numbers. In the sixteenth century perhaps 240,000 Spaniards slipped into American ports. They were joined by 450,000 in the next century. The great majority was young men; only in the late sixteenth century did the proportion of women reach onethird. This meant that many men had to marry, or at least cohabit with, Indian women, which in turn gave rise to a large mestizo or mixed population. The relative unhealthiness of Latin America's subtropical islands and coasts also contributed to a slow and modest increase in Spanish population. When the mature population finally doubled by 1628, it had taken more than fifty years, and only half

the increase was due to biology; the other half was contributed by emigrants from home.

In sharp contrast to the Spanish were the French in Canada, which Voltaire dismissed as "a few acres of snow." In a century and a half, Mother France sent only 15,000 emigrants to the Laurentian colony, the majority of them against their will. Only five hundred paid their own way, many of them merchants eager to cash in on the fur and import trade. The rest were reluctant engagés (indentured servants), soldiers, convicts (primarily salt smugglers), and filles du roi or "King's girls," sent to supply the colony's superabundant, shorthanded, and lonely bachelors with wives. Not until 1710 were the Canadian genders balanced. But even in the seventeenth century, Canadiennes married young and produced often, doubling the population at least every thirty years. Fortunately for their Indian hosts and English neighbors, this high rate of natural increase was wasted on a minuscule base population. When Wolfe climbed to the Plains of Abraham in 1759, New France had fewer than 70,000 Frenchmen, a deficit of colonial population on the order of thirty-two to one.

The biggest source of white faces in North America was Great Britain. In the seventeenth century she sent more than 150,000 of her sons and daughters to the mainland colonies and at least 350,000 more in the next. In 1690, white people numbered around 194,000; a hundred years later they teemed at three million-plus. Emigration obviously accounted for some of this astounding growth. In the eighteenth century, 150,000 Scotch-Irish, 100,000 Germans (many of them "redemptioners" from the Palatinate), 50,000 British convicts, and 2,000 to 3,000 Sephardic Jews made their way to English lands of opportunity. But the proliferation of pale faces was predominantly a function of natural increase by which the colonial population doubled every twenty-five years, at that time the highest rate of increase known to demographers. After an initial period of so-called "gate mortality," when food shortages, new diseases, and climatic "seasoning" might exact a high toll, white couples in most of the English colonies began to produce an average of four children who lived to become parents themselves.

The reasons for their success were

mainly two: In the words of Ben Franklin, "marriages in America are more general, and more generally early, than in <u>Europe</u>." Colonial women married at the age of twentyone or twenty-two, about four or five years sooner than their European sisters, and they remarried quickly if their helpmates died, both in part because men tended to outnumber women. When their children were born (at the normal European rate), fewer died in infancy and childhood (before the ages of one and ten, respectively), and fewer mothers died in childbed. Women continued to have babies every two years, in the absence of Catholic prohibitions (as in Latin America and Canada) and birth control. But American mothers were healthier and lived longer than European mothers, thanks to sparser settlements, larger farms, more fertile land, fuller larders of nutritious food, and less virulent diseases. They therefore produced larger, taller, and healthier families, who in turn did the same.

The results of all this fecundity were impressive to imperial administrators, catastrophic for the Indians. The Powhatans of Virginia couldn't have been too alarmed by the initial wave of English settlers and soldiers because 80 percent of them died of their own ineptitude and disease. But by 1640 the pale-faced population had recovered from the deadly uprising of 1622 to reach some 10,000, largely through persistent supplies from England. By 1680 the contest for the colony had been decisively won by the tobaccoplanting English, who now outnumbered the natives twenty to one.

Massachusetts, the other pole of archetypal Anglo-America, grew even faster. From only 9,000 Puritans in 1640, the commonwealth of the cod grew to 150,000 within a century; Boston alone housed more than 15,000 people. But the fastest growing region, both by emigration and nature, was eighteenth-century Pennsylvania. Between 1690 and 1790, "the best poor man's country" (as its fans liked to describe it) saw its white population increase thirty-eight-fold. On the eve of independence, Philadelphia was the largest and most diverse city in North America, filled with religious denominations, ethnic groups, and social strata of every imaginable stripe. The Iroquois and Delaware chiefs who came to be wooed to neutrality or the



rebel cause in the imminent war cannot have failed to be daunted by its 25,000 crowded inhabitants.

ET NUMBERS ALONE do not allow us to draw a moral bead on the early American story. We must not only know how many Europeans emigrated to—or invaded —Indian America but why. For without an understanding of their motives, we cannot treat them as moral agents with choices to make nor hold them accountable for the foreseen and foreseeable consequences of their actions. The one thing we can be sure of is that they came for a wide and usually mixed variety of reasons. At the beginning of the "Great Migration" to Massachusetts, even a Puritan promoter harbored no illusions about the Indian in Body Paint, by John White, 1585. A Carolina Algonquian arrayed in paint and ornaments for a special occasion. The six-foot bow and rush quiver are typical of eastern Indians.

exclusivity or purity of the migrants' motives. "As it were absurd to conceive they have all one motive," wrote John White in the *The Planter's* Plea, "so were it more ridiculous to imagine they have all one scope It may be private interests may prevail with some. One brother may draw over another, a son the father, and perhaps some man his inward acquaintance . . . Necessity may press some, novelty draw on others, hopes of gain in time to come may prevail with a third sort."

For many but by no means all settlers of New England, religion played a key role in their decision to uproot their families and move to America. But religious motives did not always guarantee health, sovereignty, or well-being of the American natives. Believers who wished simply to practice their own faiths without per-

secution, real or imagined, may be let off the hook, unless, of course, like the Puritans, their own intolerance and desire for a state monopoly led them to proscribe the natives' worship of their own gods. On the other hand, French nuns and missionaries were sent to Canada by visions of transforming the "pagan" wilderness into a New Jerusalem, where nomadic native souls "washed white in the blood of the lamb" would join good French Catholics to form "one people." New England missionaries not only reduced the native land-base by resettling the Indians in smaller, anglicized "praying towns" but inadvertently increased their neophytes' risk of contagious disease. In other words, good intentions alone are not sufficient to exempt historical actors from criticism, and history, unlike the law, has no statute of limitation.

Other motives are equally hard to condemn wholesale. Can we blame ordinary European farmers, craftsmen, and merchants for wanting to forge a better life for their families, even if they wound up on land that once belonged to America's native inhabitants? The vast majority of immigrants hardly, if ever, saw the original owners, much less cheated or forced them from their land. Even male freeholders seldom knew about the backroom chicanery of their elected representatives who speculated with ill-gotten Indian lands. Much less could the voters control the machinations of imperial officials and army officers who wheeled and dealed for the same sort of native property. If we blame ordinary colonists for wanting lower taxes, less crowding, more land, higher wages, healthier climates, more and better food, and family harmony, we will have to include ourselves in the blame —and most of the human race, for that matter. Collective guilt of such magnitude doesn't seem very productive.

On the other hand, immigrants were not only drawn to America but pushed out of Europe. Many shipped out because they were trying to run away from something: death sentences, debtor's sergeants. We may have little sympathy for those who chose to evade their civil responsibilities and the law, but what about the scrupulous avoiders of sin and immorality, who ran from drinking, gambling, and wanton women as if from the plague? Should we cut no slack for henpecked husbands who fled from shrews and harridans, or young women who could not wait an extra four or five years to marry and start a family? How hardened do we have to become to withhold our empathy from young servants who escaped abusive masters or young lovers kept apart by flinty or tightfisted patriarchs?

If we want to take a hardnosed stance on the spoiling, illegitimate, or immoral character of white immigration, we would do better to focus on those who came solely to highjack America's wealth to Europe, often with the help, witting or unwitting, of its native owners and trustees, or those who carried war and destruction to Indian country, directly or indirectly in pursuit of geopolitical objectives of a European sort. Obviously it is easier

to pillory the designers, and to some extent the agents, of military and economic imperialism than it is the runof-the-mill emigrant who carried no conscious intent to defraud, harm, or dispossess anyone. Oppressive Spanish mine owners, freebooting pirates, absentee owners of West Indian sugar plantations, and fork-tongued traders who swindled Indians of their furs and skins with watered rum and false measures undoubtedly deserve our censure, mostly because they contravened the moral standards of their own day, less, perhaps, because those standards resemble our own.

At the same time, we should recognize that to condemn every aggressive military, religious, or economic action in the past is to question some of the fundaments of Western society, past and present. If everything associated with mercantilism, capitalism, evangelical religion, and armed force is beyond the moral pale, we may find it difficult, if not impossible, to approach our past—or the histories of most of the world's cultures—with the requisite empathy, understanding, and disinterestedness.

NOTHER TOPIC that requires an abundance of all three qualities but allows ample room for moral judgment is slavery. Nineteen percent of the population of the new United States was black, the result of a legal, culturally sanctioned, but heinous trade in African slaves. The slave trade was already ancient by the time America was brought into the European orbit in 1492. But the discovery of gold, the development of sugar plantations, and the founding of cities in Spanish and Portuguese America created a vast new market for the human chattels brought from the African interior by rival African kings, merchants, and war chiefs.

Before independence, the Spanish alone transported 1.5 million blacks to their colonies, perhaps 200,000 before 1650. In the Caribbean the blacks replaced Indian laborers who had died in massive numbers from oppression, dislocation, and imported diseases. By the seventeenth century, the native populations of Mexico and coastal Peru were also seriously depleted, so black slaves were substituted as panners of gold (they died too easily in the damp of the mines), cutters of sugar cane, sailors, shipwrights, and particularly

domestic servants in urban households. They did their work so well that by the eighteenth century the majority of blacks were free, especially the women and children of the cities who were manumitted by their owners at death or by purchase.

In Canada the French preferred Indian slaves from the eastern Plains and Great Lakes called panis (after the Pawnees of modern-day Nebraska). In 125 years they imported only 1,132 Africans (fewer than ten a year), mostly as household servants in Quebec and Montreal. Since they were expensive and relatively rare, their lot was not onerous and, contrary to expectations, they adjusted to Canadian winters with little difficulty.

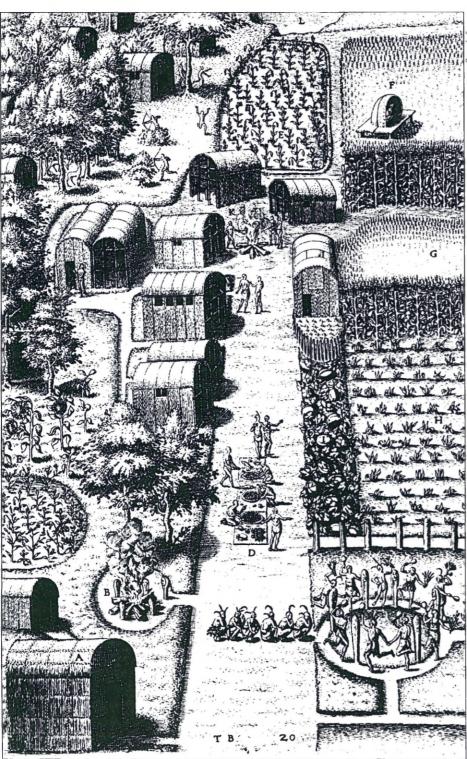
But their brethren in French Louisiana had a much harder row to hoe, to judge from the mortality rates. Between 1719 and 1735, royal and company administrators imported some 7,000 Africans, mostly "Bambaras," or acculturated slave soldiers, from Senegal. Yet in 1735 only 3,400 remained to be counted. The same loss of life must have occurred during the next fifty years: More than 20,000 arrived, but the black population in 1785 was only 16,500. Even immigration could not keep pace with Louisiana's morbid climate and the physical demands of plantation labor. The English demand for black labor grew much more slowly than did the Spanish, largely because the supply of indentured servants from the British Isles was adequate until the late seventeenth century. With the renewal of tobacco prices in Europe and the development of rice culture in South Carolina, however, English planters in the tidewater and the piedmont alike had a need for hands that could not be fully met with white workmen, who in any event often proved troublesome to the colonial elite upon gaining their freedom. So the planter turned primarily to "seasoned" slaves from the West Indies to fill the gap. Thanks to an increase in the African traffic in colonial and British bottoms, the price of a strong male slave remained a bargain when amortized over a lifetime. But after 1720, demand for acculturated West Indian slaves outstripped the supply and 80 percent of the slaves for English plantations came directly from Africa.

