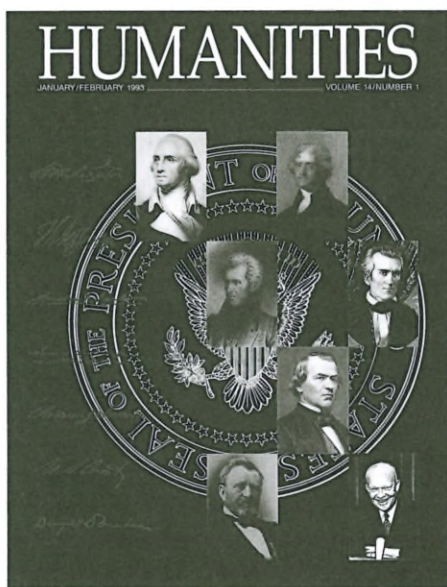


HUMANITIES

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Top Row: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson. Second Row: Andrew Jackson, James K. Polk. Third Row: Andrew Johnson. Bottom Row: Ulysses S. Grant, Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Humanities

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Telephone: 202/606-8435. Fax: 202/606-8240.

EDITOR'S NOTE

The Presidency

In this inaugural season it seems fitting to reflect on how previous presidents have viewed the presidency of the United States. George Washington approached the office with reluctance, expressing "disinclination for the weighty and untried cares before me." Thomas Jefferson wound up calling the job "a splendid misery." Andrew Jackson found himself excoriated as "King Andrew" as he tried to tame the Congress.

Most of what they said was for public consumption. But there were private moments, too. In the letters these presidents wrote to their political allies or their confidantes, they were free to voice their doubts, try out their ideas, vent the annoyance they would not express in public. Insights into these moments of history lie among their private correspondence. Over the years the Endowment has supported seven such presidential papers projects: those of Washington, Jefferson, Jackson, James K. Polk, Andrew Johnson, Ulysses S. Grant, and Dwight D. Eisenhower. For this Inaugural, we have asked a scholar involved with each of the collections to choose a defining moment in the presidency.

George Washington, of course, was acutely aware that he would be setting the pattern for the rest. In a letter early in his presidency he wrote Catherine Graham: "In our progress towards political happiness my station is new; and, if I may use the expression, I walk on untrodden ground. There is scarcely any Action, whose motives may not be subject to a double interpretation. There is scarcely any part of my conduct which may not hereafter be drawn into precedent."

There were those who would have made him king or president-for-life, an honor he turned aside, but Washington was not unmindful of the majesty of the office.

"The President of the United States wishes to avail himself of your sentiments on the following points," he wrote rather stiffly to John Adams in May of 1789: "1st Whether a line of conduct, equally distant from an association with all kinds of company on the one hand and from a total seclusion from Society on the other, ought to be adopted by him? and, in that case, how is it to be done?"

"2nd What will be the least exceptionable method of bringing any system, which may be adopted on this subject, before the Public and into use?"

"3rd Whether, after a little time, one day in every week will not be sufficient for receiving visits of Compliment?"

"4th Whether it would tend to prompt impertinent applications & involve disagreeable consequences to have it known, that the President will, every Morning at 8 O'clock, be at leisure to give Audiences to persons who may have business with him?"

And so it went—whether he should give four major entertainments a year, one being the Fourth of July, without its being considered frivolous; whether he might visit friends occasionally for tea. The letter has an artless tone—a guileless list of concerns for an infant nation—but at the same time it shows an acuteness about the conflicting demands, the struggle between public and private life, and the balance between bread and circuses that were to be the inheritance of all the presidents to follow.

—Mary Lou Beatty

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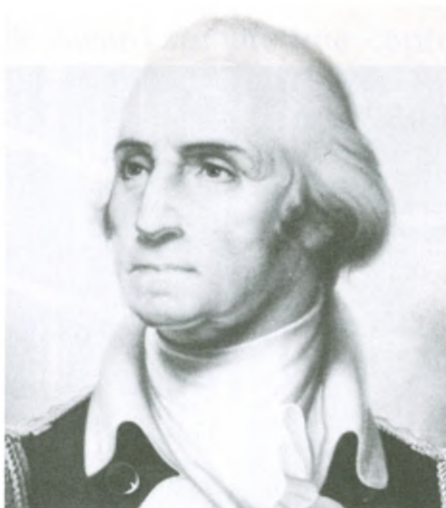
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A CONVERSATION WITH

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— © Photo by Mimi Levine

DANIEL J. BOORSTIN

The sources of creativity was a topic when NEH Chairman Lynne V. Cheney met recently with Daniel J. Boorstin, historian and the Librarian of Congress Emeritus. His books have won the Pulitzer, Bancroft, and Parkman prizes and have been translated into twenty languages. In 1990 he received the National Book Award for lifetime contribution to literature.

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—Photo by Teresa Zabala

Lynne V. Cheney: In your new book, *The Creators*, you link the creative culture of the West to myths in which God himself is seen as a creator. The question is, which came first, the desire to create or the myth that establishes creativity as a divine attribute?

Daniel J. Boorstin: All peoples want to create. Everybody wants, from childhood on, to make things, put things together—and tear them down too, I suppose—but certainly to make something. But that yen to make in Western civilization somehow has been focused on the making of the new—originality or making something from nothing. The Eastern cultures have produced wonderful things, but the premium in their cultures is not on originality, on the new. That's an opportunity, but there's a price, too, in the Western way, because it leads people to value the new for its newness and not for what it has made of experience.

Cheney: But what is the role played by belief in all this?

Boorstin: I would be wary of saying that you have to believe in a creative God in order to be creative. Of course not. But it helps because it

gives dignity to your desire to make something. It makes you godlike in the making of something new.

In the West, probably both the belief in a creative God and the premium on originality, on novelty, are a product of the same human urges for fulfillment. It's happened that in the West, for a lot of reasons, fulfillment has taken that form and influenced much that is written, and so much that is expressed in the great events in Western history.

Cheney: I was entranced, though, reading your account of various creation myths. I know almost nothing about the Hindu religion, but you helped me to understand better the temples that I've seen in different parts of the world, which to Western eyes look crowded, with figures everywhere, and you helped me understand why they're that way by explaining the emphasis in Hinduism on seeing, on the act of seeing. So the more things there are to see, obviously, the better it is.

Boorstin: And the more gods the better!

Cheney: Yes, yes—it took you nine years to write the book?

Boorstin: Yes. I don't think that's very long. *The Discoverers*, which I worked on for about ten years, was published in 1983, and this is '92. *The Americans* was in three volumes; that took thirty years.

Cheney: So, ten years a volume.

Boorstin: Of course, I wrote other books in between. *The Image*, for example, was written in about six weeks. But there is a special kind of satisfaction in writing a long book. When you write a longer book, you have the pleasure of learning from your earlier self. In completing *The Creators*, for example, as I neared the end, I could go back and read chapters that I'd written eight or nine years before, and I was amazed.

Cheney: At how good they were?

Boorstin: At what I knew back then, and that's encouraging. If I can perpetuate it for myself, maybe I can for somebody else.

Cheney: How do you write? Do you have an organizational scheme from the beginning?

Boorstin: I always spend a great deal of time on the outline, almost as much time on the outline as I do

In some ways it's more daunting to write a nonfiction work than fiction because if you write a fictional work, you can keep the reader in suspense as to whether the central figure is a hero or a villain." —BOORSTIN

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on the writing, believe it or not. I have a long file at home on the different outlines for *The Creators*, a whole file drawer full of changing outlines. And there are a number of reasons for that. In some ways it's more daunting to write a nonfiction work than fiction because if you write a fictional work, you can keep the reader in suspense as to whether the central figure is a hero or a villain. But if you're writing nonfiction, everybody knows how it turned out, so you have a problem of creating drama and suspense.

Cheney: With this book, you also have the amazing task of trying to order a vast amount of material.

Boorstin: You have to be willing to make decisions. In fact, the most important decisions, especially if it's a large subject, are what to leave out. That was very much the case with *The Creators* because I knew that everyone wouldn't agree with what works I selected.

Cheney: That's right. Where are the Brontes?

Boorstin: I determined to write only about works of art or literature that have entered into our tradition, and that had spoken especially to me. This meant that many great creators are not included. And, of course, I write unashamedly from the point of view of the West.

Cheney: Let's talk about how you came to write history.

Boorstin: By accident, in a way. In fact, I'm a refugee from the law.

Cheney: It's a dark chapter in your past I didn't want to bring up.

Boorstin: Well, when I went to Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar, I tried various things. As an undergraduate at Harvard, I had the advantage of

coming from a very good high school, Tulsa Central High School. I didn't have the sophistication of my contemporaries, who'd been to Milton Academy and Andover and Exeter and such, but I had the pleasure of coming upon the idea of the Renaissance with a freshness that would not have been possible if I had been given a more sophisticated education. I had the pleasure of discovery, and I came to have an enormous love of words.

Cheney: In your book, you showed a real appreciation for the sophists, I thought, which relates to what you're saying—the idea that oratory is important.

Boorstin: That's something that I think we need to realize, how little attention is paid to the word nowadays in our secondary education. Among my most vivid experiences as a student in Tulsa was the National Oratorical Contest in which the students were expected to write an oration. They called it an oration unashamedly, an oration about the Constitution of the United States, and you were supposed to say it as if you believed it. You also learned something about the Constitution that way. You read the standard textbooks, you even read the Constitution. And there were contests in memorizing and reciting famous speeches from the American past. In our high school, it was not uncommon for people to memorize Patrick Henry's speech or even the Gettysburg Address, which I suspect very few people memorize nowadays.

Cheney: This is something that's rather looked down upon in our schools now.

Boorstin: There was a whole range of speeches, of different kinds of eloquence. For example, Henry

Grady's *New South*, as I recall, which began, "Long before the guns of Beauregard opened fire on Fort Sumter. . ."

Cheney: I have never heard of this piece, I hate to tell you.

Boorstin: "...blood was sprinkled in the faces of the people. The hustings of America had to become a battleground and every inch of debatable territory a ring for controversial mills."

By memorizing these things, you acquired a feeling for the rhythm of language and diction and the drama of words.

So when I went to college, I already had a feeling for words and an admiration for the people who had been able to use words. I went into English history and literature as an undergraduate. Then in my junior year, my grandfather, whom I loved dearly, died, and it had a traumatic effect on me. I asked myself, is it possible to find a way that people won't die? It's a rather naive idea which I still think about sometimes. And so I changed my field of concentration from literature to biochemistry. I took nearly every elementary science course at Harvard, until I found that I had no aptitude for the laboratory. I found it difficult to decide whether a flame was yellow or green, whether it was sodium or potassium. Anyway, at the beginning of my senior year, I shifted back to history and literature, wrote my honors thesis on Edward Gibbon, and came out all right and graduated.

Cheney: Then you went into law.

Boorstin: But I did have the advantage of having surveyed something of the sciences.

Cheney: That's true.

Boorstin: Then I went to Oxford and studied law. My father was a lawyer in Tulsa; you might call him a small-town lawyer. He loved the law. He never got rich at it, but he considered himself to be a sort of family or communal priest advising people on all their problems.

Cheney: What a nice way to live.

Boorstin: He never had a partner, but he took into his office young lawyers who then became judges, and he enjoyed that a lot. Well, his idea would have been for me to go to the University of Oklahoma to study law, then come out and share his law office. But it was a time when the economy was not very good in this country. It was 1934. So I went to Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar. The standard Oxford course in the honors school of jurisprudence was about half in legal history and Roman law. I enjoyed that. I enjoyed Roman law; I enjoyed legal history and jurisprudence. You see, you don't prepare for the bar in England merely by getting a law degree. You had to enter one of the Inns of Court if you were going to become a barrister.

Cheney: Did you go that far?

Boorstin: Yes. There were two branches of the law in England, the barristers and solicitors. The solicitors were those who dealt with all ordinary business matters, such as buying a house or arranging a marriage settlement for your daughter, or making your will. The barristers were those who appeared in court. If you were a foreigner, you couldn't be a solicitor because no right-minded English person would want a foreigner digging into his personal affairs. You see, a barrister did all his damage in public. So the only branch of the legal profession that I was eligible for was the bar, so I decided to have a go at it. I made an application to become a student in the Inner Temple, which is one of the Inns of Court, the traditional places for training barristers. Theoretically, I was supposed to be attending classes there, and then after three years, I took the examinations.

In those three years at Oxford, the most important influence on me was an excellent tutor at Balliol, my

college. He was ruthless in criticizing my writing style.

Cheney: Who was it?

Boorstin: His name was T. H. Tylor. Although he was almost totally blind, he was one of the two or three top chess players in England. And he was a savage critic of style. I had to write essays for him and as I would read my essay aloud, he would ask me to defend every word. When I got through, there was nothing but a piece of paper with a lot of scratches on it, but he made me conscious of language and the value of every word.

Cheney: It's good training, if your ego can stand it.

Boorstin: Anyway, I did the examination and came back. And I went to Yale Law School as a Sterling Fellow. I got a J.S.D. graduate degree in law. I did my thesis, my book on Blackstone, which is still around, called *The Mysterious Science of the Law*. And then I went to Harvard and taught. I was invited by F. O. Matthiessen, my former college tutor, and I taught English literature and American history and literature.

Cheney: That's amazing. That would never happen nowadays.

Boorstin: I also taught legal history in the Harvard Law School.

Cheney: I'm just not sure that there is that same flexibility in the academy now that there was. It would cause a great fuss, I think, to hire someone at a first-tier university who didn't have a Ph.D. in the field, no matter what they had done.

Boorstin: I enjoyed it. I enjoyed the students. I was a vagrant, you might say, an intellectual vagrant. I didn't know where I belonged.

Cheney: When did you move into history in the university?

Boorstin: Well, I had the advantage of never being properly trained as a historian, so I didn't know what the rules were, what I was supposed to write about. I just wrote about what interested me.

Cheney: But didn't you teach in Chicago?

Boorstin: That was later, yes. Meanwhile, I just wrote about what interested me.

I have a vested interest in the amateur. I never was a professional in anything that I made my living at. Only very briefly did I make my living at the law. But I love the idea of an amateur, the amateur in the sense of the lover, the person who does something for the love of it.

Cheney: Yes, and from passion.

Boorstin: Some of the people I know who are good historians—for instance, Arthur Schlesinger—are properly trained professionals, but I think Arthur is so good that he's risen to the level of an amateur.

Cheney: I see. But you must have given yourself a certain legitimacy in the eyes of the academy by writing books or articles.

Boorstin: Well, I wrote the book on Sir William Blackstone, whose *Commentaries* became the foundation of the training (and self-training) of American lawyers. That was my first book. It related Blackstone to everything else in his time, the science and the art and the literature and philosophy. And I enjoyed it, but it was an illegitimate kind of book because it had no right to be. It didn't fit in any category. I spent a good deal of the time when I was teaching in law school propagandizing for legal history. My ally was David Riesman, who was also trying to champion a broader view.

Cheney: That's interesting.

Boorstin: Later I taught at Swarthmore, European history, which I learned for the occasion and enjoyed. And I liked Swarthmore. I was there for a few years and met some wonderful people like Wolfgang Kohler and W. H. Auden, who taught there for a while.

Cheney: Did you—do you—set aside a certain time to write?

Boorstin: Not nowadays. It's my primary occupation. When I was directing the Library of Congress, I'd write in the early morning, before I went to the library, and at night.

Cheney: I know. I remember you told me you'd get up at 5:00 a.m.

Boorstin: Well, I would try to be at work around 6:00 or so. Now I don't do that quite so much. But I did then. I had to because I had to

I tend to deal with arcane facts and unprofessional subjects—the cosmic significance of trivia, you know, the things that seem unimportant. But there's no such thing if you're a historian." —BOORSTIN

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be at the library. That was a full-time job, and I did not want to skimp it.

I did have a research assistant when I was teaching at the University of Chicago and writing, but not since. I've had no research assistants on these last two books. I've done all my own work.

Cheney: How do you get the books you need for your research? Do you use the Library of Congress?

Boorstin: I have had the privilege of being a member of the staff, and any member of the staff of the library can use it.

Cheney: Do you go to the library and do searches? Where do you start?

Boorstin: In the case of *The Americans*, which was an effort to write about what was distinctive about American culture, a lot of the things I chose to write about were rather peculiar. They were not academically respectable subjects. For example, I wrote about the history of packaging.

Cheney: Or the fellow who discovered how to harvest ice and then turned it into a commercial enterprise.

Boorstin: Those were not really very professional subjects. I was never a book collector, but I love reference books. One of the first major reference works that I bought was the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the whole thing. I still love it.

Cheney: What a wonderful possession for someone who loves words.

Boorstin: And I use it all the time. So I love reference books. I have the *Britannica*, the DAB, and the *Dictionary of Scientific Biography* at my elbow. As I say, I never collected books because they were

rare, but only because I was using them or might use them.

Cheney: And you've collected an extensive library.

Boorstin: Yes. When I left the National Museum of History and Technology, as it was then called—now it's the Museum of American History—I found they did not have a very good library of American history, so I gave them most of my American history library—a couple of thousand volumes or so. But I kept the main reference books in American history and I also kept my library on world history, which was the next subject area I was going to explore.

For *The Americans* from the University of Chicago I had needed and used the Library of Congress by inter-library loan. I tend to deal with arcane facts and unprofessional subjects—the cosmic significance of trivia, you know, the things that seem unimportant. But there's no such thing if you're a historian.

Cheney: As trivia.

Boorstin: No. Since *The Discoverers* and *The Creators*, I've written here in Washington. I use the Library of Congress because many of the kinds of subjects I write about are available only in specialized journals, in rare works of the history of science or technology, of subliterate, literature, or the arts.

Cheney: So when you borrow a book, you take notes.

Boorstin: Yes. If I own the book, I can mark it and I do mark it and write in the back of the book, make notes in the back of the book.

But, of course, obviously I don't mark anything in the library books, and then I take notes.

Having made my outline, I have file folders. I keep a file folder for each topic which might be a chapter heading, and put the slips for it there. The thing is so fluid, you see, that you have to keep track of the way the subjects are moving, where they're moving from one chapter into another.

I've just given my papers to the Library of Congress. One of the advantages of being the Librarian of Congress is that the Library will take my papers. Just yesterday a messenger came and took about two hundred pounds of files which were raw materials for *The Creators*.

Cheney: Do you take phone calls in the morning while you're writing?

Boorstin: I try not to.

Cheney: Writing is hard work, and so if somebody wants to call and talk to you, it's a great temptation.

Boorstin: Well, but you have to keep on track, and I try to keep on track, and I do write. I write, of course, with a manual typewriter.

Cheney: No computer?

Boorstin: Do you remember what a typewriter was? (laughter)

Cheney: I don't have one. I don't think we've got one up here.

Boorstin: I still have an old Olympia.

Cheney: Is it electric? No? Not even electric?

Boorstin: That's why I call it a human typewriter.

Cheney: You sound like an old newsman instead of a distinguished scholar.

Boorstin: Well, I'm not alone. My friend David McCullough, you know, also writes on a human typewriter, and I believe Robert

Caro writes on a human typewriter, and there are some other people, very good writers, too.

Cheney: Is it superstition on your part that keeps you from changing? Obviously, you've done very well on a human typewriter.

Boorstin: No. It just seems to work. I'm not against computer technology, my sons use it. And, of course, I'm in favor of the Library of Congress having all the modern technology.

Cheney: You and I disagree about that. The card catalog was far superior to the computerized system.

Boorstin: Well, I would have to say I do love the card catalog, too, but I mean in general, I think the Library of Congress, which has such a mass of stuff, has to have modern technology.

Cheney: I understand the necessity.

Boorstin: But I think that one of the problems of a modern librarian is a tendency to focus on the machine, because I still think that the book is the basic unit of our heritage.

Cheney: One of the things about a computer is it allows you to edit so much. I sometimes think that I now spend twenty times as much editing as I ever did before I had a computer, and I'm not sure my prose has improved.

Boorstin: Oh, I type on yellow sheets and I revise it, and I like to see what was there before, not just on screen but I like the feel of it. If I show you my sheets, you'll see that you don't have to have a computer to edit your material.

Cheney: Extensively, hmm?

Boorstin: I'd say in these last two books I've thrown away about twice as much as I've kept. So both *The Discoverers* and *The Creators* were about three times as long before I cut them, and that's partly due to my wife Ruth's good advice and partly because I think it's no good. I took out at least ten chapters from *The Creators*, and I think the book is much better for it. Still too long—all books are too long—but I have the great advantage also of having Ruth as my primary editor, and also the advantage of an excellent editor at Random House, Robert Loomis. I've been blessed.

Cheney: *The Creator* is probably about 300,000 words? I'm just guessing.

Boorstin: It's 811 pages, so I don't know how many words that is, but it's probably too many. But as I say, there is satisfaction in a big work, a long work. It takes years.

Cheney: And it gives your life a pattern.

Boorstin: Winston Churchill describes that sentiment. He wrote a book called *My Early Life*. Somebody else would say "my early years." Not Churchill. And he described the pleasure of crawling into this book-in-the-making—a refuge, as well as a place to put all the things that you've found and thought of and imagined. That's what a book is.

Cheney: When you look back over all of the people whom you have included as creators in your book, are there some that stood out as favorites?

Boorstin: I don't like to think of it that way. See, there is a great difference, which is not unrelated to the question you're asking, between writing about the sciences, discoverers, and writing about the arts, creators. It's much easier to construct a book about the discoverers for the simple reason that there is progress in science.

Cheney: That's interesting. You've got a plot line in place already.

Boorstin: If you write about Aristotle and Ptolemy and Galileo and Newton, nobody is going to argue with you and say, "Why did you pick them?" Nobody's going to say that. One reason is that readers are not apt to know many other names in the history of science—and even less likely to have personal favorites among them. And with the great scientists, you can measure—this has often been pointed out—the number of earlier works that this scientist's work has made obsolete. That's progress. There's progress in the sciences. But the artist does not displace other artists; Picasso doesn't displace Michelangelo. He awakens us to things about Michelangelo that we haven't thought of before.

Cheney: Are you talking about the humanities, too?

Boorstin: I would include literature, of course.

Cheney: But what about history? There are some people who would argue that histories such as Francis Parkman's—you mention them in your book—are superseded, that we now have a fuller understanding of the French and Indian War.

Boorstin: I haven't completed my contrast. When you come to the arts, you're not dealing with progress. I don't think Milton progressed beyond Shakespeare or Wordsworth progressed beyond them. That doesn't make sense. For each one of them created.

Cheney: I agree with that. I'm just not sure it's true of the humanities.

Boorstin: Well, I won't ask you to define the humanities, but...

Cheney: Thank you.

Boorstin: I think that in the case of history, the works of history which live are those which are literature.

Cheney: I see.

Boorstin: People read Herodotus, Thucydides, Tacitus—and Parkman—because they're literature. And Gibbon, of course, who is my idol. He survives as literature.

Cheney: I've always idolized Parkman. You know, nowadays when you read about the West, the new western history is so depressing. Parkman is totally different, partly because he writes so well, but there's something more.

Boorstin: But I deplore what I call the arrogance of modernity. Some people think that because they're modern and have certain ideas, that they transcend all the other creators and thinkers of the past. They conclude that Columbus, who believed in Christianity, must have been stupid because they don't believe in Christianity anymore, and so on. I don't go with that. I think that being a historian requires sympathy for alternatives and for people who didn't have the advantages and the disadvantages of modernity. That's one of the things that *The Creators* expresses, a belief that there really is no past in the world of literature or the arts. It's all present. Otherwise, we wouldn't be there. It's here. It's no longer there, it's here,

“**W**hen you look over all of the people about whom you wrote...who leads the more satisfying life? Discoverers or creators? To me, your creators seemed unhappy.” —CHENEY

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and that's the wonderful thing about it. And that's one thing I enjoyed so much. I really enjoyed, going back to some of these works and discovering the pleasure of return. You think, well, I've read that book, but no, you haven't read it. If it's an important book, you never finish reading it, really.

Cheney: You can never read it too many times.

Boorstin: That's right. Which is one reason why I've enjoyed writing this latest book. Almost all the people I deal with in *The Creators* are those, in the case of literature, I thought I had read. This would include Homer, Dante, Rabelais, Cervantes, and many of the others. But the opportunity to spend nine years going back and revisiting them has been wonderful. They are wonderful company.

Cheney: When I read your book, I kept coming across stories that I vaguely remembered, but that you tell with such a fine eye for detail. Milton, for example, lying in his bed in the mornings composing *Paradise Lost*. I wondered to myself if there's any possibility that anybody alive today could do that, and I don't think so. You talked about there not being progress, but I wonder if in fact there's a kind of retrogression. We've gotten so far away from that kind of command of words.

Boorstin: I don't know. I disagree with the assumption that lies beneath that observation when you say that people today couldn't do it.

Cheney: But who has the training to do that? It's not that I'm talking about some declining gene pool. I'm talking about the different experience that people living in this

world have as opposed to people who lived...

Boorstin: But the artist, you see, is a person who is able to exploit his weaknesses, his limitations. Look at Proust. If Proust had been a world traveler, what would we have? Nothing. He had a terrible case of asthma and was confined to his room, and he had to sit there and remember. So that was painful for him, I suppose, but it was profitable for us. And the same thing with Joyce. There's been speculation that his writing is one of the consequences of his very weak eyesight, he could almost not see.

Cheney: It is interesting to look at how many people who had bad eyes were wonderful writers. You talk about some of them: Prescott, Parkman, Milton, Joyce.

Boorstin: Eliot was very critical of Joyce, and he tied his criticism of him to the weakness of Joyce's eyes.

Cheney: But you could head toward another thesis, a notion of creativity as compensatory.

Boorstin: Well, that's far too simple a notion. I think that the great thing about the arts is their unpredictability. That's what Einstein loved about the physical world, the mystery of it. And I think very much the same can be said about the world of creators.

Cheney: When you look over all of the people about whom you wrote, and you go back and consider the discoverers that you wrote about, who leads the more satisfying life? Discoverers or creators? To me, your creators seemed unhappy.

Boorstin: I don't think happiness is a category that's relevant. I think about fulfillment. I would rather

use the word fulfillment. Now, that's not very good either because there's never such a thing really as fulfillment. But I think that so many of the great works of art are the byproducts of particular people's miseries. There's almost an antithesis between happiness and creativity. Each artist must have his own kind of dissatisfaction with what he sees. It doesn't look right, the words aren't quite right! The difference between using a good word and one that isn't the right word is that you're uncomfortable with the wrong word. Are you happy when you find the right word? Well, not exactly. It's just there's a certain decorum, a sense of what's suitable.

Cheney: *The Americans* was a trilogy. Have you just finished a second book in a new trilogy?

Boorstin: Lynne, I'm not at liberty to answer that question.

Cheney: Well, in case you write a third book, I have a suggestion.

Boorstin: Yes?

Cheney: You've got *The Discoverers* and *The Creators*. I think *The Believers*.

Boorstin: Oh?

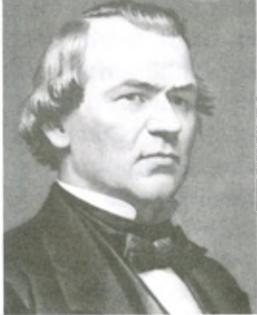
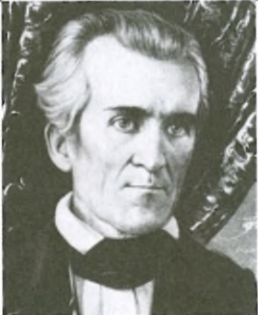
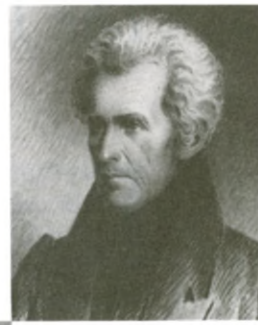
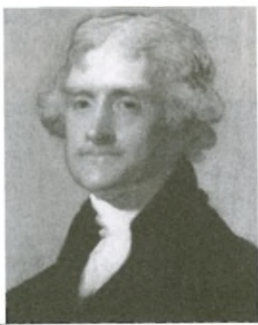
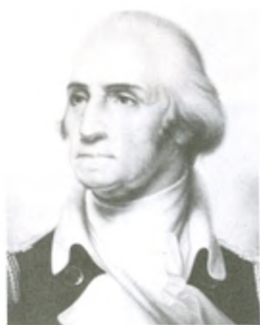
Cheney: You've told me before that you don't like ideology, though, so maybe this isn't a good suggestion.

Boorstin: I really have a greater respect for what I call the courage to doubt, the experimental, tentative nature of thought and art. That interests me more.

Cheney: So maybe the third volume will be *The Doubters*.

Boorstin: I'm going to keep writing. That's all I will say. I don't know if that's a promise or a threat. □

*I*N KEEPING WITH
this month's Inaugural,
we look at how
George Washington
and six other of
our past leaders saw
their role in the
American presidency.
Their words are taken
from the seven
presidential papers
projects supported by the
National Endowment for
the Humanities.



How Presidents See the Presidency

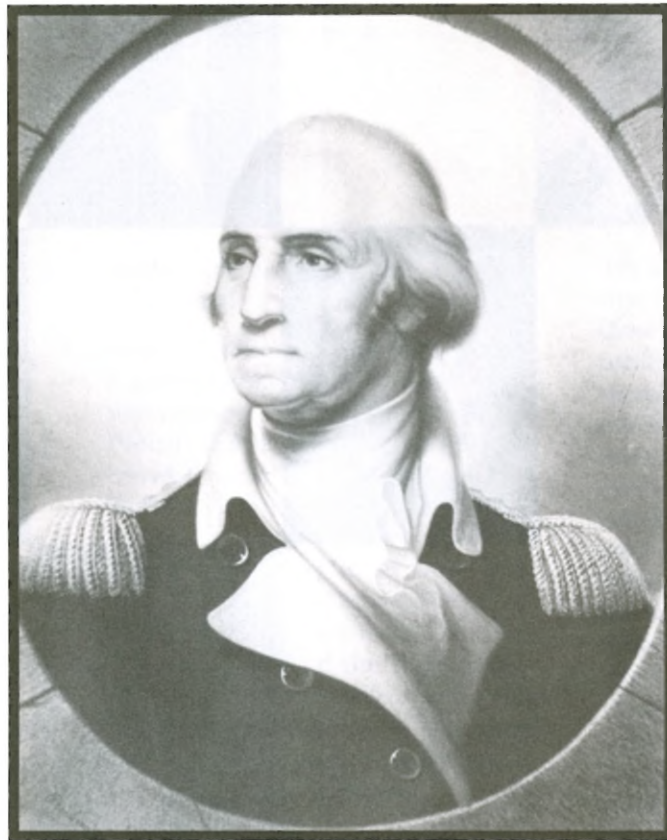


George Washington:

The First Presidency

IN THE SPRING OF 1789, just before George Washington left Mount Vernon for New York to assume the presidency, he wrote Henry Knox that, although "with the world it would obtain little credit," his "movements to the chair of Government will be accompanied with feelings not unlike those of a culprit who is going to the place of his execution: so unwilling am I, in the evening of a life nearly consumed in public cares, to quit a peaceful abode for an Ocean of difficulties, without that competency of political skill—abilities & inclination which is necessary to manage the helm. I am sensible, that I am embarking the voice of my Countrymen and a good name of my own, on this voyage, but what returns will be made for them—Heaven alone can foretell. Integrity & firmness is all I can promise—these, be the voyage long or short; never shall forsake me although I may be deserted by all men." There is no reason to doubt that the reluctance with which Washington embarked on the presidency was other than genuine. In the months before the election he was bombarded with letters urging his acceptance, but he had serious doubts about his abilities to solve the enormous problems facing the new government. Concerned as always for his reputation, he not only feared failure in his new role but, more immediately, he was apprehensive that acceptance of the presidency would be interpreted as a repudiation of his promise at the end of the war to retire from public service—a promise that had won him the reputation of an American Cincinnatus.

Washington went into office without a specific blueprint for his presidency. There was general



—New-York Historical Society

uncertainty concerning the powers and functions of the executive and, as president of the Constitutional Convention, Washington was well aware that many of the powers granted to the president in Article II of the Constitution were based on the assumption that he would accept the office—a realization that increased the trepidation with which he agreed to serve. Throughout both his terms in office he remained deeply concerned with the precedents he was establishing for the presidency. He wrote the Comte de Rochambeau in the summer of 1790: "In a government which depends so much in its first stages on public opinion, much circumspection is still necessary for those who are engaged in its administration." From the beginning he was concerned with protecting his office from trivial demands but even more with the image the office presented to the public, wishing, as he said, "to preserve the dignity and respect that was due to the first Magistrate."

Washington was well aware of the need of the new government for

national symbols, and he had an extraordinary grasp of the symbolic function of his office. In spite of pressing political and economic matters, during his first months in office he was equally concerned with projecting to the public a vigorous executive and with passing on to his constituency his own feelings of optimism about the new government. Probably for none of his successors has this aspect of the presidency been a more important role. Keeping his own counsel and holding the office of president apart from competing positions on national issues were intended to lend weight and dignity to his office. Washington himself has little to say concerning his own views of the presidential role. "With me," he wrote in 1797, "it has always been a maxim, rather to let my designs appear from my works than my expressions." But from the beginning he rejected the notion of the presidency as an American version of a European prime minister. It is also evident from his actions that he did not subscribe to the Whig theory of congressional over presidential power. On the other hand, any idea of an imperial presidency was foreign to his views of the executive role. "For the constitution of the United States, and the laws made under it," he wrote, "must mark the line of my official conduct. I could not justify my taking a single step in any matter, which appeared to me to require their agency, without its being first observed." But in his relations with Congress he was careful to project the image of an independent and equal executive, and he disapproved of legislative attempts to undermine the prerogatives of the presidency. Although many of his hopes



foundered in the party struggles of his second administration, Washington seems genuinely to have held a faith not only in the boundless possibilities open to the new republic but also in the perfectibility of its citizens. Through both of his administrations he tended to judge his presidential achievements in terms of his contributions to the creation of what he referred to as a national character, free of party struggles and internal strife. By the end of his second administration, he concluded that in this his presidency had failed. As he wrote to Henry Knox in 1795: "If any power on earth could, or the great power above would, erect the standard of infallibility in political opinions, there is no being that inhabits this terrestrial globe that would resort to it with more eagerness than myself. But as I have found no better guide hitherto than upright intentions, and close investigations, I shall adhere to these maxims while I keep the watch; leaving it to those who will come after me to explore new ways, if they like; or think them better."