Black talent and energy were never equally distributed in time or space.

In 1690, for example, both Maryland and Connecticut had white populations of 21,000, but the New England colony had only 200 blacks to Maryland's nearly 2,200. Overall, the English mainland colonies could count fewer than 17,000 blacks, or 8 percent of the intrusive population. A hundred years later, more than three-quarters of a million blacks had moved into Indian America with their white masters.

After 1680 the proliferation of black faces was especially noticeable in the South from the Chesapeake to South Carolina. In 1680, Virginia was only 7 percent black, by 1720, 30 percent. The proportion of blacks in South Carolina went from 17 to 70 percent in the same forty years, making it the only mainland colony with a black majority. And that was just the beginning: Between 1730 and 1770, Anglo-America imported between 4,000 and 7,000 Africans a year. Strangely enough, even this influx did not amount to much on an international scale: Only 4.5 percent of the 10 million slaves who survived capture and horrendous "middle passage" to the New World were landed in the English mainland colonies. The vast majority went to the Caribbean, where their chances for living long were very slim, and to Latin America, where they were somewhat better. Although the condition of perpetual bondage was never easy, life on English farms and plantations —for economic more than humanitarian reasons—was tolerable enough to allow the black population to increase naturally as well as by constant infusions of new or "outlandish" Africans.

ESPITE THE UNINVITED presence of some four million Europeans and Africans, it could be argued—and was —that America in 1790 had plenty of elbow room for natives and strangers. Even if the natives had been at full, pre-Columbian strength, some said, a slight change in their economy would have freed up enough land for all the newcomers without any noticeable pinch. By giving up the wild, nomadic life of the hunter for the taming, sedentary life of the farmer, the Indians (by which was meant male Indians) would require only a fraction of their former real estate and could be happy to swap the residue to their white neighbors for the more valuable blessings of



Indian Village of Secoton. Engraving by Theodor de Bry after a drawing by John White. Various aspects of Indian life are pictured, including the growing of tobacco and sunflowers.

civilization, such as Christianity, short hair, and long pants. And if for some perverse reason they did not like the sound of foreign neighbors, they could always move west, beyond the Missis-

sippi where the white man would

never think of moving.

But of course the natives were not at full strength in 1790, and their room for maneuvering was greatly circumscribed by nearly three hundred years of cultural crowding and numerical decline. In the South, where they were at their strongest, they had suffered a 72 percent drop in population since

1685, while the white settlers had multiplied twenty-one times and the blacks nearly eighteen. The hardest hit were natives of eastern South Carolina, who went from 10,000 to 300 in a century, a loss of 97 percent. The Natchez and other Indians of the lower Mississippi were not far behind at 90 percent: With a count of 4,000 they were actually experiencing a slight rebound from a nadir of 3,600 in 1760, but they had irretrievably lost 38,000 relatives since the seventeenth century. The Choctaws and Chickasaws, who had been able to play off the Louisiana French

and the Carolina English before 1763, had lost only half their people, but the Cherokees, located closer to the English colonies, suffered a 75 percent decline. The story in New England, Pennsylvania, and Virginia was no different: Everywhere, the original owners of the thirteen colonies had been reduced to a fragile fraction of their former selves and an even smaller minority of the states' new citizens. How had this come about?

ONTEMPORARIES WHO wishfully asserted that eastern America was big enough for everyone made one large, erroneous assumption about the Indian economy: They assumed that the natives were primarily hunters who chased wild game over the whole map. In fact, the Indians in the huge area claimed by the kings of England subsisted primarily on vegetables—corn, beans, and squash—cultivated by the women in the most fertile soils available. Among these three-season fields they lived in semipermanent towns and villages ranging from several hundred to a couple of thousand inhabitants. Although the women provided 50 to 75 percent of the annual diet, native men did have to range far and wide for the rest. Until the men could be persuaded by white reason or necessity to obtain their protein from domestic cattle and pigs rather than fish and game, the natives were forced to guard their extensive hunting and fishing grounds as jealously as they defended their villages and fields.

The advent of European farmers in search of those same cleared and fertile fields put them on a predestined collision course with the Indians. Initially, there was no question of sharing the best soils because in most areas the native population pressed hard against the carrying capacity of the environment and fully occupied most of the prime farmland. The issue that was to be decided over the next three centuries was whether one intrusive group of farmers (and land speculators) would replace another, indigenous group of farmers. How this was in fact done varied from colony to colony.

But in general the English (and their reluctant black helpers) prevailed by out-reproducing the natives and causing their precipitous decline as independent people.

THE INDIANS COULD NOT reproduce themselves because their mortality rates far outstripped their birth rates. The single greatest cause of native deaths was epidemic diseases imported from Europe without malice aforethought. In the so-called "virgin soil" populations of the Americas, European afflictions such as smallpox, typhus, diphtheria, measles, mumps, and whooping cough—many of the childhood diseases—turned into adult killers because the natives had acquired no immunities to them. Ignorant of their causes, the Indians treated them like familiar ailments by immersing patients in a sweatlodge and then into the nearest body of cold water. If this did not kill them, lack of fire, water, and elementary nursing usually did, because in the absence of quarantine, virtually everyone contracted the disease at the same time. In a shipborne plague of 1616, for example, the natives of coastal New England "died on heapes, as they lay in their houses." "The livinge being . . . not able to bury the dead, they were left for Crowes, Kites, and vermin to prey upon." One of the earliest English settlers compared the bone-strewn landscape to "a new found Golgotha." And that was before either Pilgrim or Puritan stepped off the boat.

Throughout the colonies from the beginning of contact, Old World pathogens served as the shock troops of the European invasion, softening up the enemy before the battalions of busy farmers waded ashore. From the English standpoint, these were "preparative Stroakes" of divine providence. As a South Carolina governor put it so succinctly, "the Hand of God was eminently seen in thinning the Indians, to make room for the English." And thin them He—or the diseases—did.

Smallpox was the worst scourge. In 1699 it swept away a whole nation in coastal South Carolina, "all [but] 5 or 6 which ran away and left their dead unburied, lying upon the ground for the vultures to devour." Forty years later the Cherokees were cut in half by a contagion "conveyed into Charlestown by the Guineamen," as

James Adair called African slaves, "and soon after among them, by infected goods" carried on pack train by English traders. The Cherokee medicine men attributed the epidemic to a polluting outbreak of "unlawful copulation" by young marrieds who "violated their ancient laws of marriage . . . in the night dews." Many of those who survived the onslaught killed themselves, not out of shame for their sacrilegious actions, but because they literally could not bear to live with the pockmarked faces they saw in their recently traded hand mirrors.

The second major horseman of the Indian apocalypse was war and the dislocation, starvation, and exposure that accompanied it. Most of the Anglo-Indian wars were named after the Indians involved: the Powhatan Uprising—or Massacre—of 1622, the Pequot War of 1637, King Philip's War of 1675 (named for the Wanpanoage chief Metacomet, who was dubbed King Philip by the English), the Tuscarora War of 1711, the Yamasee War of 1715, the French and Indian War of 1754-63, and Pontiac's Rebellion of 1763. This should not surprise us because the victors have always written the histories and blamed the losers for instigating war in the first place. But in every so-called "Indian" war in colonial America, the warring Indians invariably reacted to European provocations, usurpations, or desecrations, arrogations much more specific and serious than mere trespassing on Indian soil. Because they were quickly outnumbered by the prolific and technologically superior newcomers, each warring tribe or confederacy had to have their collective back to the wall or their stoical patience exhausted before they would risk armed conflict.

Their caution and forbearance were well placed, for once the aggressing colonists felt the sting of attack, they became in their own minds aggrieved victims with holy vengeance for their cause. Their retaliations were usually savage, if not particularly swift: Their lack of defensive preparation was predicated on their disbelief that anyone could doubt their innocence. So the Indians suffered doubly. To take but one example, of some 11,600 natives in southern New England in 1675, King Philip's War claimed almost 7,900 victims, or 68 percent of the belligerent

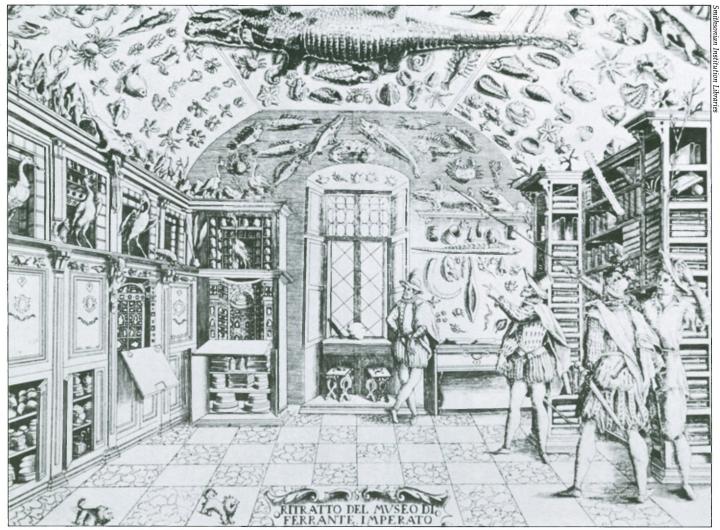
population, in little more than a year: Perhaps 1,250 died in battle, 625 later died of wounds, 3,000 succumbed to exposure and disease, 1,000 were sold as slaves and transported out of the country, and 2,000 became permanent refugees from their native land.

In every English colony, native people found themselves regarded as environmental impediments to colonial "improvement," not unlike awkwardly placed swamps or indiscriminating wolves. If the crowding of the English did not kill them through war or contagion, the colonists developed an arsenal of tactics to wrest the land from them or to dispirit them enough to move "voluntarily." One way was to incite "civil" war between rival tribes and to reward one side for producing Indian slaves, who were then sold to the West Indies, often for more biddable black slaves. Another was to play on the reasonable native regard for European trade goods, particularly cloth, metal tools, guns, and alcohol. By extending credit, the English traders got the Indians into deep debt, which could not be settled without selling real estate or hunting the local furbearing fauna to oblivion.

But for effortless cunning, the third ploy took the cake. English farmers simply released their corn-loving cattle and swine into the natives' unfenced fields. The Indian plea on this score to the Maryland legislature in 1666 speaks eloquently for the plight of most coastal Algonquians in the seventeenth century. "Your hogs and Cattle injure Us, You come too near Us to live & drive Us from place to place," Mattagund complained matter-offactly. "We can fly no farther; let us know where to live & how to be secured for the future from the Hogs & Cattle."