—Dorothy Twohig
Coeditor

The Papers of George Washington

The rules on which Washington based his presidential role emerge in his letters:

ON CHOOSING APPOINTEES

"...The event which I have long dreaded, I am at last constrained to believe, is now likely to happen. For that I have, during many months, been oppressed with an apprehension it might be deemed unavoidably expedient for me to go again into public life, is known to all, who know me. But from the moment, when the necessity had become more apparent, & as it were inevitable, I anticipated, in a heart filled with distress, the ten thousand embarrassments, perplex-

ities & troubles to which I must again be exposed in the evening of a life, already near consumed in public cares. Among all these anxieties I will not conceal from you, I anticipated none greater, than those that were likely to be produced by applications for appointments to the different offices, which would be created under the new government. Nor will I conceal, that my apprehensions have already been but too well justified. Scarcely a day passes in which applications of one kind or another do not arrive. Insomuch, that had I not early adopted some general principles, I should before this time have been wholly occupied in this business. As it is, I have found the number of answers, which I have been necessitated to give in my own hand, an almost insupportable burden to me. The points in which all these answers have agreed in substance are: that should it be my lot to go again into public office, I would go into it, without being under any possible engagements of any nature whatsoever: that, so far as I know my own heart, I would not be in the remotest degree influenced, in making nominations, by motives arising from the ties of amity or blood: and that, on the other hand, three things, in my opinion, ought principally to be regarded, viz., the fitness of characters to fill offices, the comparative claims from the former merits & sufferings in service of the different Candidates, and the distribution of appointments in as equal a proportion as might be to persons belonging to the different States in the Union; for without pre-cautions of these kinds, I clearly foresaw the endless jealousies, and, possibly, the fatal consequences, to which a government, depending altogether on the good will of the people for its establishment, would certainly be exposed in its early stages. Besides I thought, whatever the effect might be in pleasing or displeasing any individuals at the present moment,

a due concern for my own reputation not less decisively than a sacred regard to the interests of the Community, required that I should hold myself absolutely at liberty to act, while in office, with a sole reference to justice & the public good. It is true, in such a fallible state of existence and from the want of a competent knowledge of character I may err [in my nominations]: but my errors shall be such as result from the head—and not from the heart..."

(To Samuel Vaughan, 21 March 1789,
National Archives, RG 59,
Miscellaneous Letters)

ON SUCCESSIVE TERMS

"...There are other points on which opinions would be more likely to vary. As for instance, on the ineligibility of the same person for President, after he would have served a certain course of years. Guarded so effectually as the proposed Constitution is, in respect to the prevention of bribery and undue influence in the choice of President: I confess, I differ widely myself from Mr. Jefferson and you, as to the necessity or expediency of rotation in that appointment... I can see no propriety in precluding ourselves from the services of any man, who on some great emergency, shall be deemed universally, most capable of serving the Public."

(To Lafayette, 28 April 1788, Library of Congress, George Washington Papers)

ON HIS OWN FALLIBILITY

"...While the eyes of America—perhaps of the world—are turned to this Government; and many are watching the movements of all those who are concerned in its Administration, I should like to be informed through so good a medium, of the public opinion of both men & measures; and of none more than myself—not so much of what may be thought the commendable parts, if any, of my conduct, as of those which are conceived to

be blemishes. The man who intends no wrong is not likely to commit any capital errors—consequently, will never be unwilling to learn what is ascribed to him as foibles. If they really are such, the knowledge of them (in a well disposed mind) will go more than half way towards effecting a reform. If they are not errors, he can explain & justify the motives which governed him. . . .”

(To David Stuart, 26 July 1789, privately owned)

ON SETTING PRECEDENTS

“Many things which appear of little importance in themselves and at the beginning, may have great and durable consequences from their having been established at the commencement of a new general Government. It will be much easier to commence the administration, upon a well adjusted system built on tenable grounds, than to correct errors or alter inconveniences after they shall have been confirmed by habit. The President in all matters of business & etiquette, can have no object but to demean himself in his public character, in such a manner as to maintain the dignity of Office, without subjecting himself to the imputation of superciliousness or unnecessary reserve. Under these impressions, he asks for your candid and undisguised Opinions.”

(To John Adams 10 May 1789, Library of Congress, George Washington Papers)

ON THE NEW GOVERNMENT

“...The establishment of our new Government seemed to be the last great experiment, for promoting human happiness, by reasonable compact, in civil Society. It was to be, in the first instance, in a considerable degree, a government of accommodation as well as a government of Laws. Much was to be done by *prudence*, much by *conciliation*, much by *firmness*. Few, who are not philosophical Spectators, can realize the difficult and delicate

part which a man in my situation had to act. All see, and most admire, the glare which hovers round the external trappings of elevated Office. To me, there is nothing in it, beyond the lustre which may be reflected from its connection with a power of promoting human felicity. In our progress towards political happiness my station is new; and, if I may use the expression, I walk on untrodden ground. There is scarcely any Action, whose motives may not be subject to a double interpretation. There is scarcely any part of my conduct which may not hereafter be drawn into precedent. Under such a view of the duties inherent to my arduous Office, I could not but feel a diffidence in myself on the one hand; and an anxiety for the Community that every new arrangement should be made in the best possible manner on the other. If after all my humble but faithful endeavours to advance the felicity of my Country & Mankind; I may indulge a hope that my labours have not been altogether without success, it will be the only real compensation I can receive in the closing Scenes of life.

“On the actual situation of this Country, under its new Government, I will, in the next place, make a few remarks. That the Government, though not absolutely perfect, is one of the best in the World, I have little doubt. I always believed that an unequivocally free & equal Representation of the People in the Legislature; together with an efficient & responsible Executive were the great Pillars on which the preservation of American Freedom must depend. It was indeed next to a Miracle that there should have been so much unanimity, in points of such importance, among such a number of Citizens, so widely scattered and so different in their habits in many respects, as the Americans were.” □

(To Catherine Sawbridge Macauley Graham, 9 January 1790, Leicester City Museum and Art Gallery, Great Britain)



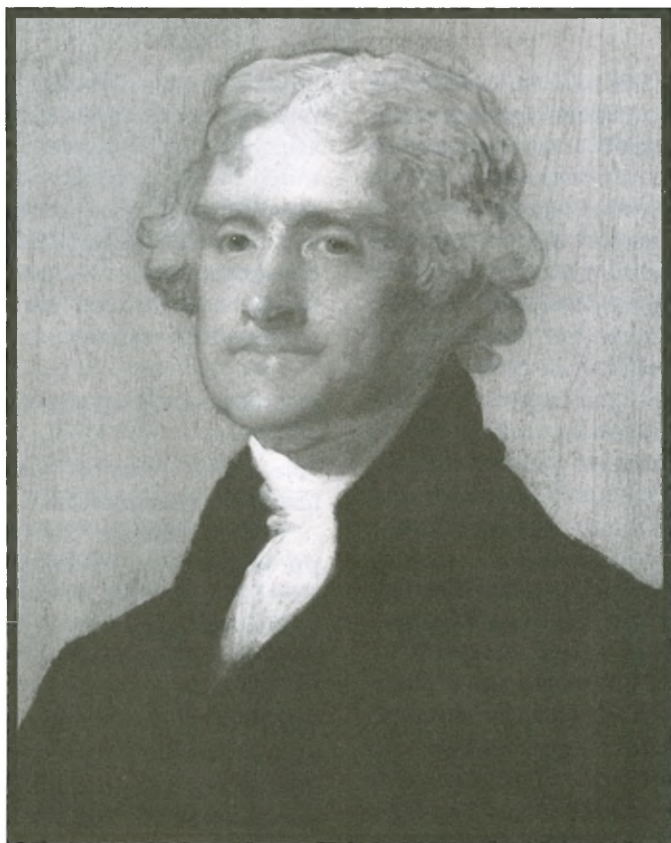
AS MINISTER TO FRANCE during the framing and ratification of the federal Constitution, Thomas Jefferson took a keen interest in the sequence of events that replaced the Articles of Confederation with the more centralized federal system we live under today. Jefferson approved the document produced by the Philadelphia Convention except in two key respects: He criticized the absence of a bill of rights to safeguard basic civil liberties, and he criticized the failure to limit the number of terms a President could serve. As Jefferson explained in a letter on May 27, 1788, to Edward Carrington of Virginia, he feared that the absence of such a limitation might lead to the development of a system of elective monarchy in the United States:

Re-eligibility makes him an officer for life, and the disasters inseparable from an elective monarchy, render it preferable, if we cannot tread back that step, that we should go forward and take refuge in an hereditary one. Of the correction of this article however I entertain no present hope, because I find it has scarcely excited an objection in America. And if it does not take place ere long, it assuredly never will. The natural progress of things is for liberty to yield, and government to gain ground. As yet our spirits are free. Our jealousy is only put to sleep by the unlimited confidence we all repose in the person to whom we all look as our president. After him inferior characters may perhaps succeed and awaken us to the danger which his merit has led us into. For the present however, the general adoption is to be prayed for.

In 1792, as party divisions roiled the cabinet, Jefferson, then secretary of state, sent President Washington an extract containing this passage in order to defend himself against charges, spread anonymously by Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton, that

Thomas Jefferson:

“A Splendid Misery”



—National Portrait Gallery and Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation

he had opposed the adoption of the Constitution.

ON THE PRESIDENCY ITSELF

“The second office of this government is honorable and easy. The first is but a splendid misery.”

(Letter to Elbridge Gerry, 13 May 1797)

Having served in Washington’s Cabinet for almost four years and witnessed the subsequent waves of Republican criticism that at times threatened to engulf his fellow Virginian, Jefferson was genuinely as relieved as his Federalist opponents that John Adams and not he was elected president in 1796. He wrote to Edward Rutledge of South of South Carolina on December 27, 1796: “I know well that no man will ever bring out of that office the reputation which carries him into it.”

His comments aptly forecast the fate of Adams, who in 1800 was repudiated both by the electorate

and by a powerful wing of his party in his quest for reelection. Jefferson’s remarks also proved to be prophetic for his own two-term presidency.

Midway through his second term as President, Jefferson reflected on the burdens of the office in a letter to John Dickinson of Pennsylvania:

I am tired of an office where I can do no more good than many others who would be glad to be employed in it. To myself personally it brings nothing but unceasing drudgery and daily loss of friends. Every office becoming vacant, every appointment made, me donne un ingrat, et cent ennemis. My only consolation is in the belief that my fellow citizens at large give me credit for good intentions. I will certainly endeavor to merit the continuance of that good will which follows well intended actions, and their approbation will be the dearest reward I can carry into retirement.

(13 January 1807)

Tormented from the outset of his administration by the necessity of making a seemingly endless number of contentious appointments to office, Jefferson wrote at a time when in foreign affairs he was finding it increasingly difficult to maintain American neutrality in the epochal conflict between Napoleonic France and Hanoverian Britain and when in domestic affairs he was under sharp attack by a small but vocal group of Republican purists for allegedly having violated the party’s principles. Two months after he penned this letter, the stresses of office, abetted by Jefferson’s habit of spending as many as thirteen hours a day at his writing desk, led to a severe recurrence of a nervous or migraine headache that forced him to remain confined for several weeks in a darkened room in the President’s House.

The pressure would only continue. By late spring Jefferson was embroiled in a court case that was to test the perimeters of presidential and judicial power. Aaron Burr was on trial for treason in Richmond, in a case presided over by Jefferson’s formidable Federalist adversary, Chief Justice John Marshall. The President was subpoenaed to appear in person with official documents requested by the defense after Marshall ruled that a general subpoena could issue to the President under the Constitution.

Jefferson resisted. In a letter to District Attorney George W. Hay on June 20, he took his stand:

I did not see till last night the opinion of the Judge on the subpoena duces tecum against the President. Considering the question there as coram non judice, I did not read his argument with much attention. Yet I saw readily enough that, as is usual where an opinion is to be supported, right or wrong, he dwells much on smaller objections, and passes over those which are solid. Laying

Andrew Jackson:

Wrestling with Congress

down the position generally that all persons owe obedience to a subpoena he admits no exception unless it can be produced in his law-books. But if the constitution enjoins on a particular officer to be always engaged in a particular set of duties imposed on him, does not this supersede the general law subjecting him to minor duties inconsistent with these? The constitution enjoins his constant agency in the concerns of 6. millions of people. Is the law paramount to this which calls on him on behalf of a single one? . . . The leading principle of our constitution is the independance of the Legislature, Executive and Judiciary of each other, and none are more jealous of this than the Judiciary. But would the Executive be independant of the Judiciary if he were subject to the commands of the latter and to imprisonment for disobedience; if the several courts could bandy him from pillar to post, keep him constantly trudging from North to South and East to West, and withdraw him entirely from his constitutional duties? The intention of the constitution that each branch should be independant of the others is further manifested by the means it has furnished to each to protect itself from enterprises of force attempted on them by the others, and to none has it given more effectual or diversified means than to the Executive.

In this and other letters to Hay, who was in charge of prosecuting Burr, Jefferson explained his refusal to obey the summons—which remained unenforced because the defense declined to press its demand—though the President provided the official papers requested by the court and offered to submit testimony in the form of a written deposition. Jefferson's refusal to appear in person, however, set a precedent that has been claimed by all subsequent chief executives. □

—John Catanzariti
Editor
The Papers of Thomas Jefferson

ANDREW JACKSON'S VIEW of the presidency was simple, direct, and appealing, at least to many voters. The President, in Jackson's philosophy was the "representative" of the American people. When he took the oath of office in 1829, few realized the full import of this concept. By 1835, Jackson's alterations in the organization, structure, and operation of the executive department had been so great his opponents dubbed him "King Andrew" and "King Richard III." The presidency was an office that Jackson had built.

Reform for Jackson meant the restoration of old republican virtue—liberty, equality, and integrity—"a plain system, void of pomp, protecting all and granting favors to none." To his notion, the governmental system had been corrupted by "abuses," brought on by personal ambition, office seeking, favoritism, and special interests. At the core of the corruption was Congress. By its very nature, Congress was made up of representatives and senators whose constituencies were prescribed by their districts and states; neither as a body nor as individuals did they represent the "whole" community. In the tripartite system established by the constitution, only the President, the trustee of all the people—above party feelings and strife—was so divested of local interests and obligations that he could act for the whole as opposed to its constituent parts. The view, repeated over and over again in his messages to Congress, threatened congressional supremacy in law and decision-making.

In implementing his reforms and in deciding on legislation from Congress, Jackson, more than all his predecessors combined, relied on the veto, the pocket veto, and executive privilege to set national above local interests, as he defined them. The presidential office he left in 1837 was not the one he entered in 1829. It had been significantly strengthened at the expense of Congress, and the key issue of his two

administrations—money, banking, internal improvements, the tariff, even the nature of the Union—set much of the political agenda for the remainder of the nineteenth century. Jackson's legacy to the executive branch was a framework out of which would evolve the modern American presidency.

ON WAR AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

"Necessity. . . may, in some cases, justify the breach of the Constitution."

"In this crisis [in New Orleans], the respondent proclaimed martial law. He intended, by that measure, to supersede such civil powers as in their operation interfered with those he was obliged to exercise. He thought that in such a moment constitutional forms must be suspended for the permanent preservation of constitutional Rights, & that there could be no question whether it were better to depart, for a moment from the exercise of our dearest privileges, or have them *wrested* from us forever. . . . Personal liberty cannot exist at a time when every man is required to become a soldier—Private property cannot be secured when its use is indispensable for the public safety. Unlimited liberty of speech is incompatible with the discipline of a camp; & that of the press is the more dangerous when it is made the vehicle of conveying intelligence to the Enemy or exciting to mutiny among the soldiery."

(United States District Court, 27 March 1815; Andrew Jackson Papers, Library of Congress)

ON PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP

"The Chief Magistrate of a great and powerful nation should never indulge in party feelings. His conduct should be liberal and disinterested, *always* bearing in mind that he acts for the *whole* and not a *part* of the community."

(Andrew Jackson to James Monroe, 12 November 1816; Jackson Papers, Library of Congress)



ON CONGRESS AND ELECTIONEERING

"In short sir all things here appear to bend to the approaching Presidential election—It is now a contest between a few demagogues and the people and it is to be seen whether a minority less than one fourth of the whole members of Congress, can coerce the people to follow them; or whether the people will assume their constitutional rights and put down these Demagogues; who say our course is necessary, for if you leave the election to the people: They will elect a certain Individual who is obnoxious to us. This my dear Sir is as much as to say the people are incapable of self government; and yet they call themselves Democratic Republicans."

(Letter to John Coffee, 15 February 1824, Tennessee Historical Society)

ON THE NATIONAL DEBT

"If a national debt is considered a national blessing then we, like Great Britain, can get on by borrowing—But as I believe it a national curse, my vow shall be to pay the national debt, to prevent a monied aristocracy from growing up around our administration that must bend it to its views, and ultimately destroy the liberty of our country."

(Letter to William S. Fulton, 4 July 1824; Jackson Papers, Library of Congress)

ON EXECUTIVE POWER

"In administering the laws of Congress I shall keep steadily in view the limitations as well as the extent of the executive power, trusting thereby to discharge the functions of my office without transcending authority."

(First Inaugural Address, 4 March 1829)

ON PATRONAGE AND REFORM

"The recent demonstration of public sentiment inscribes on the

list of executive duties, in characters too legible to be overlooked, the task of Reform—which will require particularly, the correction of those abuses that have brought the patronage of the Federal Government into conflict with the freedom of elections, and the counteraction of those causes which have disturbed the rightful course of appointment; and have placed, or continued power in unfaithful or incompetent hands."

(First Inaugural, 4 March 1829)

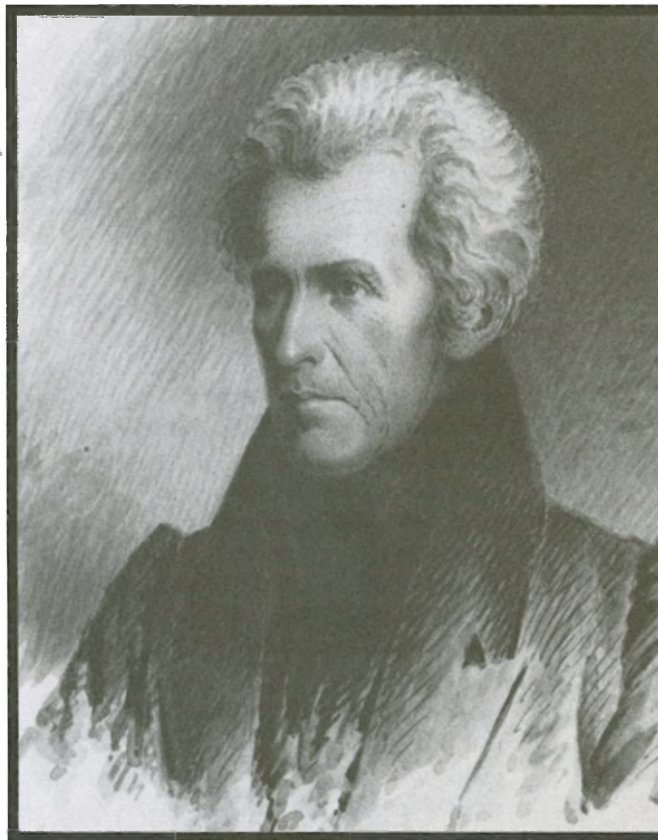
ON ROTATION IN OFFICE

"There has been a great noise made about removals. This to be brought before Congress with the causes—with the propriety of passing a law vacating all offices periodically—then the good can be reappointed, & the bad, defaulters left out without murmurs. Now, every man who has been in office a few years, believes he has a life estate in it, a vested right, and if it has been held 20 years or upwards, not only a vested right, but that it ought to descend to his children, & if no children then the next of kin. This is not the principles of our government. It is rotation in office, that will perpetuate our liberty."

(Memorandum on appointments and removals, [May 1829] Jackson Papers)

ON LIMITING TERMS

"Resting in connection with this subject, is another worthy of particular examination; it is to limit the service of the President of the United States to a single term; whether of 4 or 6 years seems not material; the latter might perhaps be preferable. . . . The chief magistrate of a free people, should never be found seeking or maneuvering to possess himself of the office. Full of care & responsibility, the merit of its possession is taken away, when obtained through any channel or means, other than the voluntary expression of the



—National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

peoples will—when . . . the constitution of the country [shall] inhibit an extension of the trust beyond a single term, every thing of management & motive will be removed and an honorable, honest & faithful discharge of the duties . . . will alone have influence, & constitute his motive of action."

(Draft of First Annual Message to Congress, 1829; Jackson Papers)

ON USE OF THE VETO

"It is due to candor, as well as to my own feelings, that I should express the reluctance and anxiety which I must, at all times, experience in exercising the undoubted right of the Executive to withhold his assent from Bills, on other grounds than their constitutionality. That this right should not be exercised on slight occasions, all will admit. It is only in matters of deep interest, when the principle involved may be justly regarded as next, in importance, to infractions of the Constitution itself, that such a step can be expected to meet with the

approbation of the people. Such an occasion, do I conscientiously believe the present to be. In the discharge of this delicate and highly responsible duty, I am sustained by the reflection that the exercise of this power has been deemed consistent with the obligation of official duty by several of my predecessors: and by the persuasion, too, that, whatever liberal institutions may have to fear from the encroachments of Executive power, which has every where been the cause of so much strife and bloody contention, but little danger is to be apprehended from a precedent by which that authority denies to itself the exercise of powers that bring in their train influence and patronage of great extent, and thus excludes the operation of personal interests, every where the bane of official trust. I derive, too, no small degree of satisfaction from the reflection that, if I have mistaken the interests and wishes of the people, the constitution affords the means of soon redressing the error, by selecting for the place their favor has bestowed on me, a citizen whose opinions may accord with their own."

(Second Annual Message, 6 December 1830; National Archives, Record Group 46, Records of the United States Senate)

ON THE SEPARATION OF POWERS

"Each public officer who takes an oath to support the constitution, swears that he will support it as he understands it, and not as it is understood by others. It is as much the duty of the House of Representatives, of the Senate, and of the President to decide upon the constitutionality of any bill or resolution which may be presented to them for passage or approval, as it is of the supreme judges when it may be brought before them for judicial decision. The opinion of the Judges has no more authority over Congress than the opinion of Congress has over the Judges, and on that point the President is inde-

pendent of both. The authority of the Supreme Court must not therefore, be permitted to control the Congress or the Executive when acting in their legislative capacities, but to have only such influence as the force of their reasoning may deserve."

(Veto of Bank Bill, 10 July 1832; National Archives, Record Group 46)

ON GOOD GOVERNMENT

"There are no necessary evils in Government. Its evils exist only in its abuses. If it would confine itself to equal protection, and, as Heaven does its rains, shower its favors alike on the high and the low, the rich and the poor, it would be an unqualified blessing."

(Veto of Bank Bill, 10 July 1832; National Archives, Record Group 46)

ON THE NATURE OF THE UNION

"The right of the people of a single state to absolve themselves, at will, and without the consent of the other states, from their most solemn obligations, and hazard the liberties and happiness of the millions composing this union, cannot be acknowledged. Such authority is believed to be utterly repugnant both to the principles upon which the general government is constituted and to the objects which it is expressly formed to attain."

"...I fervently pray that the Great Ruler of Nations may so guide your deliberations and our joint measures as that they may prove salutary examples, not only, to the present, but, to future times, and solemnly proclaim that the Constitution and the laws are supreme and the *Union indissoluble*."

(Message to Congress on Nullification, January 16, 1833, National Archives, Record Group 46) □

—Harold D. Moser
Editor-Director

The Papers of Andrew Jackson

JAMES K. POLK'S perspective on the powers of the presidency followed from his Jeffersonian concept of the American union of states. The great constitutional compromises provided for such limitations of power on the general government as might prevent a tyrannical rule of the majority of states over the minority of states, the large states over the small states, or the free states over the slave states. The Bill of Rights protected against the encroachment of the general government on the freedoms of the states and/or the individual. Article II of the Constitution detailed the powers of the President, which in addition to preserving, protecting, and defending the Constitution related almost entirely to military, diplomatic, appointive, and advisory duties. The Constitution gave the President the veto power, but his constitutional powers gave him no other say over the Congress's law-making authority or practice. In his inaugural address on March 4, 1845, Polk set forth his constitutional views:

It will be my first care to administer the Government in the true spirit of that instrument, and to assume no powers not expressly granted or clearly implied in its terms. The Government of the United States is one of delegated and limited power, and it is by a strict adherence to the clearly granted power and by abstaining from the exercise of doubtful or unauthorized implied powers that we have the only sure guarantee against the recurrence of those unfortunate collisions between the Federal and State authorities which have occasionally so much disturbed the harmony of our system and even threatened the perpetuity of our glorious Union.

Sectional divisions over slavery and tariffs had forced Congress to for-

James K. Polk:

A View of Limited Power

multate additional compromises in 1820 and 1833, and those two questions had played a major part in the presidential campaign of 1844. A strict construction of the Constitution would avoid "those unfortunate collisions" that threatened to destroy the Union.

Perhaps no other Polk document stated with greater clarity his concept of limiting the powers of the general government than his veto message of December 15, 1847, rejecting the Wisconsin Internal Improvements bill, passed at the previous session of Congress. Arguing that the \$500,000 appropriation was both inexpedient and unconstitutional, he urged Congress to forgo special-interest demands:

The true interests of the country would be lost sight of in an annual scramble for the contents of the Treasury, and the Member of Congress who could procure the largest appropriations to be expended in his district would claim the reward of victory from his enriched constituents. The necessary consequence would be sectional discontents and heart-burnings, increased taxation, and a national debt never to be extinguished.

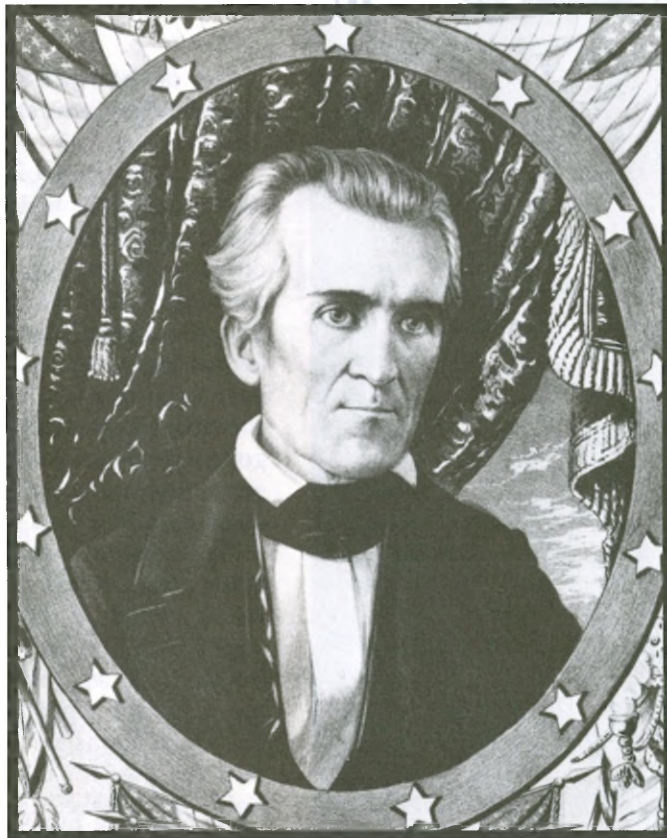
In 1844 American wealth was widely distributed among the states and their people; consolidations of wealth through government taxing and spending could result only in a redistribution of economic and political power—taking from the many for the benefit of the few. Polk denied that Congress's undoubted authority to regulate commerce could be expanded to include any incidental power to undertake internal improvements. He argued that the constitutional power to regulate commerce presumed the preexistence of that which was to be regu-

lated. The power "to regulate" was not the same as the power "to create" or "to facilitate." If such were the meaning of the commerce clause, there would be no middle ground; and the power of the general government would be unlimited. If any enlargement of Congress's delegated powers were widely approved, the states would no doubt sanction a proper amendment to the Constitution.

Polk did not shrink from exercising his presidential powers in the conduct of the Mexican War or in negotiating the Oregon settlement with Great Britain; and by any fair standard of measuring presidents, he led the nation to greater military and diplomatic successes than had been known since the revolution. As he had said in a pre-inaugural letter to Congressman Cave Johnson of Tennessee in December of 1844, "I will if I can have a united and harmonious set of cabinet counselors, who will have the existing

administration and the good of the country more at heart than the question who shall succeed, and that in any event I intend to be myself President of the U.S." A few days before taking office he set four goals for his administration: (1) reduction of the tariff, (2) creation of an Independent Treasury system, (3) resolution of the Oregon boundary dispute, and (4) acquisition of California. He accomplished those objectives and defended militarily the annexation of Texas. Polk also kept one other important pledge. Upon learning that the Democratic party had nominated him for the presidency, he vowed that if elected he would not stand for reelection. At the end of his four years he made good his promise and returned to Tennessee. □

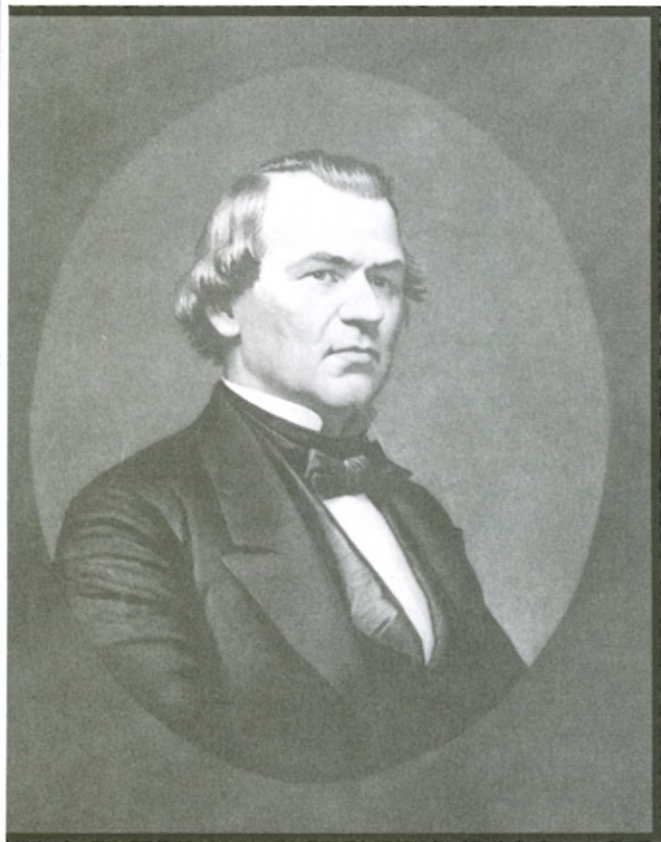
—Wayne Cutler
Editor
Correspondence of James K. Polk



National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

Andrew Johnson:

The Issue of Voting Rights



—National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

THE MAN WHO succeeded Abraham Lincoln, Andrew Johnson, articulated his conservative view of the presidency and of the Constitution itself in his annual message to Congress in December of 1865:

On the propriety of attempting to make the freedmen electors by the proclamation of the Executive, I took for my counsel the Constitution itself, the interpretations of that instrument by its authors and their contemporaries. . . . Moreover, a concession of the elective franchise to the freedmen, by act of the President. . . must have been extended to all colored men, wherever found, and so must have established a change of suffrage in the Northern, Middle, and Western States, not less than in the Southern and Southwestern. Such an act would have created a new class of voters, and would have been an assumption of power by the President which nothing in the Constitution or

laws of the United States would have warranted.

After four years of warfare during which Lincoln exerted the tremendous powers of the office of the presidency, it is startling to read Johnson's notion of a limited chief executive. Yet, to those who had long been familiar with Johnson's convictions about the national government vis-a-vis the state governments, it would have come as little or no surprise.

The matter of voting rights for black males raised significant issues. Aware of the restrictions upon black suffrage in the non-Southern states, Johnson could not resist the temptation to note the implications for all states that any plea for black voting rights must have. Certainly there was a legitimate reason to question the President's power to impose black suffrage or any kind of voting regulations upon any state, North or South. It should be observed, of course, that Johnson held strongly racist beliefs and therefore could hardly be expected to champion blacks' right to vote.

In fairness to the record, however, it is undeniable that the President at an earlier point in the reconstruction process had urged Mississippi's provisional governor to consider providing for limited voting rights for blacks in that state. In a telegram dated August 15, 1865, Johnson asked William L. Sharkey to extend the franchise to black persons who could read and write and who owned real estate valued at not less than two hundred and fifty dollars. By so doing, advised the President, Mississippi could set an example for the other Southern states and also could succeed in foiling the Radicals, "who are wild upon negro franchise." Five days later the provisional governor telegraphed Johnson to inform him that the constitutional convention then in session would not deal with the matter of black



suffrage but instead would leave it for the legislature to consider later. With that quick rebuff to the President's earlier request, Sharkey caused Johnson to back away from the issue of franchise for blacks in the South and he never again broached the subject with any of the other Southern states.

Subsequently, however, he did go on record as personally favoring a limited franchise for Tennessee blacks. In an interview with George L. Stearns on October 3, 1865, the President declared that if he were in Tennessee, he would seek to introduce black suffrage there gradually. He first would offer voting rights to those blacks who had served in the Federal army; from there he would expand the suffrage to those black males who could read and write and then move to include those who owned a nominal amount of property. While staking out his position for a limited suffrage he spoke against universal black suffrage at that time, for "it would breed a war of races." In this same interview with Stearns, Johnson argued that each state must be allowed to control the franchise "by its own laws"; otherwise, a despotic central government would be created. Concerning Tennessee, it should be noted that the President never made any attempt to push his home state to adopt black suffrage, despite his theoretical commitment to such.

Whereas radical Republicans would eventually embrace black suffrage as an essential component of Reconstruction, most political leaders did not do so in the first year or so of Johnson's presidency. His statements in the Annual Message coincided with prevailing views in the country. Indeed, black suffrage would have to await the Fifteenth Amendment, which did not clear Congress until early 1869. □

—Paul H. Bergeron
Editor and Director
The Andrew Johnson Project

Ulysses S. Grant:

"Mistakes Have Been Made"

"It was my fortune, or misfortune, to be called to the office of Chief Executive without any previous political training. Mistakes have been made, as all can see and I admit, but it seems to me oftener in the selections made of appointed to aid in carrying out the various duties of administering the Government. . . . Failures have been errors of judgment, not of intent."