But of course the honorable assemblymen of Maryland had nothing to say. Like their successors in the national Congress of 1790, they sat on their hands as Indian America was slowly but inexorably transmuted into a lopsided mosaic—predominantly white and significantly black, with only a fading margin and a few shrinking islands of native brown. □

James Axtell's study of "The Confluence of Cultures in Colonial North America" has been supported by a \$30,000 grant and a \$750 travel grant from the Division of Fellowships and Seminars.



 $Woodcut\ from\ Ferrante\ Imperato's\ Dell'historia\ naturale, 1599, depicting\ the\ private\ collection\ of\ Imperato,\ a\ Neapolitan\ pharmacist\ and\ naturalist.$



The Age of the Marvelous



BY ROBIN LATHAM

the ocean blue, the earth, as Europeans knew it, was still the center of the universe, and Europe was still Christendom—the site of God's rule on earth. As a new world view gradually superseded these long-held assumptions during the next two centuries, a lively curiosity about the newfound cultural and natural diversity of the earth swept through Europe—a fascination with things or events that were unusual, unexpected, exotic, extraordinary, or rare, whether they came from the

Robin Latham is a freelance writer in the Washington, D.C., area.

earth's remote corners or were found or made locally.

Scholars have noted several reasons for this phenomenon: the Renaissance interest in ancient texts that commented on natural and artificial marvels or wondrous effects, such as Pliny's Natural History, Ovid's Metamorphoses, and Aristotle's Rhetoric and Poetics; the revelations and products of science and technology during the period; and the Catholic church's sensational claims to have incontrovertible proof of the Christian miracles.

Most important, however, was the discovery and exploration of new lands. Following Columbus's contact, trade with the New World and with

distant ports elsewhere accelerated rapidly and resulted in a tremendous influx to Europe of exotic objects, both natural and manmade. Columbus, Magellan, Vespucci, and other explorers brought back unknown plants, animals, cultural artifacts, and strange peoples that held Europeans in thrall. As Europeans collected more exotica from lands around the world, crafted their own artistic novelties, and invented extraordinary technical devices, public taste for the marvelous grew apace and prompted further enthusiasm for the uncommon.

Examining this phenomenon is "The Age of the Marvelous," an NEH-supported exhibition that opens

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(Top right) The Veil of Veronica, by Domenico Fetti, ca. 1615. A legend says that Veronica wiped the sweat from Christ's face as he carried the cross to Calvary. The piece of linen miraculously imprinted with the portrait inspired many paintings.

(Bottom right) Nautilus Shell as a Snail, by Jeremias Ritter, ca. 1630.

September 21 at Dartmouth's Hood Museum of Art and travels to three other art museums in 1992. It will enable visitors to examine the passion for the new and unusual that permeated Europe during the Renaissance and baroque periods, see the marvels of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and feel something of the awe that the objects evoked.

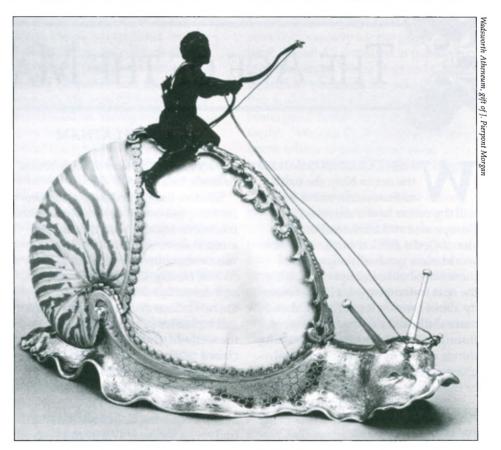
"Exotica and wonders from this period are included in many exhibitions in other places," says Joy Kenseth, professor of art history at Dartmouth College and curator of the exhibition. "But we are trying to show the interest in the marvelous as a widespread cultural phenomenon across many fields, including the sciences, arts, and religion."

What was a marvel exactly? Kenseth's criteria are derived from many sixteenth- and seventeenth-century sources. "It's surprisingly well documented," she says, "in literary discourses, guidebooks, travel diaries, and histories of the lives of contemporary artists." The "marvelous," she says, fell into three categories: the natural, the artificial, and the supernatural.

Natural items that excited wonder included fossils, dinosaur bones (which were thought to be giants' bones), the Seychelles coconut, the nautilus shell, crocodiles, peacocks, passionflowers, mandrake roots, ostrich eggs, and other species of flora and fauna. Dwarfs, freaks, and other human anomalies, sometimes viewed as nature's mistakes, were more often regarded, like geniuses, as products of God's divine wisdom.

Artificial, or manmade, wonders were also varied. They included carvings on nut shells, finely wrought objects in ivory and metal, painting and sculpture, architecture, theatrical machinery such as the revolving stage, fountain displays and topiary art in extensive gardens, pyrotechnic exhibitions, and the telescope and microscope. These latter had a strong impact on the way scientists of the day—Boyle, Galileo, Kepler, and Newton—









understood size and distance. What had once been tiny could now be enormous, the faraway could be brought up close. The concepts of large and small, near and far, real and unreal became relative.

Supernatural marvels demonstrated that God's appearance on earth was the most exalted marvel of all. "The idea of the marvelous can only be understood within a Christian context," says Kenseth. "All marvels were seen as manifestations of God's presence on earth whether natural or made by the hand of man in accordance with God's will."

Accordingly, the Catholic church had a prominent role in promoting and encouraging the cult of the marvelous. "In the period following the Council of Trent," Kenseth says, "the church sought to combat Protestantism by proving the miracles of the post-biblical period, that is, the miracles that had been denied by the Protestants. The church did this through art that depicted the visions and ecstacies of the saints and that represented holy relics." An example is a painting of the

veil of Saint Veronica, which bore the supernaturally imprinted image of Christ. "Representation of these relics were in themselves marvels, since they created the illusion that the holy relic was palpably present to the beholder."

In their quest for universal knowledge, Renaissance humanists turned to collecting oddities, rarities, and exotica as signs of God's ways in the world. This stimulated scientific studies and trade, which in turn expanded the circle of collectors from rulers and wealthy patrons to include educated middle-class professionals and merchants.

For many, having a collection of curiosities became a status symbol. Others collected for different reasons. English philosopher Francis Bacon viewed ownership of a collection as an essential component of a learned gentleman's cultural apparatus. In addition to "a most perfect and general library," he believed that a learned man should own a collection of "whatsoever the hand of man by exquisite art or engine has made rare in stuff, form, or motion; whatsoever singularity, chance, and the shuffle of things

(Left) Allegory of Summer, by Guiseppe Arcimboldo, 1572. Arcimboldo painted a number of these allegories, which use natural objects to create a human figure. (Right) Observatory of Tycho Brahe, an engraving from Geographia maior, volume 1, by Joan Blaeu, 1662. Brahe (1546-1601) was a Danish astronomer.

hath produced; and whatsoever Nature has wrought in things that want life and may be kept"—in brief, a sampling of the world's natural and manmade wonders.

Others collected to entertain and to amaze. Lorenz Hoffman (d. 1630), a doctor of medicine in Halle, Germany, displayed an armband made of elk's hooves, rings fashioned from rhinoceros horn, paintings by Dürer and Cranach, pictures of Martin Luther as a monk and as a corpse, and two dozen miniature spoons hidden in a cherry stone. The Veronese Lodovico Moscardo could boast of mummies, rare musical instruments, giants' teeth, and magical stones in his collection.

Still others sought to advance scho-

larly and scientific study of the physical world. Natural scientists built or sought out collections including strange ethnographic items, objects from the Americas or other foreign lands, monstrous animals, bizarre geological specimens, and plants with unusual properties. By studying examples of "nature erring," it was believed that one could uncover her hidden secrets.

These collections, variously known as wonder rooms, cabinets of curiosities, or Kunst-und-Wunderkammern, were the precursors of modern museums. If they seem to be odd and illogical assemblages by modern standards, that's because of the contemporary aspiration to encompass universal knowledge, Kenseth says. Objects were thought to mirror the four elements-earth, air, fire, and waterand were arranged according to materials. Thus an American Indian headdress made of feathers might appear next to a mounted bird, and a rockcrystal ewer in the shape of a dragon might appear among quartz crystals and other mineral specimens.

The "Age of the Marvelous" exhibition will create a wonder room similar in many ways to those founded in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The room will include naturalia such as mounted exotic birds, a stuffed alligator, unusual or fabulous animal fragments, rare seashells, insects, and geological specimens, and artificialia such as paintings, ethnographic artifacts, armor, and exquisitely fashioned decorative arts.

During the late-Renaissance and baroque periods, an explosion of printed materials—discourses and commentaries on the marvelouskept an avid public up to date on the latest discoveries. Guidebooks and travelogues led readers to wonder rooms and gardens Europewide. Festival books documented the wondrous inventions created for parades and theatrical productions, and a flourishing genre of wonder books dealt exclusively with extraordinary phenomena, human and animal anomalies, and other curiosities. Travel accounts, botanies, and geographical histories documented the strange and marvelous forms of life found in the Americas.

EXHIBITION SCHEDULE

HOOD MUSEUM OF ART Hanover, New Hampshire September 21-November 24, 1991

North Carolina Museum of Art Raleigh, North Carolina January 25-March 22, 1992

> Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Texas May 24-August 23, 1992

HIGH MUSEUM OF ART Atlanta, Georgia October 6, 1992-January 3, 1993



Compound Monocular Microscope, ca. 1620, by Christopher Cocke. This instrument was designed and used by Robert Hooke (1635-1702), the curator of experiments at the Royal Society, London, and keeper of its museum.

Even if man no longer stood in the center of the universe after the publications of Copernicus and Galileo, the collector could yet place himself in a world of his own making. "The Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II of Austria was an extraordinary collector at the

end of the sixteenth century," Kenseth says. "His collection embraced all the human arts, all the branches of human knowledge, and all the different realms of nature." These kinds of allencompassing collections served to glorify their owners and stood as a symbol of their mastery over the world.

But it was a world that was changing by the end of the seventeenth century. The rise of a new kind of science, with its empirical approach to the study of nature, resulted in new discoveries that challenged previous ideas about humanity's place in the world and relationship to God. The Catholic church had converted great numbers to its faith, but a new climate of skepticism was engendered by developments in philosophy, calling the existence of many miraculous healings and visions into doubt.

In addition, the proliferation of curiosity cabinets all over Europe led to the demise of their capacity to inspire wonder. For how could the rare, exotic, and strange continue to excite when it could be found in so many places? Spectacular gardens came to the same fate as their fantastic water displays and statuary became so familiar. What had become commonplace lost its power to excite astonishment.

There was even a kind of aesthetic backlash against the marvelous. Descartes proclaimed that an excess of wonder "can never be other than bad, for it may prevent or pervert the use of reason." The excesses, oddities, and virtuoso expressions of poetry and art were seen as frivolities, with no morally edifying purpose.

But the urge for the marvelous, the very human desire to be surprised and awed, never left completely. "Think of how we revere child prodigies, special effects in movies, extraordinary displays of fireworks, and high tech inventions," says Kenseth. "Our love for the marvelous hasn't been extinguished—it is still very much with us." \square

For this project, Dartmouth College received \$250,000 in outright funds from the Humanities Projects in Museums and Historical Organizations program of the Division of Public Programs.

CALENDAR

September • October



"LBJ," part of the documentary film series *The American Experience*, tracks the development of Lyndon Baines Johnson's political life; it airs on PBS in two parts—September 30 and October 1.



A double-headed wolf ceremonial dish is among the objects in the exhibition "Chiefly Feasts: The Enduring Kwakiutl Potlatch," opening October 18 at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City.



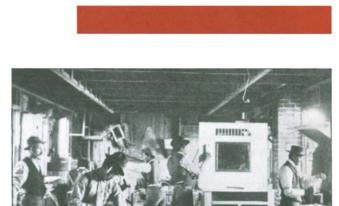
"The Integrative Art of Modern Thailand" will be explored in an exhibition opening October 18 at the Lowie Museum in Berkeley, California.



The impact of rapid industrialization in shaping the workday and the American city is examined in "The Working People of Richmond," an exhibition at the Valentine Museum in Richmond, Virginia, through December 9.



This thirteenth-century Japanese wooden lion is part of a permanent collection in the newly opened Asian wing of the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore.



"Humanistic Dilemmas: Translation in the Humanities and Social Sciences" is the subject of a conference at the State University of New

York, Binghamton, September 26-28.

This 1904 carpentry class is part of an exhibition telling the story of the Santa Fe Indian School from a native American perspective; continuing at the Acoma Pueblo in New Mexico through October.

---Mamie Anderson

American Indian Art at the Brooklyn Museum

OBJECTS OF MYTH AND MEMORY



BY JAMES S. TURNER

URING THE HEYDAY of ethnological collecting from 1875 to 1925, the decline of North American Indian cultures spurred a frenzy of expeditions bent on documenting those cultures before they presumably vanished forever.

Today, many of the native American artifacts collected during this so-called "museum age" are recognized not as surviving remnants of dying cultures but as traditional embodiments of living ones.

Illustrating this revision of an earlier assumption is "Objects of Myth and Memory," an exhibition of 250 native American art objects that will open this fall at New York's Brooklyn Museum. At Brooklyn from October 4 to December 29 this year, the exhibition will travel to California's Oakland Museum next spring and to the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona, next fall for the Columbian Quincentenary.

The objects in the show are drawn from the collection of R. Stewart Culin, who served as curator of the Brooklyn Museum's Department of Ethnology from 1903 to 1929. Perceiving the need for an eleventh-hour salvage operation, Culin made an American Indian collection his top priority.

"In evoking the specter of the vanishing Indian, Culin was a man of his

James S. Turner is assistant editor of Humanities.

time," explains Diana Fane, curator of African, Oceanic, and New World art at the Brooklyn Museum. With the decimation of Indian populations by warfare and disease and the organized government efforts at acculturation, the belief was widespread that the ultimate demise of native American cultures was at hand, she says. Beginning with the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876, practitioners of the young discipline of ethnology turned to collecting as a means of saving the Indian heritage for posterity. Systematic, museum-sponsored collecting expeditions were begun, and museum installations and expositions became the main media for presenting the story of the American Indian to the general public.

Working within this tradition, Culin sought to piece together the story of particular tribes from what remained of their material cultures. With a heightened sense of urgency, as much because of the competition for artifacts among museum collectors as the supposed imminent disappearance of Indian cultures, from 1903 to 1911 Culin traveled to native American communities in the Southwest, California, the Pacific Northwest, and Oklahoma. In that time he collected some 9,000 native American objects from those regions for the Brooklyn Museum.

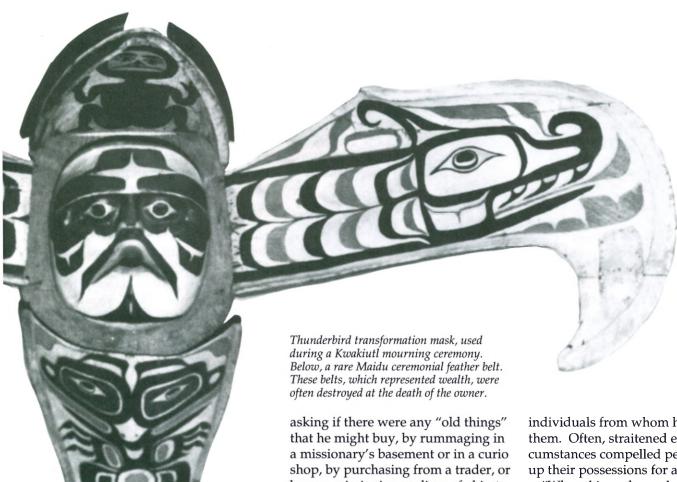
The cultures that he focused on were the Zuni, Navajo, Jemez, Cochiti, and

Hopi from the Southwest; the Pomo, Maidu, Hupa, Yurok, and Yokuts from California; the Kwakiutl, Haida, Nootka, and Salish from the Canadian Northwest Coast; and the Osage from Oklahoma.

Culin believed that he could definitively represent these peoples through the remnants of their material and artistic cultures, Fane says. He viewed the objects as timeless examples of lost arts, and he claimed the ability to ascertain their true value. In this presumption, too, he was a man of his time.

"Culin largely dismissed the Indians themselves as a source of historical knowledge," Fane says. "His professed goal as a curator was to make things tell him their story and then to arrange them so that this story would be told to the world." In 1911, Culin declared his American Indian collection complete—the final word on the cultures represented.

"We're trying to let the viewer be aware of Culin's biases and the extent to which they affected the corpus he collected," says Fane. "This show represents one man collecting during a single decade." The objects present a slice of native American life depicting particular people at a particular time, Fane emphasizes, and cannot represent those cultures in their entirety, Culin's presumption notwithstanding. "Culin did not see that the objects were only one manifestation of



by commissioning replicas of objects from native craftspeople. And he included stories he heard about objects at the moment they came into his possession. The result is a trove of information not only about the acquisition process but also about the significance of native American artifacts for the

individuals from whom he acquired them. Often, straitened economic circumstances compelled people to give up their possessions for a price.

When things change hands, people tell stories about them, talk about their value, their history, who owned them, why they're selling them," says Fane. "In Culin's terms, an object literally 'speaks' at the moment it changes hands." In preserving this lore, Culin's field notes provide glimpses of aspects

complex and ongoing social, religious, and economic systems," says Fane.

Culin nonetheless had a remarkably keen eye for native American artifacts that comes through in his field notes, which have been pulled together for this exhibition from scattered locations in the Brooklyn Museum's archives.

"One of the extraordinary things about this collection is Culin's documentation," says Fane. "For the first time objects in the collection will be linked in the catalogue and wall texts with Culin's original notes."

Culin wrote detailed expedition reports that went beyond merely describing, dating, and recording the function of Indian objects, Fane says. He recorded how he acquired the objects—whether by going from door to door in an Indian community and



of native American culture that have vet to be plumbed.

"The whole premise is that the acquisition circumstances provide a way of understanding what's going on in a culture," Fane says. "The very fact that Culin found so many items in traders' shops says that they were in circulation, that someone was willing to let go of them. If you look at what ended up in traders' shops versus what didn't, you get a very interesting sense of the economy of traditional Indian arts at that time." For example, she says, the Zuni primarily used Apache and Paiute baskets, valuing them more than their own pots, which they could produce at will.

"Instead of talking abstractly about a cultural region, as most exhibitions of native American art do, we're talking about a particular place, not just a village but a particular household," says Fane. "And instead of giving the impression that these objects made themselves anonymously in a tribe as though tradition is some kind of gene, we're talking about individuals—the artisans and owners."

Visitors will see an eclectic and intrinsically beautiful array of ceremonial objects, heirlooms, discards, and replicas. And Culin's documentation will tell the story behind each artifact—what it meant to its owner and its function in the culture.

In the process of collecting, Culin discovered that ceremonial and household items he wanted but could not find (because they had become obsolete) or acquire (because they held too much private value for their owners to part with them) could be replicated by commission from native artisans, and he used their services freely. He did not realize, however, that this capacity for replication, which indicated that the methods and meanings of native American art were alive and well, belied his own view that Indian cultures were nearing extinction.

and skill have not vanished," says Fane. In fact, an exhibition that complements "Objects of Myth and Memory," called "A Dialogue with Tradition: Three Native American Artist Families," will include demonstrations by Zuni, Hupa-Yurok, and Pomo craftspeople of the creation of their ancestral arts. "Native Americans may not have a need for particular objects from their past, but they can look at objects and remember their place in the culture. That makes objects, especially in societies that have not had written records, incredibly important in preserving history and ideology and religious concepts and in passing them on. Much of native American history and culture is in fact embodied in objects. Culin knew that Indians had a history; he just thought it was over."

One example of the value of Culin's field notes pertains to a Hopi carved ornament, which Culin bought at Chinle, Arizona, in 1904 from a trader named Charles Day. Day, who found the ornament at a Navajo shrine in a cave thirty feet deep in Canyon de Chelly, told Culin that he learned the following story of the shrine from a Navajo man named Billy Jones: Long ago, the Navajos in the canyon gave shelter to a starving Hopi woman and her baby. When the baby grew up, he left the Navajos to return to the Hopi village. Later, he returned to the canyon with some other Hopis to perform Hopi ceremonial dances for the Navajos. After his death, the Navajos concealed the Hopis' ceremonial objects in the cave where Day found them.

In recording Day's comments, Culin noted that Billy Jones claimed his grandfather had seen one of these dances many years before and that the Hopi ornament was probably used to call on ancestral beings to bring rain and other blessings.

Another example regards a ceremonial feather belt of the Maidu people of northern California. Calling the belt "the finest and most beautiful thing I have seen," Culin bought it

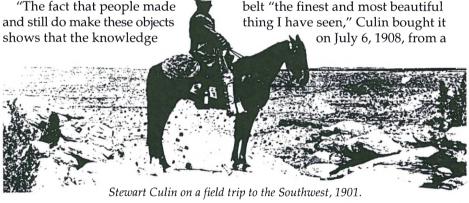
Mrs. Ann Barber, who had received it from her first husband—a Maidu Indian named Pomaho —at the time of their marriage. The belt, Culin learned, was exceedingly rare because such items were usually destroyed at the time of the owner's death. The belts were the supreme Maidu symbol of wealth, and during the latter half of the nineteenth century any male Maidu who had attained the stature of importance would have had one to give to a woman at marriage or to wear in a war dance.

Another exhibition item, from the Northwest Coast, is a Kwakiutl thunderbird mask. Culin bought the mask from collector C. F. Newcombe in Victoria, British Columbia, on July 15, 1908, and learned from Newcombe that the mask could be used only during a mourning ceremony: "First, when the people are all assembled, a chief stands up and calls the name of the dead member of the family. Then a whistle is immediately heard to sound in the woods at the back of the house.... Next some one wearing the thunderbird mask comes into the house and while all the people are watching he opens the beak and shows the man painted on the inside, who is supposed to be the dead person."

The exhibition itself will open with a gallery about Culin himself to establish the two main premises of his collecting: the conviction that native American cultures were nearly extinct, and the belief that their true story resided in their artifacts. Following will be exhibits on the tribes Culin studied and, finally, "A Dialogue with Tradition," which will include some thirty objects by contemporary Indian artists.

"I hope that viewers will feel they're following in Culin's footsteps and will experience something of the excitement of being in the field and making sudden discoveries," says Fane. In addition, the exhibition will speak to issues about defining traditional native American art, she says, and it will introduce a remarkable group of objects—each one with a compelling story to tell, whoever the listener may be. \square

To support this exhibition and its accompanying catalogue, the Brooklyn Museum received \$318,340 in outright funds and \$100,000 in matching funds from the Humanities Projects in Museums and Historical Organizations program of the Division of Public Programs.