(Final Message to Congress,
5 December 1876)

Ulysses S. Grant entered the White House with considerable reluctance. As general in chief, Grant had a desk job, drew a comfortable salary, lived in a house presented to him by wealthy admirers, and enjoyed the company of his four school-age children. To accept the presidency, he had to resign a position that carried lifelong tenure for another that would last at most eight years and return him to civilian life at age fifty-four.

Grant detested politics and had only once voted for president, and then for Democrat James Buchanan. During the Civil War, he converted so slowly to Republican that in 1864 Democrats considered nominating him for president. After accepting the Republican nomination in 1868, Grant left for an extended western tour, primarily to escape electioneering, reporters, and public speaking.

Grant had won the war as an unmilitary general; he planned to serve as an unpolitical president. Accordingly, he appointed a cabinet without consulting party leaders, then set his own course in enforcing Reconstruction and reforming Indian policy. Early in the Civil War he had learned from mistakes, but the presidency afforded no such opportunities. Moreover, once he traded his uniform for civilian clothes, he lost some of the prestige he had brought to the White House, and party chieftains regained

power. Stung by personal attacks, Grant sought reelection as vindication. The second term proved far less successful, marred by exposure of scandals that did not blemish his reputation of integrity but did impugn his judgment.

Because of the contrast between Grant's military achievements and his presidency, he is often ranked among White House failures. Democrats, however, produced inferior presidential candidates (Horatio Seymour and Horace Greeley), and the Grant administration reflected the faults of his countrymen who wanted peace and prosperity rather than reform. His final message to Congress, sometimes misread as an apology, instead presented a candid self-appraisal. Grant's blunt, outspoken honesty resembled that of Harry Truman; and proud Republicans would have nominated Grant for a third term had he not decisively rejected their pleas.

—John Y. Simon
Executive Director
The Ulysses S. Grant Association

LOOKING BACK

"I did not want the Presidency, and have never quite forgiven myself for resigning the command of the army to accept it; but it could not be helped. I owed my honors and opportunities to the Republican party, and if my name could aid it I was bound to accept. . . . I never wanted to get out of a place as much as I did to get out of the Presidency. For sixteen years, from the opening of the war, it had been a constant strain upon me. So when the third term was seriously presented to me I peremptorily declined it. . . . If



—National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

Tilden was declared elected I intended to hand him over the reins, and see him peacefully installed. I should have treated him as cordially as I did Hayes, for the question of the Presidency was then neither personal nor political, but national. . . . When you take up the question of second or third terms, and propose permanent ineligibility afterward, you are encountered with the argument that in a free government a people have a right to elect whomsoever they please, and that because a man has served the country well he should not at the end of his term be in the position of an officer cashiered from the army. What you want to avoid, it seems to me, is not re-elections but frequent elections. I think the best plan, one that would go farther to satisfy all opinions, would be one term for six or seven years, and ineligibility to re-election." □

(Conversations, 1878)

Dwight D. Eisenhower:

A Postwar World Vision



Courtesy of Eisenhower Centennial Foundation

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER, thirty-fourth President of the United States (1953-1961), understood the importance of leadership. He was the great war hero of World War II, beloved by Americans for his leadership as Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force, and Theater Commander, European Theater of Operations; for his continuing service to his country as Chief of Staff, United States Army; for his role as president of Columbia University; and for his success as Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, in organizing the forces of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Himself a proven and popular leader, Eisenhower wrote often of leadership as he took up the task of guiding postwar America in the 1950s. In documents selected for publication by the editors of *the Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower* we see Eisenhower time and again writing about leadership—leadership in the Congress, in his administration, in the Republican Party, and

in the international community.

In July 1953 Eisenhower had served in office for six months. His days were filled with such frustrations as Senator John Bricker's attempt to limit the treaty-making power, and the embarrassing agitation of Senator Joseph McCarthy. Yet his vision of world leadership through the presidency impelled him to write, on July 2, a long entry in his diary that speaks to the role he might play in bringing men and nations together.

"Daily I am impressed," he began, "by the shortsightedness bordering upon tragic stupidity of many who fancy themselves to be the greatest believers in and supporters of capitalism (or a free competitive economy), but who blindly support measures and conditions that cannot fail in the long run to destroy any free economic system." He went on to discount

Lenin's "contradictions" in capitalism, and then said:

The general conclusion of these meandering thoughts is that leadership must find a way to bring men and nations to a point where they will give to the long-term promise the same value that they give to immediate and individual gains. If we could produce clear and dispassionate thinking in this regard, if we could get today the questions of world trade and world cooperation studied and settled on the basis of the long-term good of all, we could laugh at all the other so-called 'contradictions' in our system, and we could be so secure against the communist menace that it would gradually dry up and wither away.

As it is, the danger is very real and very great that even the so-called enlightened areas of Western Europe, Britain, United States, and other English-speaking peoples will, by stubborn adherence to the purpose of achieving

maximum immediate gain, actually commit suicide.

In this situation, we find a reason to say that, even if the free government were not originally based upon some form of deeply felt religious faith then men should attempt to devise a religion that stresses the qualities of unselfishness, cooperation, and equality of men.

In the facets of our resources—material, scientific, human, and spiritual—there is ample assurance not only of security but of continued advance for all the free world in living standards if only we have sense enough to learn to cooperate for the long-term benefit of all of us. □

—Elizabeth S. Hughes
Senior Associate Editor
*The Papers of
Dwight David Eisenhower*

THE PRESIDENTIAL PAPERS PROJECTS

Seven presidential papers projects receive Endowment support:

The Papers of George Washington
University of Virginia:
\$126,955 in outright funds and
\$1,220,361 in matching funds.

The Papers of Thomas Jefferson
Princeton University:
\$180,000 in outright funds.

The Papers of Andrew Jackson
University of Tennessee, Knoxville:
\$297,395 in outright funds and
\$380,206 in matching funds.

Correspondence of James K. Polk
University of Tennessee, Knoxville:
\$279,000 in outright funds and
\$129,350 in matching funds

The Papers of Andrew Johnson
University of Tennessee, Knoxville:
\$389,709 in outright funds and
\$34,500 in matching funds

The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant
Southern Illinois University:
\$292,943 in outright funds and
\$7,500 in matching funds

Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower
The Johns Hopkins University
\$53,728 in outright funds and
\$1,052,964 in matching funds.

Old Hickory at Home



In this ca. 1880 photograph, split rail fencing separates fields from the mansion and its outbuildings.

“**A**S MONTICELLO WAS for Jefferson and Mount Vernon was for Washington, the Hermitage was the foundation of Andrew Jackson,” comments George Anderjack, executive director of the Hermitage. The Hermitage, one of the three most popular presidential sites in the country, is currently being restored and re-established as the center of a working plantation as it was in the last years of Jackson’s life. “In a physical and emotional sense that perhaps we can understand because we have those same feelings for those places called home,” Anderjack observes, “I think it gave him the intellectual, emotional, and physical strength to keep charging out. He loved the land, and he referred to the Hermitage not as the mansion: The Hermitage was the place, it was the farm. When he referred to the mansion, it was always ‘the mansion house,’ but when he said ‘The Hermitage,’ it was the land. I think perhaps because he in so many ways lived a military and political nomadic life, the importance of calling a thousand acres ‘home’—the land, the dirt, the animals, the people—was at the core of his peace of mind.”

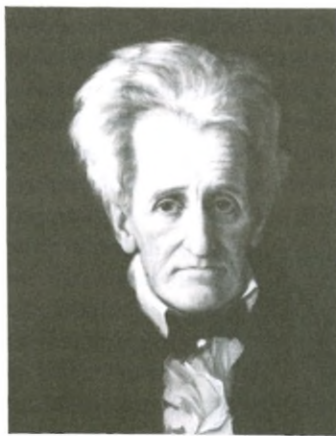
Jackson first bought the land in 1804 and lived there with his family in several log cabins until 1821, when the family moved into a newly completed, larger home built in the Federal style. Library wings and a gabled dining room were added ten years later, and three years after that, in 1834, a fire all but destroyed much of the house. Jackson, although he was in the White House at the time, launched a radical and grand rebuilding of the house, this time in the Greek Revival style—complete with facades and stylish renovations to the interior. Jackson finally returned home to enjoy the Hermitage in 1837, and he lived out his retirement there until his death in 1845; it is these later years that current efforts

at the Hermitage attempt to recreate. “We are not concerned with Jackson as the earlier military hero, we are not concerned with Jackson as the obstinate president, but we are concerned with the final eight years of his life,” Anderjack stated.

The new interpretation will also reveal the contrast between the political image Jackson cultivated for himself as a buckskin-clad frontiersman and his identity as a cultured aristocrat. In his public life Jackson presented himself as a populist, but the furnishings of his home indicate that he was sophisticated and discriminating in his passion for fine living.

A fervent sense of place flavors the current restoration efforts at the Hermitage, from replicating the tiniest decorative details that Jackson himself might have selected in the mid-1830s, to recovering this original meaning of “The Hermitage” and placing the mansion in its correct context as part of a nineteenth-century working plantation. Along with the restoration, there will be projects in archaeology, on slave life, and preservation laboratories.

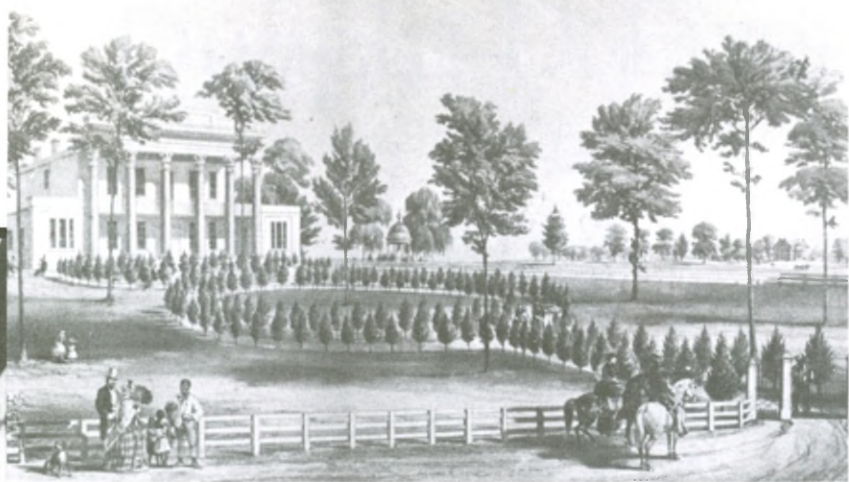
However, while the Hermitage has been a historic house museum since the last decade of the nineteenth century, when the Ladies Hermitage Association of Nashville rescued it from an uncertain fate, this current standard of meticulous replication has evolved, over the course of the last century, from a very different ethic. When the Ladies Hermitage Association first acquired the mansion in 1889, the house was suffering from neglect and was in dire need of fundamental repairs. Once the roof was fixed and the grounds tidied, the association set about restoring the mansion in a way that reflected contemporary household fashion, in the mood of “Southern colonialism,” meaning that damaged wallpaper was replaced by beige paint, and the style of Greek Revivalism that Jackson had cultivated



Andrew Jackson
by George P. A. Healy, 1845.

BY MEGHAN LASLOCKY

—Photos courtesy of the Hermitage



The Hermitage in an 1856 lithograph.

in the house's decor was somewhat corrupted. After the house was opened to the visiting public in 1893, the Ladies Hermitage Association went about tracing and buying back the original furnishings. To this day the Hermitage boasts the largest collection of original personal possessions at any early presidential home open to the public, a vast assemblage which includes everything from Jackson's bed to his books to family silver cakebaskets.

Meanwhile, outside the house, trees were planted to create a park-like setting, and as southern sensibilities at the turn of the nineteenth century resisted discussion of slavery, the slave cabins that had housed at least some of Jackson's one hundred and twenty-five slaves, as well as other telltale outbuildings, were razed. Similarly, the fences that separated the field from the house were dismantled. Over the course of the next few decades, and even into the 1960s, the association also managed to buy back much of the acreage that was part of the plantation.

It was in the sixties, however, that a new consciousness began to develop in the field of preservation and restoration, specifically in historic house museums. "In the early sixties," Anderjack commented, "I think preservation really lurched ahead as a result of a lot of the efforts that were going on in very important houses, principally in the White House. Jacqueline Kennedy was making a very strong statement on important public houses, and I think that rippled out to houses of other presidents, like the Hermitage."

So, in keeping with fervent campaigns to retrieve original furnishings of historic homes of presidents, efforts were made to recreate a period mood or feeling in the rooms, although research did not inform every decision made about the decor and the results were not exact.

In the case of the Hermitage, Anderjack reports that around 1970 a chandelier was fabricated and installed in the dining room of the mansion because it was assumed that every gracious dining room would have one.

Eventually the practice of recreating a period feeling evolved, in the eighties, into an ethic of applying the rigor of scholarly integrity to the field of historic preservation and restoration. Under a new regimen of meticulous research, when the staff at the Hermitage could find no documentary evidence that a chandelier had hung in the dining room in Jackson's time, the chandelier was removed. Similar standards were applied to the Hermitage's plan to recreate and refurbish the original finishes, wallpapers, and textiles that had decorated the mansion and that presumably reflect Jackson's urbane taste.

By examining invoices, receipts, and other documentation, specialists at the Hermitage have been able to identify the original wallpaper patterns used in the house during the 1830s. While many historic patterns have been preserved, they are usually made with twentieth-century silk-screening methods; however, the recent spirit of integrity has created a demand for those same patterns made with nineteenth-century block printing techniques. "About five years ago," Anderjack reported, "a great wallpaper house in France, Zuber, really began to push the effort of reintroducing, with original blocks from their collection from the nineteenth century, many of these papers that had not

been available for over one hundred years. And what is forcing this is not just the preservation market, but the consumer market for fine period furnishings."

While in the case of the wallpaper, the research was largely documentary, the research that informed decisions made about the painted surfaces was based more upon chemical and microscopic analysis, which required the expertise of a microanalyst of paint finishes. In the dining room, for example, chromochronology revealed that the colonial beige walls were Prussian blue in Jackson's time. A paint company in Philadelphia collaborated with the Hermitage staff and consultants to fabricate not just the correct color, but also the correct texture of the original paint, which involved using a formula for paint suspended in linseed oil, unlike modern oil-based paint, which is made with mineral spirits, a petroleum product. Anderjack explained that "in the 1830s, people would have loved the paints we use today; unfortunately, the technology of the 1830s was not advanced, and they could not achieve the perfectly even painted finishes. And then not only did we deal with the correct paint, but we brought in paint specialists, two gentlemen from Scotland, one whose great-great-great-grandfather worked decorating the Houses of Parliament, which were reconstructed after the great fire in the nineteenth century. We brought in these specialists because they had, over generations, a feel for paint finishes of this time period. We applied the paint using nineteenth-century style brushes, these rounded brushes of camel hair, in the same brush strokes. So the result of the painted finishes, in this room, is in a way, just God awful! But it is terribly accurate for the 1830s."

Also through chromochronology, it was discovered that the facade of the Hermitage, which had been added after the 1834 fire, had been painted a bright white for at least one hundred years, but during the years of Jackson's retirement, it had been painted off-white, with sand from local creek beds thrown into the paint. Two years ago, the original process was replicated, and the end result resembles dressed stone



The dining room of the Hermitage as it appears today. The walls have been painted Prussian blue and the chandelier that had been installed in a 1970 restoration has been removed.

work and again presumably reflects Jackson's taste in exterior finishes.

Along with providing visitors with a scrupulously accurate encounter with the authentic nineteenth-century decor, the staff of the Hermitage is also conscious of bringing to life the smaller, less permanent, even seasonal details of life in the nineteenth century. "People used to make changes to rooms that we really don't understand today because of air conditioning and central heating," said Anderjack. "We have to remember what it would have been like before electricity, before vacuum cleaners, and before screens, when in a warm time of year, you would have to open your windows, which in a great mansion like the Hermitage is right in the middle of a dirty, fly-infested, working farm, and that would be really injurious to the furnishings in a room. So you would drape [in gauze] gold-leafed picture frames and mirrors because flying insects, like common household flies, left acidic black spots. Today we might find it very fashionable to have a distressed gold frame with spots on it, but let me assure you, any great lady of a country house would have been scandalized if anyone saw a black spot on a frame, because it indicated that she was not performing good household care and was not in control of her mansion." Today, the windows of the Hermitage are sealed and a state-of-the-art environmental control system carefully monitors the heat and humidity, but plans for

reinterpretation will keep one room, a parlor, "dressed for summer" throughout the year: its paintings and fixtures swaddled in gauze; its carpets rolled up and stored; its furniture slipcovered in dimity; and its fragile porcelain ornaments packed away, as if a confused barn swallow could still dart in through an open window and dash it to pieces.

Outside the windows of the Hermitage, a seeming world away from French wallpaper and dimity, the long voyage towards authenticity continues on somewhat rougher seas as the Hermitage faces the difficult task of reinterpreting the site as a plantation, and Jackson as a slave owner. Far away from the mansion lie the remains of six duplex buildings that once housed twelve slave families. Again, Jackson owned one hundred and twenty-five slaves, which according to Anderjack, was a lot for only a thousand acres—there were much larger plantations in Tennessee at that time that had nine thousand acres and only one hundred and fifty slaves.