THE TEXTBOOK COLUMBUS: EXAMINING THE MYTH

BY CARLA R. PHILLIPS AND WILLIAM D. PHILLIPS, JR.

Two professors of history at the University of Minnesota revisited 245 textbooks, popular histories, and biographies in search of the changing images of Columbus. This is what they found.



ESPITE THE attention devoted to Columbus and his voyages to the Western Hemisphere, he remains a largely mysterious figure,

two-dimensional and remote. His exploits have assumed mythic proportions, but there has been little attempt to probe beyond the myth.

An American history done in 1777 by William Robertson, a Scottish clergyman, was to influence writers in the United States for two generations. Robertson provided the precedent for beginning the history of the United States in Europe, as a continuation of the centuries-old quest for new commercial routes and markets. His section on Columbus relied very heavily on the biography attributed to the explorer's son Ferdinand, as well as on the writings of the Dominican friar Bartolomé de las Casas. Robertson presented a Columbus who was devout, curious, courageous, modest, persistent, and steadfast—in short, the perfect hero. The monarchs of Spain and Portugal, in contrast, received respect but hardly admiration. Columbus was the larger-than-life figure rising above the political squabbles and petty financial concerns of kings and queens.

Carla R. Phillips and William D. Phillips, Jr., are history professors at the University of Minnesota at Minneapolis.

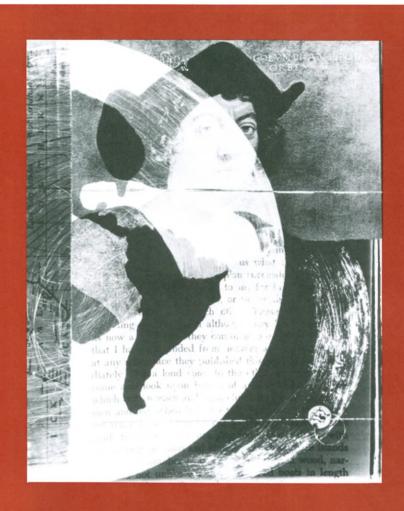


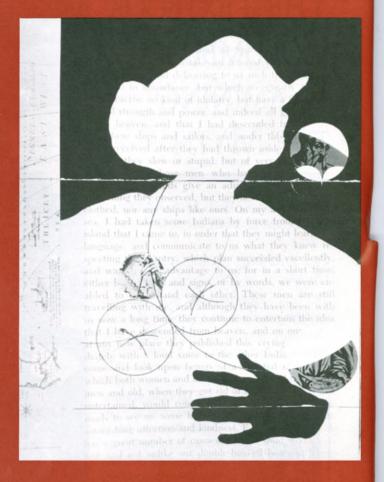
"Columbus Presenting the Productions of the New World to Ferdinand and Isabella." Frontispiece from an 1831 edition of The History of the Discovery and Settlement of America by William Robertson.

The first two decades of the nine-teenth century saw the development of textbooks in U.S. history that consciously aimed to create virtuous and patriotic citizens. A popular history by the Reverend Charles A. Goodrich cast Columbus as illustrating the virtues of "decision, energy and perseverance," at the same time offering the cautionary lesson that virtue could not protect Columbus from dying "the victim of ingratitude and disappointment." To Goodrich, lessons such as these revealed the hand of God in history.

A leap forward in Columbian scholarship in the United States came in 1828 with the publication of Washington Irving's three-volume biography of Columbus. Irving, who had spent

many years in Spain as a U.S. diplomat, had access to an important collection of documents in Madrid compiled by the historian Martín Fernández de Navarrete. Navarrete had gathered together three volumes of material on the early Spanish voyages of exploration; the first volume dealt primarily with Columbus. Irving mined the Navarrete collection thoroughly for his biography—so thoroughly that he was later accused of plagiarism by another American writer, although Irving had openly acknowledged his intellectual debt to Navarrete's work. Navarrete had objected strongly to the portrayal of Columbus as a misunderstood genius who had been given minimal help for the historic voyage of 1492 and was betrayed thereafter by the





Spanish crown. Although Irving used Navarrete's documents to correct the record on certain points, he retained the heroic portrait of Columbus that had become the staple of American historiography.

Irving's biography enjoyed sensational popularity not only in the United States but around the world. Besides being reprinted thirty-nine times in English, fifty-one editions in other languages appeared before Irving's death in 1859.

Virtually every subsequent textbook for the next several decades seems to have used Irving's biography of Columbus as its main source, although Robertson continued to be popular as well. Charles Goodrich expanded the 1833 edition of his popular history to incorporate detail from Irving, whom he gratefully acknowledged. The general vision of Columbus the unblemished hero continued to hold sway. As Emma Willard put it:

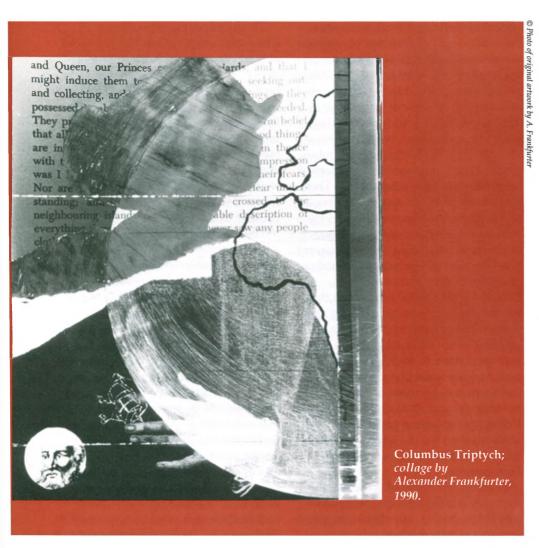
He possessed a teeming imagination, an ardent courage, a glowing zeal, and all those energetic impulses of the soul which

lead to high achievement; and, with these noble qualities, he combined judgment the most grave and solid, prudence and patience the most steady and unoffending, piety the most devout, and, what chiefly ensured his success, the most untiring perseverance ever manifested by man.

Some authors in the mid-nineteenth century chose to give the edifying story of Columbus their own particular slant. Thomas D'Arcy McGee's Catholic History of North America emphasized the faith and piety of Columbus and the Catholic nature of European exploration. McGee and others wrote to counter the anti-Catholic bias that colored many historical publications in nineteenth-century America. Many non-Catholic authors applauded Columbus's heroic virtues, including piety, but not his Catholicism. And a few school texts and popular books shifted from the exclusively European focus of their precursors: They began their American histories with the peoples who had arrived millennia before the Europeans, whom Columbus called Indians.

One author stood nearly alone in the mid-nineteenth century, using the evidence from Navarrete and a sensitive reading of Irving and others to question the standard portrayal of Columbus. Jacob Abbott, a successful author of children's books, noted that "there was a strange incongruity in the motives which seemed to actuate him in all this exploring cruise among the islands—an exalted religious enthusiasm, which seemed sometimes quite sublime, mingling with a very eager appetite for worldly wealth and power. Crosses and holy banners in one hour, and in the next Cipango, spices and gold." Abbott, it is worth noting, wrote children's books, not school textbooks.

In 1892 the fourth centenary of Columbus's voyage stimulated a flood of work, including a great deal of serious scholarship published in Europe. Undoubtedly the most important was the massive collection of documents published by the Italian government and known as the Raccolta Columbiana. The Navarrete collection in Spain was also more widely known by then, and the American scholar Henry Harrisse,



who was working with the Italian government on a range of Columbus scholarship, published a well-documented biography of Columbus in French in 1884.

The most important American contribution to the fourth centenary's scholarly output was the work of Justin Winsor, published in 1892. Winsor's clear-headed and balanced portrayal still rings true after nearly a century. He dealt with Columbus's overweening desire for fame and fortune, his misrepresentations of what he had found across the ocean, and his maladministration in the Indies, as well as with the qualities of mind and character that made him a pivotal historical figure. In the process, Winsor rehabilitated the reputations of the Spanish monarchs and their advisors—persons whom Columbus's admirers usually presented as malevolent obstacles to his greatness. Winsor's views eventually made inroads into the standard heroic myth of Columbus, at least among serious scholars. Yet a large segment of the American public was unwilling to admit the slightest

flaw in its heroes, and the reaction against Winsor and other less scholarly critics was swift and long lasting. Several books vigorously defended Columbus against Winsor specifically. Others simply ignored the critics and wrote modern glosses on Irving. The tone of many rebuttals to Columbus's critics echoed some of the persistent themes in American historiography, including religious and nationalistic antagonisms. Some supporters of Columbus tended to be anti-Spanish and anti-Catholic. They were willing to forgive Columbus for his Catholicism, because they could use his life to illustrate Spanish perfidy. Some detractors of Columbus also tended to be anti-Spanish and anti-Catholic. Despite the scholarship of Winsor, and despite Irving's debt to Navarrete, anti-Spanish prejudice seems to have grown stronger during the nineteenth century as a legacy of the Mexican War and the Spanish-American War. Some Catholic authors glorified Columbus's achievements as particularly Catholic and often ignored or excused his faults and minimized his association with

Spain. There was even a movement to canonize Columbus, which foundered on various obstacles, including his irregular union with Beatriz de Arana. Winsor, in his forceful and honest scholarly analysis, stood nearly alone above the unedifying quarrels of his compatriots.

School textbooks tended to bypass scholarly controversies altogether, aiming to instill the virtues of good citizenship and defining American heroes with that purpose in mind. Textbooks from the late nineteenth century continued to be used in the early twentieth with only minor revisions. And many continued to acknowledge their debt to Washington Irving, whose biography of Columbus was published nearly a century before.

With the late 1920s a new approach, rooted in the political movement known as progressivism, gained ground in the teaching of U.S. history. Rejecting the traditional approach centered on individuals and human character, historians in the progressive movement emphasized the social and economic context of history. Columbus and other explorers became minor actors in the great drama that saw the expansion of markets around the globe. While this approach gained adherents, the traditional emphasis on individuals continued to have strong appeal. One of the masters of the art of historical narrative, David Saville Muzzey, gave new life to traditional history by his lively and intelligent style in a beautifully written text for high schools, published in 1927 and revised in 1936. Muzzey knew the available scholarship on Columbus and summarized it persuasively. His History of Our Country, recognized for its vigorous style and intelligent analysis, became a standard textbook throughout the United States for decades. It was clearly aimed at encouraging good citizenship. For younger grades, however, the unmixed heroic portrayal of Columbus continued to dominate.

Despite the considerable scholarship on Columbus in the nineteenth century and thereafter, the approach of the 450th anniversary of his voyage saw no consensus about him in the United States. Few new documents had been discovered, so scholars and interested amateurs continued to gnaw on the old ones.

The most important American contribution to scholarship on Columbus

in this period was provided by Alice Bache Gould, who identified virtually all of the crew members on his first voyage and provided brief biographies of many of them. Gould spent decades searching the archives of Spain for documents related to Columbus. The articles she published from 1924 to 1944 were recently reedited, indexed, and published by the Royal Academy of History in Madrid. She died in 1953 at the doorway of the Archive of Simancas near Valladolid, where a plaque commemorates her devoted scholarship. She is one of the very few Americans cited by Columbus scholars today. Other work by foreign scholars clarified Columbus's relations with the Spanish crown and with Spanish mariners and settlers in the Americas. The new scholarship tended to undercut Washington Irving's heroic version of the admiral's life and to support Justin Winsor's critical biography, which enjoyed an enhanced reputation in the United States as a result.

In 1942 the 450th anniversary of Columbus's voyage saw the publication of a major American contribution to Columbian scholarship, Samuel Eliot Morison's Admiral of the Ocean Sea. An erudite sailor and a skilled storyteller, Morison shifted the emphasis to Columbus's talents as a mariner and geographical visionary. Morison's biography became very popular. His picture of Columbus the scientist and technician fit well with the twentiethcentury development of American technology, and many authors of textbooks subsequently used Morison to shape their portrayal of Columbus.

From World War II on, some textbooks on U.S. history developed a more internationalist approach. To make room for the ongoing march of time, earlier topics such as Columbus and his voyages were given shorter shrift. In some portrayals Columbus ceased to be the forceful expert mariner and became instead an impractical dreamer whose fame was based on a colossal mistake in geography and a stroke of luck. These portrayals often emphasized as well that Columbus died lonely, destitute, and brokenhearted, having outlived his brief fame. Moreover, many of the high school and college texts assumed that Columbus and the early days of U.S. history had been "done" in the lower grades and did not require much discussion later on. To the extent that high school and college texts abandoned the topic at a

more sophisticated level, there was no avenue for the findings of serious scholars to make their way into America's textbooks. Children in the 1950s seem to have been taught the simplified laudatory view of Columbus in the lower grades and very little thereafter. As adults they would retain a one-dimensional portrait of Columbus, even as they advanced their historical understanding on other topics. There were exceptions, of course—textbooks at the high school and college levels that continued the tradition of Muzzey and others in keeping up with current scholarship and portraying Columbus in all his human complexity.

In the 1960s, social ferment in the United States produced a strong challenge to traditional textbooks and popular histories at all levels. The injustices done to native Americans and African Americans became central themes of textbooks. In some sensational and ahistorical accounts, Columbus became a genocidal maniac who planned the decimation of the native inhabitants of the Western Hemisphere.

In many textbooks of American history published or revised since the late 1960s, native Americans are given greatly increased space, whereas Columbus and other European explorers receive only brief mention. Typically authors who pursue this approach spend less time on Columbus than on Friar Bartolomé de las Casas, who sounded the alarm against mistreatment of Caribbean natives in the early decades of exploration. Some authors shove Columbus to the sidelines entirely because he did not actually reach the shores of North America, as if that were all that mattered.

The general tone of many recent textbooks and popular articles seems designed to debunk traditional approaches to American history. The most balanced texts manage to combine the best features from many of these new directions, recognizing the crucial importance of the voyages of exploration for subsequent world history, and showing due understanding and respect for the historical context and cultures of all the peoples involved. Some children's books and schoolbooks for the lower grades seriously attempt to give a full and accurate account of Columbus and his life. Nonetheless, they can hardly be expected to deal with complex issues fully when their audiences are so young.

The imminent quincentenary of Columbus's first voyage has produced at least one notable work of scholarship in the United States to date—the best edition of the diary of that voyage, with Spanish transcription and English translation presented on facing pages. There are also several new biographies published in the United States in the 1970s and early 1980s, but written by non-Americans and therefore not within the framework of our present study.

There appears to be little hope that a consensus on Columbus and his accomplishments will develop by 1992. Most Columbus scholars would probably agree with the portrait sketched by Winsor in 1892 and embellished since then by Morison and by new evidence discovered more recently, nearly all of it by Europeans. Unfortunately, the most visible U.S. scholarship in the past decade has centered around the singularly pointless and unproductive controversy about Columbus's first landfall in the Caribbean. Columbus as a historical actor and the significance of the Columbian voyages have been largely lost in the shuffle. With luck, the landfall controversy will be forgotten as more important topics emerge from scholarly works now nearing publication.

At the popular level, neither readers nor writers of books and articles about Columbus seem aware of the monumental scholarship that already exists. It is very common for educated and intelligent Americans to believe that very little is known about Columbus, simply because they have been taught very little. Therefore, every new and resuscitated notion-however illfounded—can find an audience. The historian Charles Nowell's observation that Columbus is "alternately praised and belittled, groomed for canonization and charged with piracy, lauded as a scientist and branded as an ignoramus" is no less true today than it was in 1939 when he wrote it. Without a mature foundation of knowledge about the man and his times, it is possible to believe nearly anything. □

In 1988, William Phillips received a \$27,000 grant from the Division of Fellowships and Seminars to do research for the Phillipses' forthcoming book, The Worlds of Christopher Columbus, to be published in January 1992 by Cambridge University Press.

Spanish Pathways continued from page 11

and the first encounters as early as 1980. During the succeeding four years others joined their talents to the effort, with the result that by 1984, when the National Endowment for the Humanities announced its intention to support projects directed toward 1992, our Florida group was sufficiently active and organized to form an Institute for Early Contact Period Studies. With Endowment support the institute began formal operations in May of 1985.

Augmented by the grants from foreign governments, the Organization for American States, the state of Florida, American and Spanish corporations, and private individuals, the institute has undertaken a number of projects:

■ Libro de Armadas

The search for Columbus period documents in the Archivo General de Indias and the Biblioteca Colombina, both in Seville, led to Eugene Lyon's discovery of the 440-page Libro de Armadas. That document contains the first-ever description found of any one of Columbus's ships, the admiral's favorite, the Niña, whose rigging, lading, crewing, and arming for the 1498 voyage are given in close detail, enabling nautical architects to render accurately for the first time a caravel, the class of vessel that was to become the workhorse of the Atlantic fleets in the century that followed.

In addition to inventories of material culture items that were sent to the Indies, including medicines, tools, foodstuffs, and livestock, the document contains new data about important personages such as Amerigo Vespucci and Juan de Fonseca; about native Americans brought back to Spain; about the various means taken to finance the ships, supplies, arms, and men sent west on the various expeditions of the 1490s; and about the earliest plans acted on by Spain to settle mining and agricultural colonies in what was not yet known to be a new world.

■ La Navidad

Investigation of La Navidad, Columbus's first settlement, founded on the north coast of modern-day Haiti at Christmas time 1492, continues. Our teams have scoured the documents and searched the site, which on good evidence we believe to be a manioc

plantation at En Bas Salina. There Columbus built a fort from the timbers of the shipwrecked Santa Maria and left a small garrison until his promised return in 1493, when to his distress, he found the rude structure destroyed and all his men killed. Many items from the site, of the twelve tons of material removed to Gainesville for analysis, suggest that the site has

been correctly identified: Chief among these are European faunal remains—pig and rat—that were unknown this side of the Atlantic before Columbus.

La Isabela

The institute is excavating, again with Endowment support, the second Columbus settlement in the new world, named La Isabela, established in December 1493 on the eastern bank of the Rio Bahabonico on the north coast of the present-day Dominican Republic. The excavations are being conducted under a joint arrangement with the Dominican government. The site is undeniably important since the town provides the first example we have of Euro-American domestic life —where Spaniards first made themselves "at home in America"—as well as of sustained social contact between Europeans and native Americans—the initial experience, if you will, of a process that changed the political, social, economic, and religious world of the sixteenth century and thereafter. Here we find Columbus's own house; the first masonry houses of any kind; the first intentional introduction of European plants and animals; the first urban plan combined with the first urban streets, plazas, ramparts, canals, and gardens.

■ PUERTO REAL, OTHERS

Among the institute's other site studies that have relevance to the age of discovery is Puerto Real, the fourth oldest European town in the Americas. A sometime thriving cattle ranching



Archaeologist Kathleen Deagan at La Isabela.

community that lasted from 1501 to 1580, it was located two kilometers from La Navidad: Analysis of documents and of archaeologically recovered material indicates that Puerto Real's Spaniards experienced gradual acculturation with the indigenous Taino population.

Another Endowment-funded excavation is the 1539-1540 winter encampment site of Hernando de Soto at Tallahassee. Discovered by accident in the spring of 1987, the so-called Martin site was the first positively identified site to be connected with Soto at any point during his 4,000-mile march through the American South. Not only did it yield a highly suggestive bounty of chain mail, crossbow quarrels, maravedi coins, and pig remains—the firstever sign of porcine presence in what is now the United States—it also spurred a flurry of Soto-related research and publications, the latest of which are soon to appear in the university presses of Florida and Alabama.

Still another archaeological project underway is the search for San Miguel de Gualdape, the first European settlement in what is now the United States, founded by Lucas Vásquez de Ayllón and six hundred other persons, including women, children, and African slaves, from Santo Domingo. The date was 1526, thirty-nine years before the founding of St. Augustine. The site, we are encouraged to think, was Sapelo Sound, Georgia. If found, the San Miguel site should reveal much about the first appearance of demographic and cultural change in the American Southeast, and allow us a

first look at how the Spaniards tried to adapt to the resources they found along the coastal strand, a fragile environment that yielded abundant animal and fish proteins but few carbohydrates familiar to them. The town was abandoned within a few months of its founding.

The successes in the archaeological projects to date have depended in great measure on a working marriage with history. Archival documentary evidence has been essential to the start-up of every one of the institute's attempts to find buried material evidence. Conversely, archaeology has provided the historian with data that, for one cultural reason or another, appear never to have been reduced to writing. The excavations at Puerto Real, for example, brought forth data about the life and role of women in that colonial settlement that were lacking in the written record. Although an older generation of scholars in Spanish colonial studies took care to combine investigations of material culture with exegesis of documents, by 1950 it was common for historians to adhere strictly to the archival documents and for historical archaeologists—a new subset that have cut out a place distinct from their older sister discipline, prehistoric archaeologists—to tend narrowly to the analysis of recovered artifacts. By the 1970s, however, it became clear that each discipline needed the other for full elaboration of its findings. Thus, there has been a conscious strategy of multidisciplinary collaboration. Such an association is likely to take investigators into fields not normally visited by colonial researchers frontier adaptation, residential patterning, household functions, diet, kinship and marriage models, and interethnic relationships—in order to flesh out the usual accounts of political, military, religious, and diplomatic activity.

■ Cuban, Spanish Archives

Two institute projects, both of which received initial support from the Endowment, are archival in nature. The first, completed in March of 1989, was the first-ever microfilming of the Spanish La Florida materials in Cuba. The documents, all parish registers, were discovered in Matanzas province on a research trip in 1982. It took the intervening seven years to obtain permissions and make the necessary arrangements for the filming.

The second project, in Spain, is more

ambitious: microfilming the archive of the counts of Revillagigedo (archivo de los condes de Revillagigedo) in Madrid. The largest and most important private archive brought to this country from Spain, it contains information about the founding of Florida by Pedro Menéndez de Avilés and his successors, the extension of Spanish hegemony across the southern tier of states as far as California, and the administrations of two important viceroys of Mexico. The collectionsome 825,000 pages, 167 color images, and a reel of large charts—took six months to film. It is available for use at Gainesville and St. Augustine. The project opened our eyes to the extraordinary and little-used resources of the papers of noble families for early contact studies in the central and northern Americas. With a special Endowment grant we pursued other similar holdings, eventually winning the agreement of nine noble families —dukes, counts, and marqueses– to copy their private archives.