Anderjack anticipates that over the next five years, archaeology will play a key role in informing us about the farm as an economic unit and its slave community as a source of labor, as well as bring the Hermitage to the forefront of the growing field of plantation archaeology. Archaeological finds so far have shaken previously secure notions about slave life. A wealth of fauna remains indicate that these slaves had a varied diet of domestic and wild animals; coins found around the cabins corroborate documentary research indicating that slaves were paid for extra work; and parts of fire-arms found suggest that slaves could own guns, probably for hunting.

Over the course of the next twenty-five years, the information derived from archaeological reconnaissance will inform the efforts to restore the landscape around the house to what it was in the 1830s

and 40s, and place the mansion in its proper physical context as headquarters of a plantation. In the meantime, the trees that the Ladies Hermitage Association planted early in this century are not being replaced as they die off so that fence lines can be rebuilt, fence lines that emphasize the boundaries between the house and the fields. To further the agricultural authenticity of the site, crops will be planted in the fields surrounding the house.

Historic preservation is, however, an ongoing process, and in twenty-five years, doubtless more questions will be raised, in a healthy way, about individual decorative details or, on a larger scale, about the philosophy that presently guides the field. "In preservation," Anderjack proposes, "the bottom line is that you are never through with your work, and when you think you're through with your work, you've done an incomplete job. There's always another rock that gets turned over, with a fragment of information that begins to open up possibilities that you didn't know before you stepped on the rock." □

Meghan Laslocky is a program specialist for Collaborative Projects in the Division of Research Programs.

The Hermitage was awarded a Challenge Grant of \$375,000 matched three-to-one in gifts to assist with the restoration of the mansion and to facilitate a new interpretive focus on the life and character of President Andrew Jackson.

The Hermitage today.



Saturday the 12 Arose about six o'clock in the morning read till School time and spent the fore noon hours in drawing and the Girls was questioned in the bible and reminded of their faults which Miss Pierce had discovered during the week in the after Noon took a walk but saw nothing entertaining returned to my Chamber where with many disagreeable feelings I indulged myself I soon found I must not give way these unhappy feelings went down stairs and when they were all assembled each one read a Chapter in the beble And retired to rest at Nine.

and who sent his children, including daughter Harriet, to the academy; Tapping Reeve, founder of the Litchfield Law School, the first such school in the country; and Sarah Pierce, founder and headmistress of the Litchfield Female Academy.

From April to December 1993 the Litchfield Historical Society, with

A miniature of Sarah Pierce (1767-1852), attributed to George Catlin, ca. 1830.



A Lady's Education: The Litchfield Ideal

*F*IFTEEN-YEAR-OLD Maryann Bacon began her journal in June 1802, the day after she arrived at the Litchfield Female Academy in the hills of western Connecticut. With uncertain spelling and syntax, but with genuine emotion, Maryann described her first days at school:

Friday June the 11 Arose at five O'clock the family was not up walked in the Garden for the morning was very pleasant meditating upon the beauties of Nature and reflecting with many disagreeable feelings upon have parted from my kind Parents and Acquaintance to live with strangers I returned to the house where breakfast was almost ready at Nine o'clock went to school with Miss Cornelia Adams drew and heard the Girls read history, at Noon studied my Dictionary and devoted the afternoon to reading drawing and spelling and spend the rest part of the day with Mrs. Adams and her daughter and retired to rest at Nine o'clock.

Ellen Marsh is assistant editor of Humanities.



Miniature of Maryann Bacon, ca. 1800, one of Miss Pierce's pupils.

Despite her homesickness, Maryann Bacon was a fortunate young lady, for Miss Sarah Pierce's Litchfield Female Academy was one of the finest schools for young women and girls in the new republic. Indeed, Litchfield itself was one of the finest towns in Connecticut, if not in all New England. The years of the academy, 1792-1833, coincided with Litchfield's "Golden Age," when it was a prosperous county seat and the fourth largest town in the state, the locus of turnpikes and stagecoach routes. Litchfield had an unusually well-educated citizenry. Of all that citizenry, three were preeminent: the Congregational clergyman, Lyman Beecher, who lived there from 1810 to 1825

NEH support, will commemorate the bicentennial of the first complete academic year of Miss Pierce's school with an exhibition, "To Ornament Their Minds: Sarah Pierce's Litchfield Female Academy, 1792-1833." The title is taken from a letter that Nancy Hale, a student at the academy, wrote to her sister in September 1802: "Besides embroidering I study Geography and write Composition. I get my lessons in Evening. [Miss Pierce] does not allow anyone to embroider without they attend to some study for she says she wishes to ornament their minds when they are with her."

Miss Pierce's emphasis on intellectual endeavor in her school was unusual. The "ornamentals"—French, art, needlework, and music—were the foundation of the female academics of the period, however, and Sarah Pierce's school was no exception. Not only did the families of the Litchfield girls expect a handsome embroidered picture or watercolor to hang over the mantel, attesting to their daughter's accomplishments and attendance at an expensive academy, but the school itself made a good profit from orna-



The Litchfield Female Academy, as drawn by Emily Noyes Vanderpoel in 1892 from a sketch made by a schoolgirl at the academy.

mental subjects, which were much more costly than the academic courses. A student taking piano lessons, for instance, had to pay extra for her teacher, for practice time on an instrument, and for sheet music.

Unlike most headmistresses, Miss Pierce was not herself an expert in the ornamental subjects. Her friends and relations spoke of her personal disdain of needlework, her tone deafness, and her feeble attempts at drawing. But instructors in these arts could be hired. Sarah Pierce's deficiencies in feminine skills were more than compensated by her intelligence, business sense, and ability as a teacher. The Litchfield Female Academy became one of the most important, successful, and prestigious educational institutions in the post-Revolutionary period, so highly regarded that students came there from fifteen states and territories, Canada, and from as far away as the West Indies and Ireland, an unusually wide geographic distribution for a female academy at that time. Over its history, the school educated at least 3,000 young women, trained scores to become teachers and heads of schools, and enlarged its curriculum to include higher mathematics, the sciences, and Greek and Latin.

Sarah Pierce was a schoolmistress because she was obliged to earn a

living. In those days, unmarried women were supported by their fathers or another male family member. After their father's death in 1783, John Pierce, Sarah's oldest brother, provided for his widowed stepmother and eight siblings. And when he died, Sarah, age twenty-five, assumed leadership of the family and opened an academy for young ladies. Her brother had sent her to school in New York City to prepare her for just such an occupation, the only respectable one for a middle-class woman.

Most such schools were incorporated and administered by a male board of trustees, but Sarah Pierce maintained sole control of her academy until the late 1820s. She persuaded the leading men of Litchfield, who were proud of her school, to raise subscriptions to pay for two successive school buildings in 1798 and 1828. Miss Pierce also sold supplies to the students, boarded some girls in her home (the rest of the students boarded in houses

throughout the town), and managed her affairs so well that, despite generous gifts to charities during her lifetime, she died a rich woman. The forty-one years of the school's existence testify to Miss Pierce's acumen—most female academies had a much briefer life span.

Education was important to the new republic, for it was believed that the very survival of the country depended upon a virtuous, educated, and moral citizenry. Sarah Pierce was in the forefront in taking up the cause of education for women. As early as 1818, she argued that because fathers were increasingly out of the home and in the workplace, it fell to mothers to educate children to take their place in society. The expansion of the role of women was reinforced by the religious thinking of the Second Great Awakening, which asserted that women were morally and spiritually superior to men. As the primary keepers of Christian faith and morals, women, especially privileged women, were expected not to limit their role to the domestic hearth, but to engage in educational, charitable, and reform

activities that would improve society. It was essential that women be well-educated.

Sarah Pierce was deeply religious. She believed that "in God's final judgment, women of all classes would find salvation only through having led lives of intellectual and emotional discipline, virtue and modesty, and social usefulness," states Lynne Templeton Brickley, an adviser for the exhibition.

"Pierce's educational philosophy was firmly grounded on the didactic literature of eighteenth-century Great Britain, which dealt with woman's 'separate sphere' of domesticity and the proper education for that sphere."

Enrollment at the academy grew from thirty students in a single quarter in 1795 to more than seventy-five in 1807 and a peak of 157 in 1816. Brickley compares these numbers

*The truth
must be spoken
at all times,
on all occasions,
though it might
appear advantageous
to tell
a falsehood.*

*Rule No. 11
of the Litchfield Academy.*

with Phillips Academy in Andover, the largest of the New England male academies, which had an enrollment of fifty-seven in 1803. "As late as 1822," she states, "none of the fifty male colleges in the United States enrolled more than 135 students a year." The Litchfield Female Academy students ranged in age from six to the mid-twenties, but most of them were thirteen to sixteen years of age. Brickley says, "The younger pupils tended to be local, like the Beecher girls, and the older ones taught part-time to earn their way," preparing themselves to open their own schools. The majority of the girls attended only one or two terms, but many stayed for years.

Academy schooling for girls was expensive. In an era when skilled artisans earned \$1 a day and small-town New England professionals frequently made less than \$1,000 annually, Brickley estimates that a year at the academy for a boarding student could easily cost the considerable sum of \$350, excluding travel (which vastly exceeded tuition), clothing, and personal expenses. By comparison, a year in a New England college such as Amherst or Williams cost young men about \$100.

Many of the boarders were upper-class girls of the colonial aristocracy or from the new mercantile fortunes, but they democratically mixed with the daughters of small-town New England—the children of ministers, lawyers and doctors, tradesmen, and artisans. At the school the girls made friendships that lasted a lifetime.

Although the academy initially offered the usual curriculum of a female academy, it was not long before Miss Pierce began expanding and emphasizing the academic subjects. By 1824 she described to a

parent a curriculum that included "Grammar, Geography, Arithmetic, Ancient and Modern History, Rhetoric, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Logic, Alison on Taste and Composition—together with what is taught in common schools."

A nephew, John Pierce Brace, whom Miss Pierce had sent to Williams College so that he could join her school, began teaching there in 1814. Brace introduced courses in the sciences, philosophy, and higher mathematics, some at the same

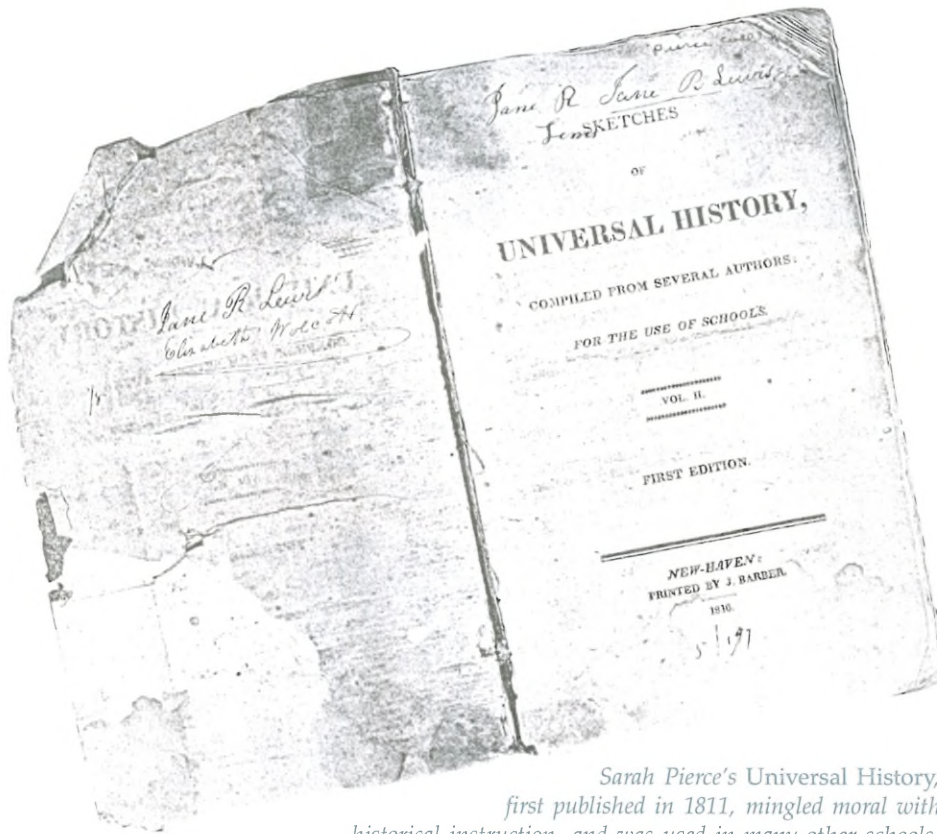
earnest fearlessness of those times in regard to all matters of opinion, that the hardest theological problems were sometimes given out as composition subjects." At nine years of age, Harriet wrote an essay which Brace assigned on "The Difference between the Natural and Moral Sublime," and in 1823 twelve-year-old Harriet's composition on "Can the Immortality of the Soul Be Proved by the Light of Nature?" was fine enough to be read at the end-of-term public exhibition of

students' accomplishments.

Miss Pierce kept her girls busy at school from Monday through Saturday. Every hour was accounted for. At the beginning of each semester, the students copied out the rules of the school, under Miss Pierce's dictation. These rules, which Harriet Beecher Stowe recalled "required of us only absolute moral perfection," were read and reviewed every Saturday, when the girls were examined on what they had learned

that week and each girl's debits and credits were publicly added up.

Besides composing "sixty lines of good writing" every week, the girls kept journals, part diary but mostly notes from lectures, sermons, and readings, which their teachers corrected and which the girls used as texts from which to study. Textbooks were scarce and expensive: Teachers read from them and the girls copied or took notes in their journals on what was read. Rote learning was the teaching method, which Sarah Pierce and John Pierce Brace believed added not only to the students' store of factual knowledge, but also increased their intellectual abilities. When Miss Pierce decided to write her own textbook, *Sketches of Universal History Compiled from Several Authors*



Sarah Pierce's Universal History, first published in 1811, mingled moral with historical instruction, and was used in many other schools.

level of difficulty as those at men's colleges. He was also a remarkable teacher of composition. In later years Harriet Beecher Stowe recalled his methods:

The constant excitement in which he kept the minds of his pupils—the wide and varied regions of thought into which he led them, formed a preparation for teaching composition, the main requisite for which, whatever people may think, is to have something which one feels interested to say.

John Pierce Brace did not condescend intellectually to his young charges. In her novel, *Oldtown Folks*, Harriet Beecher Stowe described Cloudlands Academy, which strongly resembled the Litchfield academy: "It was characteristic of the simple,

for the Use of Schools, she used a catechetical format of questions and answers, which the girls memorized.

From 1810 to 1824, the Reverend Lyman Beecher came on Saturday afternoons to give religious instruction, in exchange for free tuition for his seven children. Sundays meant church twice a day, and in the stricter Congregational boarding homes, cold meals and no work or leisure activities. Sunday evenings the young women attended a female Bible study group. Christmas day was little different from an ordinary day, observed in Puritan fashion but not celebrated.

All courses had a strong moral component—there was no wishy-washy relativity here. Miss Pierce, like her fellow Americans, firmly believed that the United States and its government were the best in the world and that Christianity was the one true religion. These beliefs were inculcated in the students. Geography, for example, had four precepts: the supreme breadth and perfection of God's plan for the world; the superiority of Christian lands and people to all others; the greatness of the United States in its geography, resources, institutions, and people; and the preeminence of New England in this great nation. One wonders how the young ladies from Mississippi or New York or Kentucky reacted to that last precept.

School life was not all study and devotions, however. Miss Pierce believed that daily exercise was necessary for good health in her charges and required each girl to take morning and evening walks, for which they earned credits. She encouraged dancing as a healthy form of exercise. Balls or "hops" were frequently held at the school and in private homes, and the students at the Litchfield Law School invited the young ladies to balls, teas, sleigh rides, and picnics. All in all, there was a good bit of social intermingling between the two schools, with many marriages as a result. Brickley

believes that the law school was one reason the female academy was so popular—brothers or fathers who had gone there to study law encouraged their sisters or daughters to attend Miss Pierce's academy. The families of all concerned thought it was no bad thing for well-educated young ladies to become acquainted with marriageable law students who had bright prospects.

Although she was a strict, demanding schoolmarm, Sarah Pierce had a deep affection for her students. In 1819, for instance, Mary Chester, a student, wrote that Miss Pierce had told the girls, "I can truly say that I would be willing to lay down my life this day for your sakes." That affection was returned. Many of the students kept in touch with her in later years and sent their own daughters to the school.

Miss Pierce was successful in her goal of training her students to become rational, intellectual beings whom she encouraged to continue to study and to learn throughout their lives. "For many of the students, being alumnae of the school was the core basis of their adult personae," says Brickley. She notes that numerous family histories, obituaries, and memoirs proudly state that alumnae attended "the famous school of Miss Sally Pierce in Litchfield, Connecticut."

Sarah Pierce's own life as an independent, accomplished, intellectual woman was an example for her students. Many of them went on to found foreign mission schools, Sunday, and charity schools, and participated in a wide range of charitable and reform activities. Miss Pierce's greatest influence on the history of American education, however, was through the more than forty young women she

trained as teachers. The educational level they received at the academy was far superior to that required for teachers in common schools. At least fifteen of these women founded female academies in ten or more



The Cottage Girl needlework picture (watercolor and embroidery on silk) made by Cyrinthia Smith in 1802.

states, spreading the influence of Sarah Pierce's school throughout the country. Catharine Beecher, for instance, established the well-known Hartford Female Seminary on the Litchfield model, and Brickley says that four of Miss Pierce's students founded schools or taught in Ohio, which was a state that "consciously patterned all its schools on those of Connecticut."