The seed money from the Endowment enabled us to obtain full funding for the copying project from a Spanish insurance company foundation headquartered in Madrid. With a level of assistance amounting to millions of dollars, we abandoned microfilming in favor of optical laser disk technology, and we now have in place at Madrid a scanner-monitor-diskprinter array. The principal challenge we face is the efficient capture of documents in those cases where degradation of paper, faded ink, bleed-through, water stains, or insect damage require that certain documents receive special treatment. Scanning has now begun of the archives of the dukes of Infantado. Ignacio de Medina y Fernandez de Cordoba, the duke of Segorbe, has made available a 200,000 square-foot wing of the sixteenthcentury Hospital Tavera in Toledo, Spain, for the papers depository.

This project should continue long after the Columbian Quincentenary year and into the quincentenary decade, that is, through 2002, the anniversary of Columbus's last voyage, thereby allowing many serious scholarly projects time to mature and, one would hope, inaugurating a new and continuing emphasis on Ibero-American studies. As has been remarked, 1992 ought not to be a year for dropping an anchor but for hoisting a sail.

Publications

The institute has embarked on a Columbus Quincentenary Series in association with the University of Florida Press. The first volume to appear, titled First Encounters, is the companion volume to a large exhibition mounted by the Florida Museum of Natural History on the Gainesville campus. The exhibition, called "First Encounters: Spanish Explorations in the Americas," includes a two-thirds scale replica of the Niña and is currently in transit to ten American cities.

The second title is Columbus's own Libro de las profecías, edited and translated by Delno C. West and August Kling. Five other volumes in the series are in final preparation, including Eugene Lyon's translations of the Libro de Armadas.



One should not leave a topic such as this without addressing the question so much on the mind of many who study the Columbus event, namely, where did the Navigator make his first landfall? Was it Watling's Island, now San Salvador, as Samuel Eliot Morison and many others maintained? Was it Samana, as the National Geographic contends? Or was it Grand Turk, Egg, or any one of a number of Bahamian islands which over time have laid claim to be the first landfall site on that night that divided human history nearly five hundred years ago?

The geographers and yachtsmen tell me that we can never know with certainty the admiral's transatlantic track because the original *Diario* is missing and the copy we have from Las Casas is an abridgment with many lacunae, errors, and corrections.

The archaeologists tell me that we can never know from artifacts since anything left on the first island, such as beads, would have been traded off that island immediately to another as exotic goods.

And the historians tell me that it really doesn't make a difference where he made his landfall, since the important thing is not where Columbus first sighted land, but what happened as a result of the sighting. And so say I. □

The Institute for Early Contact Period Studies has received \$267,603 in outright funds from the Interpretive Research program and \$9,587 from the Reference Materials program of the Division of Research Programs.

NEH-Supported Projects on the Quincentenary

S INCE 1984, when the Columbian Quincentenary initiative began, the Endowment has made some 325 grants totaling nearly \$22 million. Awards range from \$750 for a scholar to travel to an archive to study the letters of Hernan Cortés, to \$500,000 for a traveling exhibition on cultural influences, to nearly \$1 million for a multivolume history of cartography to serve as a basic reference source in decades to come.

Here is a sampling:

■ During the next two years, four poster-panel versions of "Seeds of Change," an exhibition on the



exchanges between Old World and New World cultures after the voyages of Columbus, will travel to sixty libraries and other sites nationwide. The main exhibition opens this October at the Smith-

sonian Institution's Museum of Natural History. The traveling components were produced by the American Library Association in Chicago.

- A series of twelve public lectures "1492-1992: Crosscurrents of Culture," on Columbus's encounter with the New World, begins October 1 at New York University.
- Through this fall, two exhibitions—"The Literature of the Encounter," on books published in Europe during the Renaissance, and "Encounter the New World," on the graphic record of the period—are on display at the John Carter Brown Library in Providence, Rhode Island.
- "1492: Two Worlds of Science," an exhibition on the Old World knowledge underlying Columbus's exploration, the technology that made the voyages possible, and the sciences and technologies of

native American cultures at the time, opens October 12 at the Lawrence Hall of Science at the University of California, Berkeley. Two copies and the original installation will travel to science museums around the country through 1994.



- "Indian America," a ten-part film series about native American history and cultures from 1492 to the present, is currently being scripted by Film Odyssey, Inc., in Washington, D.C.
- "Columbus and the Age of Discovery," a seven-part documentary film series about Columbus's voyages, the cultural environment in which they took place, and the legacies of the European contacts with America, is being produced by the WGBH Educational Foundation in Boston. It is scheduled to air on PBS October 6-9, 1991, with an encore on Columbus Day, October 12. It will air again in October 1992.



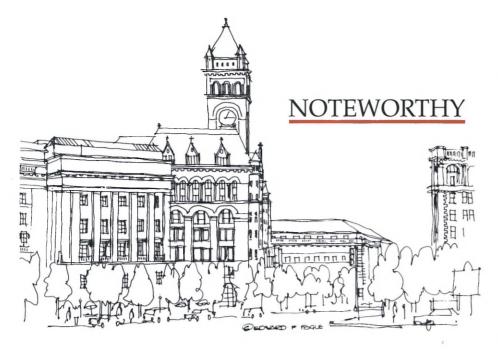
■ From January to April next year, the Newberry Library in Chicago will present "America in 1492," an exhibition of books and manuscripts about American Indian cultures on the eve of the Columbian voyages.

Next summer, the Newberry will hold an institute on the historical and cultural contexts of native American literature for twenty high school English teachers and Indian community college instructors.

"Maps and the Columbian Encounter," an exhibition and catalogue produced at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, looks at the encounter as expressed in historical geography and cartographic history. In 1992, the exhibition will be at the Newberry Library in Chicago from May 15 to June 15; the Bell Library of the University of Minnesota at Minneapolis in July; the Clements Library of the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor from August 15 to September 15; and the Milwaukee Public Museum from September 25 through October.



- Editorial preparation of the Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas is now under way at the Cambridge University Press in New York.
- Several volumes in the *Repertorium Columbianum*, a twelvevolume corpus of Italian, Latin, Spanish, Portuguese, and Nahuatl source texts related to Columbus's voyages and other transatlantic explorations, are being translated through support to the University of California, Los Angeles.



History Afloat on the Ohio

This summer, a river barge housing exhibits on the history and culture of the Ohio valley is visiting cities and towns all along the Ohio River. The barge—the centerpiece component of



the NEH-supported project "Always a River: The Ohio River and the American Experience"—has been the focus of concerts, tours, and other cultural festivities. It embarked from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in May and makes its final port of call 981 miles downstream at Cairo, Illinois, in September.

—Douglas Varley

McPherson on Brittle Books

James McPherson, author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning Battle Cry of Freedom, testified on the importance of book preservation during House hearings on the NEH appropriation bill. Recalling his days as a graduate student working in the Library of Congress, he remarked: "My years in graduate school came at the dawn of the microfilm age. Very few of the sources I used had been microfilmed. I read them in the original, just as they had come from the printer nearly a century earlier. This hands-on contact with materials that had been handled

by people I was studying was thrilling, but it was also potentially disastrous. Many of these pamphlets, books, and newspapers had been printed on paper made by the then new wood pulp process. As I turned these precious but highly acidic pages, some of them tore and crumbled in my hands no matter how carefully and delicately I handled them. I was horrified by the experience of damaging, perhaps destroying, the very sources that nurtured my knowledge."

-D. V.

Soviet and U.S. Teachers Confer

This past summer, fifteen U.S. teachers spent four weeks with colleagues from the USSR discussing how best to teach the history of the Cold War in the age of glasnost. The institute was held at Harvard University's Soviet and East European Language and Area Center (SEELAC).

"The Soviets know there have been serious problems with the way they've taught their history and are very interested in how it is treated in the U.S.," says Janet Vaillant, associate director of SEELAC. The Cold War period was chosen so the teachers could explore how their respective cultural traditions influenced relations between the two countries.

While the main challenge for Soviet teachers is teaching history in a changing society, American teachers have a different concern: Soviet history is most often taught in the U.S. as part of a class on current events, Vaillant says, so students "learn history backwards" as they seek explanations for what they see happening today. The

institute, she says, should help American teachers gain the appropriate background in Soviet history.

The U.S. participants are now embarking on individual projects that grew out of the institute. They also left Cambridge with a supply of BBC Russian language tapes that will help them prepare for phase two of the project: next year's summer institute in Moscow.

−D. V.

A Renaissance Chautauqua

"The American Renaissance is coming to a tent near you" was the slogan for this year's Great Plains Chautauqua. Humanities scholars portrayed seven literary figures of the nineteenth century. Among them, Frederick



Douglass preached on civil rights, Nathaniel Hawthorne told ghost stories, and Margaret Fuller presented feminist writings.

Each character engaged the spectators in discussion and then stepped out of character in order to answer questions raised by the characterizations. The tent show traveled from Oklahoma to North Dakota, stopping in several cities.

—Mamie Anderson



Shelly Duvall in "Bernice Bobs Her Hair."

Film Retrospective at Archives

A retrospective of 600 NEH-supported films is being presented at the National Archives through the end of November. The twelve-week series will include films ranging from The Adams Chronicles to the poetry of Sylvia Plath on *Voices and Visions*.

—Marimé Subramanian

Arthur A. Demarest

On the Trail of a Lost Civilization

HILE HE'S BEEN called the "real Indiana Jones," Arthur Demarest, an anthropologist who for the last five years has been studying ancient Maya culture deep in the Guatemalan rain forest, regrets the association.

"I've spent all of my career digging domestic garbage and preaching that archaeology should not be focused on temples and treasures and monuments," he says.

Ironic words, perhaps, coming from someone who last spring led an expedition into the 1,200-year-old burial chamber of an unnamed Maya warlord dubbed Ruler 2, at the base of a rubble-filled shaft in an eroded pyramid-temple. But not so ironic when you realize that the tomb's discovery is only the latest development in a project that has involved plenty of routine digging en route to figuring out why Maya civilization vanished in the ninth and tenth centuries A.D. Maya culture, which encompassed Guatemala, Belize, and southern Mexico and the Yucatan, flourished for nearly 600 years.

Demarest doesn't consider himself a Mayanist, even though he's general director of the Petexbatun Regional Archaeological Project in Guatemala, which is excavating six Maya cities with support from NEH and from private foundations. From 1981 to 1983, he held a Society of Fellows appointment at Harvard to do ethnographical work on the Aztecs and the Incas. He has studied the Olmecs as well.

By 1986, however, an appointment to a major chair was in the offing—he is now Centennial Professor of Anthropology at Vanderbilt University—and he was looking for a big project that would enable him to bring together some of the ablest scholars of Mesoamerican civilizations on a long-term venture.

"When I saw those concentric trench and moat systems at Dos Pilas [one of the Maya sites being excavated], I knew this was it," Demarest says. In addition to many kilometers of wall systems, his team has since found numerous spearheads at some points along the base of the walls, caches of decapitated skulls, and post holes indicating the presence of palisades, parapets, and towers.

Demarest and his colleagues are trying to reconstruct the chain of events that led to the collapse of Maya civilization. The area of northern Guatemala he's working in is called the Petexbatun, where he thinks the decline of Maya culture began.

One hypothesis being tested is that the raiding style of warfare common among local Maya rulers in the Petexbatun intensified to all-out civil war in the eighth century. Siege and fortification tactics were introduced, which may have forced changes in farming techniques that led to soil depletion and, ultimately, crop failure. Malnutrition, and possibly starvation, may have compounded the effects of warfare that engulfed the Petexbatun. Then, over the course of the next century a ripple effect of warfare from the Petexbatun may have influenced the collapse of civilization in other Maya regions of Central America.