But the times changed. By the late 1820s there were a number of competing female academies in the Northeast. Enrollment at the Litchfield academy dropped to fifty-two students in 1832, and John Pierce Brace left his aunt's school to take the principalship of Catharine Beecher's academy in Hartford. Miss Pierce severed her connection with the school in 1833, and it closed a few years later. In 1834 the Litchfield Law School closed—Yale and Harvard had their own law schools and students preferred to study there. The days of the stage-coach were numbered; railroads avoided the hilltop towns. Manufacturing followed the rivers to Waterbury and Torrington. The Golden Age of Litchfield ended.

The Litchfield Historical Society received \$125,000 for the exhibition from the program for museums and historical organizations in the Division of Public Programs.

*You are requested
not only to exercise
in the morning but
also in the evening
sufficiently for
the preservation
of health.*

Rule No. 2
of the Litchfield Academy.

V e r m o n t



R e a d i n g



P r o j e c t

DECODING the KREMLIN

BY
LAURA
RANDALL

WELL BEFORE THE FAILED Kremlin coup of August 1991, Gorbachev's policies of perestroika and glasnost were creating changes in the USSR that reverberated worldwide. As the new openness endorsed freedom of thought and expression among its citizens, an awakening of a different kind was occurring among people outside the Soviet Union in 1989. Not only scholars, but non-specialists as well, sought to grasp the complex political and social upheavals that were transforming the country and probe its cultural identity and intellectual life as well.

At the same time in Vermont, local arts leaders were meeting to figure out how to attract more people to the state's already popular reading-discussion programs. When someone suggested a series on Soviet literature, "the entire room seemed to brighten at the timeliness of the idea," said Sally Anderson, director of the Vermont Reading Project. "You know it's a good idea when everybody says yes."

The panel decided to expand the series to include a theme on Eastern European literature. Scholars from area universities were enlisted to compile a list of books that would best reflect these different cultures for the people of Vermont. Kevin McKenna, professor of Russian language and literature at the University of Vermont, led the search. "I

looked for books that gave insight into the Russian soul," he says.

In October 1991, a scant two months after the attempted Soviet coup made startling headlines around the world, "Literature of Soviet Life" and "Voices from Eastern Europe" were launched in libraries across Vermont. Fueled by both events evolving on the other side of the world and readers' hunger to learn more about different cultures, the two-year program—sponsored by the Vermont Reading Project and supported by NEH—has turned into one of Vermont's most successful reading-discussion series. (Two other themes came to be included in the program as well: "Families in Literature" and "The New World and New England History.")

Reading programs have been a significant part of Vermont communities for more than a decade, with seventy to eighty libraries participating in any given year. But more than just the "regulars" flocked to this particular program, says Anderson, to read and discuss works by such influential authors and poets as Marquis de Custine, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Milan Kundera, Czesław Miłosz, and Vaclav Havel. The mix of audience members—male and female, young and old—was exactly what project leaders had hoped to attract when they first raised the idea. "We already knew we had serious readers. We wanted to expand our audiences," Anderson says.

Most of the discussion groups

met weekly at local libraries for a month and a half, with local scholars taking turns as leaders of the discussions. During the winter months, participants braved Vermont's bitter cold and trekked through snow and ice to attend. They sometimes listened to discussion leaders read excerpts from a novel in Russian or outline the history of a certain country. Then the floor would open to people with questions or comments.

"I had no idea how curious and obsessed Vermont audiences would be in trying to reach an understanding about Russia," says Kevin McKenna.

The diversity of the audience only enhanced the discussions, leaders say. "There was everyone from an elderly, grande dame type who had ridden the Trans-Siberian Railroad to unemployed people in their early twenties," adds John Kopper, professor of Russian and comparative literature at Dartmouth College.

"Literature of Soviet Life" was the first reading-discussion series music teacher Alvin Shulman ever attended, although they are a regular event at his local library in Lyndonville, Vt. "I hadn't read any Russian literature apart from Dostoevski's *Crime and Punishment* many years ago," he says.

Many, like Shulman were unaccustomed to the complex political nature of some of the works on the reading lists. With this in mind, McKenna chose the 19th-century *A Journey for Our Time* by Marquis de Custine to kick off the Soviet dis-

cussion series. After reading the travel diary, he says, people realized that despotism did not originate with Joseph Stalin, that centralized administration and bureaucracy were not the invention of the Bolsheviks, and that the lack of a work ethic is not the legacy of a Communist ideology. "It's a penetrating analysis applicable to the Soviet Union in the 20th century," he says of the 1839 book. McKenna also compared de Custine to Alexis de Tocqueville, the renowned French author and statesman. "De Custine went to Russia to praise autocracy and ended up with the opposite opinion of it," he says. "De Tocqueville came to America to declaim democracy and ended up praising it."

Another way McKenna drew people into the discussions was describing his own extensive travels to Russia. "Are Russian people happy?" was the question frequently asked by participants, who are led to believe everyone there is miserable from the sad-looking people of newspaper photographs.

"I said that by nature showing their feelings and laughing in public is considered rude in Russia," McKenna explains. "I told them the best way to see Russians as they really are is around the dinner table. They love to philosophize, they love to discuss."

To build on the theme of feminine voices in recent Soviet literature, McKenna chose Natalya Baranskaya's 1960s novella, *A Week Like Any Other*, which depicts one Soviet woman's rigorous day-to-day existence. "People saw that we can get into our station wagons and go to the grocery store once a week. [Soviet women] spend two to three hours every day just shopping for food," says McKenna.

John Kopper was impressed by how seriously the participants regarded the reading. "They were better prepared than my Dartmouth students," he says.

While most of the scholars leading the discussions had spent their lives

studying this type of literature, Agnieszka Perlinska could add a unique perspective to the sessions she led on Eastern European literature. Perlinska, a professor of Russian at Norwich University, spent much of her life in Poland, emigrating to the United States in 1981. She tried to personalize her lectures as much as possible. "If these events did not touch me, they at least touched the generation of my grandparents," she says. Partici-



—© photo by Craig Line

pants were intrigued that she had met Czesław Miłosz, the author of *Native Realm*, the book they were discussing, whose works had been banned in Poland until 1980. Perlinska recalled as a young student reading the poems and stories of Miłosz in secret. The audience's enthusiasm at her personal reflections was apparent. "It became not just a book anymore; it was a living person for them," she says.

Programs such as "Literature of Soviet Life" and "Voices from Eastern Europe" create additional work for busy librarians, who put together book displays on the theme, hand out flyers, advertise in local papers, and finally attend the discussion sessions themselves. But

for Pat Hazlehurst of Cobleigh Library, the reading programs also offer a chance to learn more about her patrons and their reading tastes in a comfortable atmosphere. "It's not just an evening out," she says, of the weekly gatherings in her library's reference section. "People have said to me, 'These are books I would not have read on my own.' They learn through these sessions to read with much more clarity."

When the series ends, Hazlehurst says she prepares for a slew of requests for books on the same theme. After the Soviet Life series, she says books such as *The New Russians* by Hedrick Smith and *Fear*, a follow-up to *Children of the Arbat*, one of the books in the series, were constantly checked out.

The Vermont Reading Project's next series theme will explore Chinese literature, confirming that Vermont readers enjoy delving into other cultures. The success of these discussion groups held during the last thirteen years is a constant source of joy and surprise, says project director Sally Anderson. "I don't think there was anyone who knew the programs were going to work as they did," she says, adding that the discussion groups help people to see the impact books can have on every aspect of their lives, social and professional. "Reading is important; it is transformative. Through local reading and discussion groups, residents and scholars explore a world of knowledge while they strengthen community ties." □

Laura Randall is a freelance writer in Washington, D.C.

The current Vermont Reading Project is supported by \$116,000 in outright funds and \$50,000 in matching funds from the Humanities Projects in Libraries and Archives of the Division of Public Programs.

The Midwife's Tale

AN INTERVIEW WITH

PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING HISTORIAN

LAUREL THATCHER ULRICH

IT WASN'T EASY being a midwife in the pioneer settlements of Maine. The diary of Martha Ballard, who lived in Hallowell and Augusta in the late 1700s, provides ample evidence. Not only were the hours—then as now—unpredictable, but traveling both on land or across the Kennebec River (no bridge was built in the area until 1797) could often be downright treacherous. Bad weather added to the discomfort. In December, 1793, after delivering two babies within twenty-four hours, Martha Ballard recorded, "Snow hail & rain. . . . I left [Mrs Parker] at 4 pm as well as Could be Expected & walkt over the river. Wrote Mr Ballards hors home." With characteristic forbearance, the midwife added merely, "I had a wrestless night by fataug [fatigue] & weting my feet."

Ballard kept her diary for twenty-seven years, from 1785 until shortly before her death in 1812. At first glance, many entries seem to be little more than lists of babies birthed, cabbages counted, mittens knitted, neighbors visited; indeed, past historians have passed much of it off as "trivial and unimportant." In a sweeping, new appraisal (*A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1990), Laurel Thatcher Ulrich weaves together extensive research—ranging from other eighteenth-century diaries, letters, and even sermons, to twentieth-century childbirth statistics—with a fresh examination of Martha Ballard's nearly 10,000 brief, often seemingly mundane entries. In the process, Ulrich, an associate professor of history at the University of New Hampshire, illuminates Ballard's extraordinary life in the



BY
ELLEN MACDONALD WARD

midst of very ordinary circumstances. She also reveals a wealth of new information about how people doggedly went about their business in a small late-eighteenth-century Maine town.

To call Martha Ballard merely a midwife is an understatement. As was expected of most women at the time, she not only ran her own household but performed various community duties, from caring for sick neighbors to preparing the dead for burial. Any sickbed or

childbirth, however, required both the efforts of inexperienced and generally younger women as well as more practiced, more skilled matrons, such as Ballard. In addition to delivering 996 babies in the Hallowell area, she also diagnosed illness, prescribed treatment, and raised medicinal herbs in her garden. "In twentieth-century terms," Ulrich writes, "she was simultaneously a midwife, nurse, physician, mortician, pharmacist. . . . Furthermore, in the very act of recording her work, she became a keeper of vital records, a chronicler of the medical history of her town."

In October of 1777, "I first set my feet on the Kenebec shore," Ballard wrote. The Ballard family's move from Oxford, Massachusetts, where she had been born forty-two years earlier, took two years; Martha's husband, Ephraim, had first come to Maine in 1775 to find work as a miller along the Kennebec. He was also employed as a surveyor, charting the wilderness surrounding Hallowell for the wealthy men who owned it. At the time of the move, the family included five children; the Ballards' last child would be born two years later.

Most of the 100 families in Hallowell in 1777 inhabited log houses, according to Ulrich, although a few had found the time and money to build with sawn boards. Even eight years later when the diary begins, the Ballards' house was still unfinished, only two of its four rooms usable in cold weather.

Later historians would describe Hallowell of the late eighteenth century in bucolic, somewhat romanticized terms, a time when, as one wrote, "the trees [were] fall-

Ellen MacDonald Ward is associate editor of Down East.

To support scripting a documentary on the life of Martha Ballard, The Filmmakers' Collaborative received a grant of \$81,008 from Humanities Project in Media of the Division of Public Programs.

ing before the choppers' axes, and forest openings [were] [were] expanding into fields and farms, and homes [were] multiplying." Martha's distinctly less idyllic depiction shows that the wilderness was still very much a force to be reckoned with. Yet she and her fellow townsmen learned to adapt. If business called them to the far side of the river, they forded it regardless of whether the surface was water, ice, or something in between. "People Crost the river on a Cake of ice which swong round from the Eddy East side & stopt at the point below Mr Westons," Martha Ballard wrote one December. Called upon to attend a childbirth, she went even when the snow was "Levil with the top of the lower pain of glass of our north window." At night the midwife might travel by the light of the moon or a candle—or sometimes neither. Of one foray through the darkness of a June night she wrote, "Calld in hast to go to Mr Whites. The Boys Landed me at Jackson Landing. I took of(f) my shoes & walkt in my stockins. Steerd as strait a Coars as I Could and reacht Mr Whites very soon but was much fatigued." Fortunately, that evening she did not stumble across the paths of any wild animals. But they were lurking in the area. "There was a moose by our gardin this afternoon," she once wrote, and another time noted that "Hannah & Dolly [two of her daughters] were fritened by a Baire between here & Neighbor Savages."

Wild rivers and wildlife aside, life on the frontier sometimes required a quieter kind of courage. During a summer when scarlet fever ran rampant in Hallowell, Martha wrote, "William McMaster Expird at 3 O Clock this morn. Mrs Patin & I laid out the Child. Poor mother, how Distressing her Case, near the hour of Labour and three Children more very sick." Of all the diary entries that summer, Ulrich points out, this was the one time Martha wrote of her feelings. Yet Martha hardly comes across as coldhearted. Along with her "specktakles," "time piece," and "medicines," she brought to every childbirth or sickbed a great deal of compassion. Tucked within her professional bedside manner lay the memories of having given birth to nine children herself—and having lost three small daughters to diphtheria in less than two weeks.

As a midwife, Martha Ballard perhaps knew Hallowell better than any other resident in the late 1700s. Her deliveries "encompassed the town socially as well as geographically," Ulrich writes. "She delivered *Captain Molloy's* and *Esquire Hayward's ladies* as well as Mr. Cummings's servant 'Bulah' and 'Black Hitty,' [a free black woman living in town]." Arriving under circumstances that would be trying for any household in any day and age, Martha saw Hallowell families at both their worst and their best. "Some women could afford an 'elligant dinner' for [the female neighbors who attended them in childbirth]; others sent their midwife home searching her clothes for fleas," Ulrich points out.

Besides seeing her neighbors both in strength and in weakness, she also became privy to some of Hallowell's darker secrets. People came to her in need—perhaps because of her kind and caring assistance in time of illness and childbirth, perhaps because she was not apt to repeat gossip, at least not if her diary is any indication. Some sort of family fight must have been the cause of her writing on December 14, 1787, that "Mrs McNight

sleeps here. Her Husband hastened her out of Dores as shee says," but Martha did not record in her diary what else she knew about the situation. On another occasion, she wrote merely, "Calld at Mr Westons, Pollards, Mrs Fosters & Mr Savages. Came home at 1 h pm feel fatagud." This innocuous passage says nothing of the shocking news that Martha actually received that day: a later entry reveals that on that very day Mrs. Foster, the minister's wife, had confided to Martha that she had been raped by several local men, one of them a prominent judge, Joseph North. In due course, Rebecca Foster made public her accusation and the judge stood trial for the alleged assault. Surviving court records include only the indictment and the verdict. The details of the testimony are lost—except for an unusually long passage Martha entered in her diary, presumably to jog her memory before she took the stand at the trial. She passed no judgment openly one way or the other, yet what she wrote seems to imply that she believed Judge North was guilty. At the end of the trial, her diary states merely, "North acquitted to the great surprise of all that I heard speak of it."

Although Ballard's work as a midwife brought her closer to her neighbors and community, it was the work itself that probably mattered most to her. She was a career woman, at least as much as that term could be applied to a woman in the eighteenth century. She writes proudly that she "Put [Mrs. Shaw] safe to Bed with a daughter at 10 O Clok this Evinng." A certain quiet satisfaction also appears in her description of the adversities she overcame in order to perform her chosen work. In journeying to a delivery, she might write that she had "Walkt to the Loading place. From there Crosst [the river over] the mountains of ice. Arivd allmost fatagud to death" but it was only after she "swept [her] Chambers, lower rooms and seller" that she found it necessary to "[leave] home and be free from work."

Being a midwife in some ways gave her equal footing with her husband. Like her husband, for instance, she spent considerable time away from home pursuing her occupation, a freedom of movement that few other women enjoyed. A midwifery practice also paid better than most female occupations; Ulrich writes that "Martha's standard fee—six shillings—is comparable to what Ephraim could claim for a day spent 'writing plans' or appraising an estate." On the other hand, Martha was not earning as much per delivery as a male doctor could charge. According to Ulrich, in the early 1800s, when Martha Ballard was charging less than two dollars for a delivery, Dr. Benjamin Page, a local physician, was collecting six.

Her status in the community as a busy and popular midwife was not looked upon favorably by all. Local physicians seemed to regard her medical practice somewhat questionably, probably because she had no formal education. "[Dr. Cony] accused me with going to Mr. Dingleys in his sickness," Martha wrote at one point, "and objecting to [Dr. Cony's] prescriptions and prescribing some of my own and seting Mrs Dingley Crying by giving my opinion of the disease and said this was one of many instances I had done so. Which I must deny till her or some other Can bring it to my recollection." In this instance, the matter seems to have blown over; Martha later reported, "[Mr Dingley]

declares no such thing mentioned by him or his wife as the Doctor represented to me." Regardless of how Martha Ballard had come by her medical knowledge, Ulrich points out that she was a successful and skillful midwife, even by early-twentieth-century standards of childbirth mortality.

Although Martha Ballard was an important person in her community, history would have virtually overlooked her, had it not been for her own diary—and Ulrich's recent book. We know about her contemporary, Dr. Daniel Cony, from various town histories, from his membership in the Massachusetts Medical Society, and from a

medical biography published in Boston in 1828. About Martha Ballard, little remains in official records other than a newspaper obituary that reads, "Died in Augusta, Mrs. Martha, consort of Mr. Ephraim Ballard, aged 77 years." Without her diary—despite nearly 1,000 births—we would not even know that she had been a midwife. □

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—Maine State Library / © photo by Benjamin Magro

"Healing Is an Ancient and Central Women's Role."