It all began, Demarest suggests, when successive rulers of the Maya city of Dos Pilas grew more aggressive and conquered the other cities in the Petexbatun region. Under Ruler 4, the kingdom grew so large that it became unwieldy. By 760 it had broken up into smaller warring chiefdoms that hastily set up defensive walls, which in turn may have altered their delicate adaptation to the jungle ecology. If in the future it can be shown that warfare-induced disaster spread to other Maya regions, the mysterious disappearance of Maya civilization may be solved.

"We knew that the rulers of Maya cities had long engaged in a limited warfare that enabled them to demonstrate their power against each other," Demarest says. "This warfare was routine and did not disrupt the way people lived. But the wall systems we found suggest a major readjustment



of Maya life from a successful system to one whose goal was simply to survive from year to year in the face of a constant threat of attack."

The Maya succeeded in the rain forest, Demarest explains, because they mimicked its biodiversity. They used different field systems, terraces, sunken gardens, raised fields, and some slash and burn, scattering them widely and doing none very extensively. "Now if you pull these together around a fortified center and try to do concentrated agriculture high up on the escarpments where these fortified centers are or on the adjacent slopes, you're going to deplete and erode the soils within decades," he says. "That could lead to ecological catastrophe. Whatever the cause, by 820 at the latest most of the region was abandoned. We are currently testing several hypotheses, one of them being that warfare was a major factor in the collapse of Petexbatun civilization."

For the next several years, Demarest intends to apply what he's learning to the problems of modern Guatemala. "The project is very stressful in terms of the guerilla war against the army that often cuts our supply lines, the burning of the rain forest around us, the starving Indians and the failure of their agricultural system, the diseased children brought into our camp every day for the clinic. We're really on the front lines in the third world. In looking at the Maya collapse and the impact of warfare on ecology, it's hard not to see a parallel when there's a war going on around you." □

—James S. Turner

HUMANITIES GUIDE

FOR THOSE WHO ARE THINKING OF APPLYING FOR AN NEH GRANT

Archaeology Projects

BY GEORGE LUCAS

HEN Christopher Columbus abandoned his makeshift home at La Isabela, the first Spanish colonial settlement in the Americas, he hardly could have imagined that scholars would one day celebrate finding what was perhaps a fragment of his cereal bowl, of his water glass, or even of his chamber pot.

The Endowment-sponsored excavation of La Isabela, which rests high on a bluff in what is now the Dominican Republic, is a model of how archaeology unites legend with history, permits science to dabble with speculation, and confers on formerly everyday items great significance and even wonder.

Applications for projects in either Old World or New World archaeology are normally submitted to the Interpretive Research Program. Funds for analysis and prepublication costs are provided in either outright funds or a combination of outright and federal matching funds; survey and excavation projects are eligible for up to \$15,000 in outright funds per year, with the remainder provided by federal matching funds. In addition to funding for projects that will prepare the results of excavations for scholarly and popular publication, support is also available for foreign and American archaeological fieldwork, for surveys, for materials and laboratory research, for artifact preservation, and for field reports.

Given the limitation on outright funds for excavation, project directors typically turn to corporations and private sponsors for additional support. But one enterprising project director boldly courted the state legislature as a source of funds. He garnered \$150,000 to

George Lucas is assistant director for Interpretive Research in the Division of Research Programs. excavate the site of Old Mobile, Alabama, the founding settlement of French colonial Louisiana and the first permanent French settlement on the gulf coast. Any gifts from a third party qualify for federal matching funds.

One of the most unusual and valuable of the sixty or so projects currently funded by the Endowment is the Aegean Dendrochronology Project, which seeks to establish a tree-ring chronology for the Eastern Mediterranean region from the third millennium B.C. to the present. By counting and comparing the rings of wooden timbers of extant buildings, artifacts, or ruins, the project staff can develop an absolute chronology that could settle historical questions and pinpoint the dates of various architectural styles. The tree-ring chronology will ultimately improve the accuracy of radiocarbon and ceramics dating.

The Endowment is committed to supporting archaeological research that promises to strengthen understanding of history and of diverse cultures. Applications for archaeology projects should demonstrate clearly the significance of the proposed work for the humanities, including the historical importance of the site itself. Strong proposals incorporate an explanation of how the site and the research connect to other relevant excavations or publications. Projects should build on existing scholarship and lead to a more integrated understanding of the subject matter.

A nonspecific, unconvincing, or exaggerated argument for significance is a common pitfall for applications to the archaeology category; similarly, applications that are ultimately disapproved often fail to describe the project methodology properly. By contrast, the most competitive proposals justify the project's research methods: Superior

applications include a lucid explanation of the relationship between the data to be collected, the central interpretive focus, and major research questions. In the nine-month review process, specialist reviewers and then panelists closely examine the proposals for clearly articulated links among the data, the goals of the project, and the importance of the work for the humanities.

In addition, explanatory information should illuminate the project's historical, cultural, and geographical contexts. Such explanations may appear within the narrative, in parentheses in the narrative, in footnotes or endnotes, or in appendices. Approximate dates for the period covered by the research and for the site, and an indication of how well a chronology has been established, are important details. Other worthwhile features are visual aids: photographs or copies of photographs, drawings of the site and artifacts, and maps. However, applicants often err by providing too many micromaps (small sectors of excavation) and omit a macromap of the site located within present national boundaries. At least one map of the site and one map of the country or region in which the site is located are useful to evaluators. Finally, evaluators prefer plain language, even in descriptions of theoretical models and methodologies.

New application instructions and forms specifically designed for archaeology projects are now.available. The staff welcomes inquiries and encourages submission of preliminary drafts in preparation for the next application deadline on October 15, 1991. Contact the Interpretive Research Program, Division of Research Programs, National Endowment for the Humanities, 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20506; 202/786-0210.

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Donald O. Henry: University of Tulsa, OK, *A Cultural History of the Bedouin of Southern Jordan*

Mark P. Leone: University of Maryland, College Park, An Archaeology of the Foundations of Modern Daily Life in Annapolis, Maryland Michael G. Peletz: Colgate University, Hamilton, NY, Representations of Gender and Kinship in a Malay Society

John G. Russell: Chiba College of Health Science, Japan, Images of Blacks in Contemporary Japanese Society

Jack M. Weatherford: Macalester College, St. Paul, MN, Intellectual Influences of Native Americans on the Discipline of Anthropology

UNIVERSITY TEACHERS

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Arts—History and Criticism

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Jody Diamond: Mills College, Oakland, CA, Contemporary Music and Composers in Indonesia
Peter J. Fergusson: Wellesley College, MA,
The Vernacular Architecture of the 12th-Century

Reform Orders in England

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ington, DC, The Gendering of Nature and Art in Renaissance Italy

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Ethan T. Haimo: University of Notre Dame, IN, Arnold Schoenberg and the Birth of Atonality **Mary C. Henderson:** Independent Scholar, New York City, Jo Mielziner and the Theater of His Time

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Thomas F. Kelly: Oberlin College, OH, The Cultural Context of the South Italian Exultet Elizabeth Lipsmeyer: Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA, The Palm Sunday Christus and Palm Sunday Ritual in the Middle Ages Paula R. Radisich: Whittier College, CA, Art and Society in 18th-Century France: A Study of

Selected Works by Hubert Robert Cleota Reed: Independent Scholar, Syracuse, NY, Decorative Ceramics in American Architecture, 1870-1940

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Minneapolis, The Sight of Sound: Visual Constructions of Meaning in Western Musical

Practices
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Louis, MO, Musical Life in the Nunneries of
Bologna, 1550-1730

Julia Moore: University of Idaho, Moscow, Music in the Marketplace: The Habsburg Empire, 1780-

Sally A. Ness: University of California, Riverside, Philippine Sinulog Dancing

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Nancy H. Ramage: Ithaca College, NY, Sir William Hamilton, the 18th-Century Diplomat as Archaeologist

David M. Richman: University of New Hampshire, Durham, Yeats's Mastery of Drama W. Jackson Rushing: University of Missouri, Saint Louis, Native American Art since 1960 Gerald D. Silk: Temple University, Philadelphia,

PA, Futurist Art of the Italian Fascist Regime George R. Small: Los Angeles Pierce College, Woodland Hills, CA, The Role of the "Aire Libre" Movement in the Development of Modern Mexi-

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Mary R. Lefkowitz: Wellesley College, MA, Euripides and the Gods

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Joe Park Poe: Tulane University, New Orleans, LA, Pollux's Work on Theatrical Antiquities: A Commentary

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the Present

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Ethnicity and Cultural Loyalty in Timurid Society,

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Defining a Japanese Aesthetic Tradition
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The Reformation and the Towns in England,
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Jennifer W. Glos: Columbus School for Girls, OH, *Leadership and Machiavelli: A Conceptual Study*

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New York City, Gandhi and Origins of Nonviolence in South Africa

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History—U.S.

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South Hadley, MA, Slavery and the Decline of the Atlantic System: Virginia, 1800-60

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and Social History

Robert F. Jones: Fordham University, New York

City, Thomas Jefferson: Political Thought and

Phillip S. Paludan: University of Kansas, Lawrence, Society, Slavery, and Civil War Elisabeth T. Perry: Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN, Feminist Classics in American Culture, 1850-1930

SUMMER STIPENDS

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Grinding Technology in the 17th Century

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GA, Harmony, Perspective, and the Infinity of
Mathematical Space: A Study of Brook Taylor

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Miami, FL, Cigarmaking among Cubans in Miami: Documenting an Ethnic Tradition Amina M. Quargnali-Linsley: University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, Cooperation and Conflict in the Southwest: Redefining the American Dream Kirsten L. Scheid: Columbia University, New York City, From Traditional to Tourist Art: A Study of the Aesthetic Transition in Balinese

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Adam R. Spiegel: Phoenix Country Day School, Paradise Valley, AZ, Lucretius and His Influence on Western Thought

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ND, Sitting Bull: A Reexamination of His Death from a Hunkpapa Perspective Jason C. Van Boom: Thomas Aquinas College,

Santa Paula, CA, Karl Popper and the Testing of Scientific Hypotheses

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Jurisprudence

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Stephen R. Munzer: University of California, Los Angeles, The Human Body and Property Rights

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Language and Linguistics

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Cambridge, MA, The Middle Years of Life as

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Anne H. Hawkins: Wesleyan University, Middle-

Decline in English and American Novels

ance in the 19th-Century English Novel

18th- and 19th-Century English Novel Jack R. Lundbom: Independent Scholar, Sweden, The Book of Jeremiah: A Commentary for the Anchor Bible

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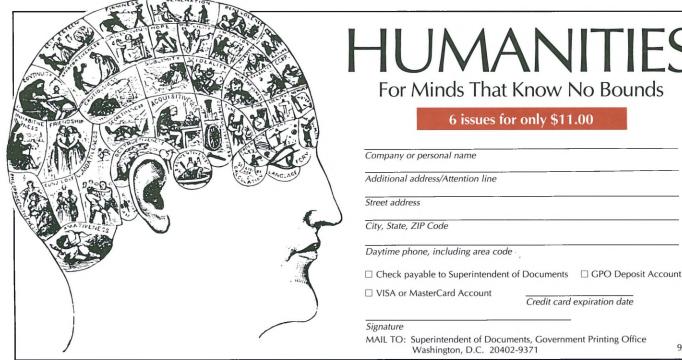
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