THE 200-YEAR-OLD diary of a midwife named Martha Ballard opened up a fascinating world of healing and medicine to historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich and provided her with material for a Pulitzer-prize-winning book. But the diary's discovery in the Maine State Library was pure luck.

"It was serendipity," says Ulrich, a historian at the University of New Hampshire and the author of *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard Based on Her Diary, 1785–1812*. "I was just doing my work as a historian." She was working on another project at the time but was drawn to the diary, and returned to it several months later. With an NEH grant for a summer research fellowship, she began the work that would lead to her acclaimed second book.

Ulrich's first book was entitled *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650–1750*. Although the book focused on women, she said, she wrote it "with almost nothing in a woman's hand." Coming across Martha Ballard's diary, she was excited "to see so much in a woman's handwriting." That, combined with the subject of midwifery in early America, convinced Ulrich that the diary was significant. "There was really no detailed account of a midwife's practice this early," she explained.

She is quick to point out that Martha Ballard and her peers did



Laurel Thatcher Ulrich

more than deliver babies. Midwives, she said, were the general practitioners of early America. "It's not just babies," she said. "Healing is an ancient and central women's role." In fact, she said, one of the salient points of the book is that "women were a central part of early American communities. Not just important to families, but important to communities."

Ulrich describes herself as "a women's historian" whose work is very much influenced by the change in women's roles during the late 1960s and early 70s. "I married while I was still in college. . . was a housewife and mother. . . then gradually developed this academic interest," she says. "I think that my life as a parent and housewife informs my scholarship."

"I consider myself a feminist," she continued. "I was really touched by women's history—I therefore love doing it." One thing she appreciates about the accolades garnered by

A Midwife's Tale is that it helps to illustrate that "women's history is not some sort of exotic byline to history but an important part of history in general."

New England is also the focus of much of Ulrich's work. That resulted, she said, not so much from scholarly interest as out of convenience. She did most of her graduate work part-time while raising her children and couldn't travel far, so, she said, "I decided to see what was in my own backyard." She is now an associate professor of history at the University of New Hampshire.

The many awards she received for *A Midwife's Tale*, which in addition to the Pulitzer include Columbia University's Bancroft Prize and two awards from the American Historical Association, please Ulrich most because of the attention they have brought to the book. "The awards are wonderful," she acknowledges. "But what makes it especially exciting is that people who don't think of themselves as liking history. . . read this book. It makes me think what could happen if serious scholarship were more accessible. The general public doesn't often learn about scholarly books."

Ulrich herself has always been drawn to history. She grew up in Idaho, and when she came to New England in 1960, "I found this old, old stuff fascinating." □

—Pam Weisz
Laurel Thatcher Ulrich received \$18,500 from the Division of Fellowships and Seminars to study the diary of Martha Ballard.

Pam Weisz is a free-lance writer in Washington, D.C.

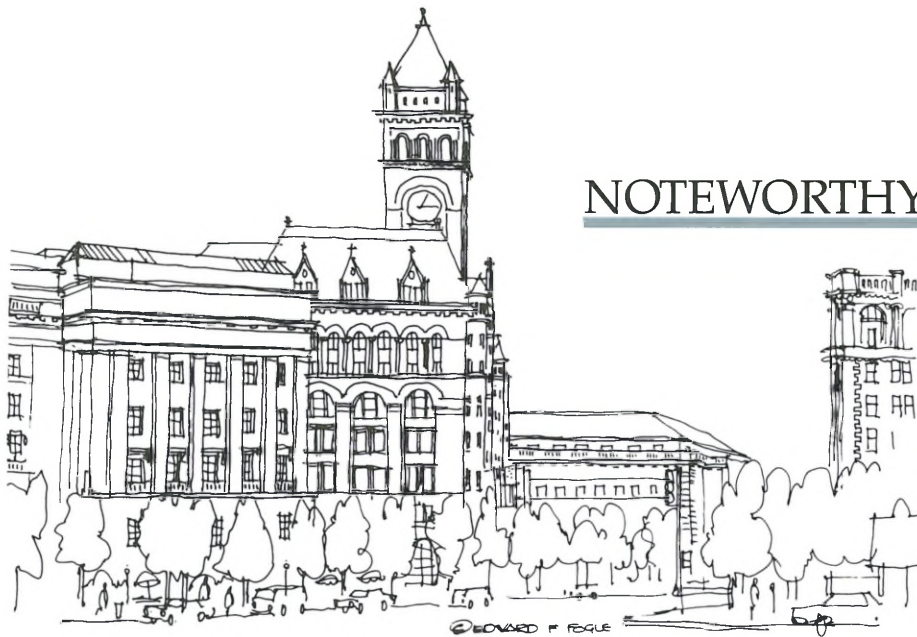
A new documentary, *Before You Can Say Jackie Robinson*, illuminates what life was like in the Negro Leagues in New Jersey and America—in its heyday from the 1920s to the 1950s. For those three decades, the Negro Leagues rivalled in size the all-white American and National Leagues.

With the breaking of the color barrier in 1947 when Jackie Robinson joined the Brooklyn Dodgers, an era ended. "Integration came at a price—a loss in the business world, entertainment and opportunities," says Lawrence Hogan, professor at Union County College in New Jersey. "Black players did not really have a chance in the major leagues. Only a few would be let in when there was a host of talent that could have played."

Some of those players—Josh Gibson, Buck Leonard, Ray Dandridge and John "Pop" Lloyd—are focused on in the documentary, which tells their stories through interviews, newspaper sources, and private footage from the period. "We're not just telling about the Negro Leagues, but in the context of a black communal world where these players were fixtures in the communities," says Hogan.

Hogan, who is project director, worked on the film with director Thomas Guy, a former producer-director with New Jersey public television. The film received two grants from the New Jersey Committee for the Humanities: an initial \$40,000 media grant and a \$10,000 completion grant.

Players in the Negro Leagues were not eligible for Baseball's Hall of Fame until 1971. Eleven have been inducted so far. The most recent was Ray Dandridge of the Newark Eagles in 1987. His ceremony



NOTEWORTHY

in Cooperstown, New York, was shot for *Before You Can Say Jackie Robinson* and is the dramatic ending for the film. "I've seen it fifteen times and I still cry," admits Hogan.

Weathering the Storms

Eight grants have been awarded through a \$1 million emergency fund to assist libraries, museums, and other institutions damaged by hurricanes in Florida, Louisiana, Guam, and Hawaii. The fund provides grants of up to \$30,000.

"The cultural life of communities depends on collections at local libraries and museums," said Chairman Lynne V. Cheney. "The funds are being made available to ensure that damaged books and objects do not deteriorate further."

Four grants concern Florida:

The Historical Association of Southern Florida received \$30,000 on behalf of the Florida Pioneer Museum in Dade City, a museum of agricultural and railroad history. The grant goes to repair the roof and repair the collection.

The Northeast Document Conser-

vation Center in Massachusetts received \$30,000 for a team of conservators to work with the Historical Museum of Southern Florida in Miami, providing technical assistance.

The Kendall Campus Library at the Miami-Dade Community College received \$9,182 to restore water-damaged manuscripts and replace books destroyed by the storm.

The Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami, received \$10,513 for a telephone hot-line service to provide conservation information.

Four grants are in Hawaii:

Grove Farm Homestead, a historic sugar plantation on Kauai, received \$29,500 to repair roof damage and to fix air conditioning and fire suppression systems.

Hanalei Elementary School on Kauai received \$29,828 to replace books and audio visual materials. Kapaa Elementary received \$30,000 to replace lost books.

The Bishop Museum and its Pacific Regional Conservation Center in Honolulu received \$25,990 to assemble a team of conservators to provide technical help.

First Place

"Moscow Eyewitness," an article in the November/December 1991 issue of *Humanities*, has won first place nationally in feature writing among government publications. The article, describing the early hours of the attempted 1991 coup in the Soviet Union, was written on-scene by Joseph Troncale, director of Soviet studies at the University of Richmond, Virginia, who was on a year's exchange program with NEH. □



The Newark Eagles were Negro League World champions in 1946.

Calendar

JANUARY ♦ FEBRUARY



—Folger Shakespeare Library/Julie Ainsworth

The "wonder cabinet" pictured—*Le Cabinet de la Bibliothèque de Sainte-Genevieve*, by Claude du Molinet, 1692—is the precursor to our modern museum. It is a part of the "New World of Wonders: European Images of the Americas, 1492-1700" at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C., through March 6.

- ♦ A group of twenty progressive artists in Brussels in late 1883 formed a society that they called Les XX (The Twenty). "Les XX and the Belgian Avant-garde: Prints, Drawings, and Books" is on display January 24 through March 21 at the Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas at Lawrence. The exhibit will travel to the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, Massachusetts and to the Cleveland Museum of Art.

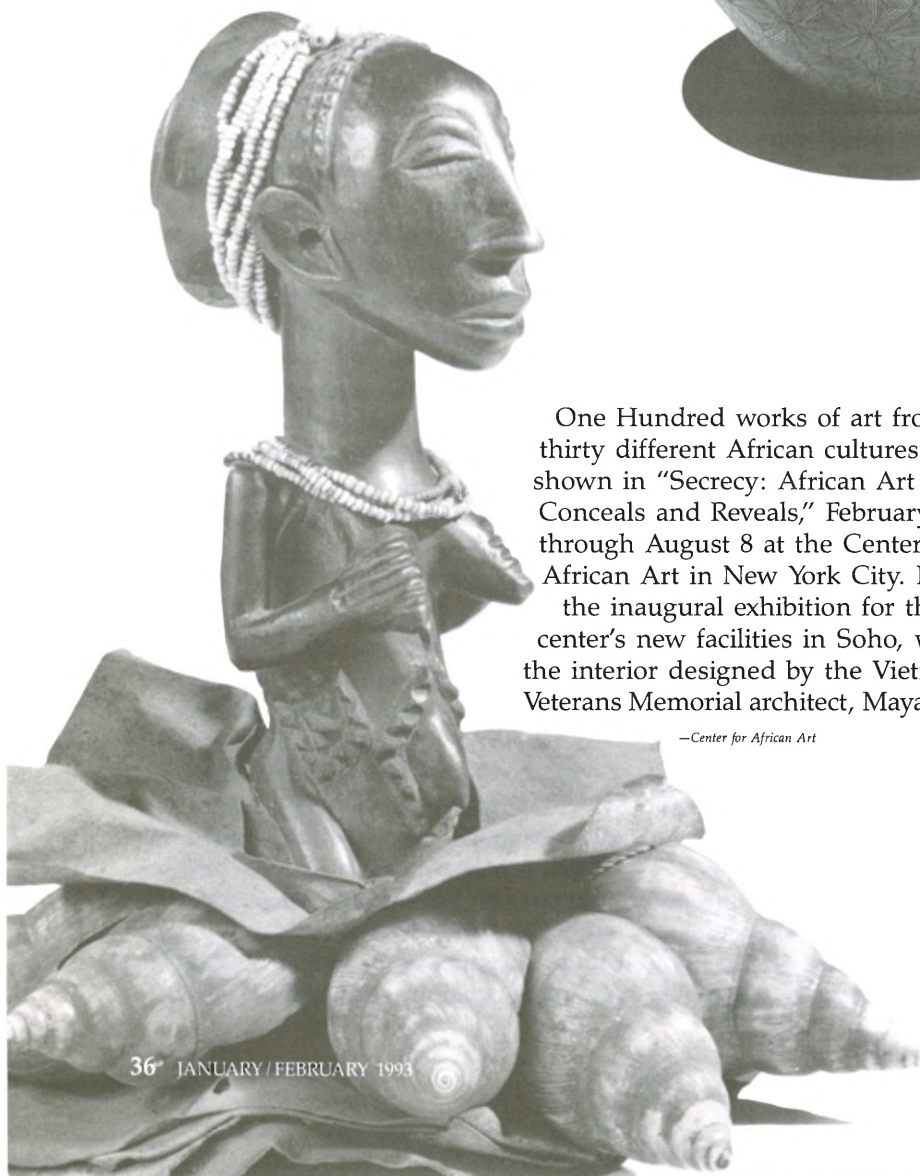
The Times Mirror Hall of Native American Cultures is a permanent exhibit opening in February at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. It showcases 800 pieces from the Museum's collection and features exhibits ranging from a two-story prehistoric Pueblo cliff dwelling to a gallery of contemporary Native American arts.

—Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County



One Hundred works of art from thirty different African cultures are shown in "Secrecy: African Art that Conceals and Reveals," February 13 through August 8 at the Center for African Art in New York City. It is the inaugural exhibition for the center's new facilities in Soho, with the interior designed by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial architect, Maya Lin.

—Center for African Art



—Walker Art Center/Peter Moore

"In the Spirit of Fluxus" appears at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, February 14 through June 6. The exhibition coincides with the thirtieth anniversary of the Fluxus Group, which introduced film and performance to traditional visual arts. With the exhibition are symposia, and film and performance programs.

HUMANITIES GUIDE

FOR THOSE WHO ARE THINKING OF APPLYING FOR NEH GRANT

THROUGH A PROGRAM called Parallax—Toward Uniting Science and the Humanities, Brown University will offer a new intellectual challenge to its undergraduates. Students will be able to select from eight courses that reveal and examine the connections between disciplines. Historians, an astronomer, a physicist, and an anthropologist are among the faculty preparing Parallax courses, which are intended to enroll potential science majors together with students who expect to specialize in the humanities or the social sciences.

In one of the courses designed by a physicist and a historian, freshmen and sophomores will study ideas about space and time in the historical and intellectual contexts in which they arose. In another course offered at a more advanced level, students will consider the place of the experiment in the development of the sciences.

These innovative courses will be developed with support from a special competition in which the Endowment, through its Division of Education Programs, is collaborating with the National Science Foundation and the Fund for the Improvement of Post-secondary Education of the Department of Education. The new effort, Leadership Opportunity in Science and Humanities Education, supports curriculum projects in higher education that engage disciplines across the full extent of the liberal arts and reveal connections among the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities. Through mutual cooperation, the three agencies seek to stimulate faculty interest in broad and concerted intellectual collaboration and to make the coherence and inter-relatedness of human knowledge more accessible to students.

The 1992 competition, Projects in Science and Humanities, received a strong response, with applications from 102 institutions. NEH, NSF, and FIPSE established joint review procedures and awarded over \$1 million in grants for nine projects. The projects selected as outstanding all involve students in intellectually rigorous study across the disciplines. They

Leadership Opportunity in Science and Humanities Education

BY SUSAN GREENSTEIN

focus on significant topics and texts in both the sciences and the humanities and often include laboratory and field experiences as well as appropriate mathematics. Another feature common to the award-winning projects is the enthusiasm of faculty for the opportunity to share the perspectives of their fields and participate in a cooperative enterprise to rethink fundamental issues in undergraduate education.

Awards were made to institutions of all sizes and types across the nation. Nassau Community College in New York State will use its grant to create a new program for the liberal arts degree featuring required multidisciplinary courses that integrate science and the humanities. In World Cultures, for example, students will examine the evolution of human culture in three diverse societies. Looking at Egypt, Mexico, and Japan, they will explore the development of civilizations in the context of environment, climate, population, and changing technologies.

Faculty from the University of Texas at El Paso will join their counterparts at El Paso Community College in designing a year-long interdisciplinary course in science, its history, and its cultural implications. At Skidmore College and also at Allegheny College, the awards will lead to a series of multidisciplinary capstone courses which will enrich general education offerings.

Projects may focus on an issue, a

theme, or an approach that can best be addressed from a number of disciplinary perspectives. In "Light, Vision and Understanding," students at Worcester Polytechnic Institute will consider problems common to the sciences and the humanities concerning the nature and function of representation. Case studies will include Greek and Arabic theories of vision, the invention of linear perspective, and Newton's optics. A historian, a chemist, a physicist, a philosopher, and an art historian are among the faculty designing the course.

Projects may help establish a new major or minor. An award to Southwest Texas State University will call on faculty from a wide range of fields whose common interest is the study of the Southwest through the perspectives of history, culture, and the natural sciences.

Cross-fertilization between engineering and humanities perspectives is the goal of a course planned by the University of Virginia. Faculty from engineering, history, and education will join forces with an inventor in a summer workshop to prepare a new course for liberal arts and engineering students.

An award to the Association of American Colleges will provide a national forum to discuss curricular initiatives across the disciplines. This grant will support the 1993 Asheville Institute on General Education, to be held in June at the University of North Carolina at Asheville.

For the years 1993 and 1994, NEH, FIPSE, and NSF hope to make as many as fifteen grants annually for a total of approximately \$2 million each year. General education curricula and courses that will help bridge the separation of humanities students from the sciences and of science students from the humanities are especially encouraged. The next deadline will be March 15, 1993. For guidelines and further information write or call the Division of Education Programs, Room 302, National Endowment for the Humanities, Washington, D.C. 20506, 202/606-8380.

Susan Greenstein is a program officer in the Division of Education Programs.

DEADLINES DEADLINES DEADLINES

DIVISION OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS

James C. Herbert, Director • 606-8373

Area code for all telephone numbers is 202.

	Deadline	Projects beginning
Higher Education in the Humanities • Lyn Maxwell White 606-8380	April 1, 1993	October 1994
Institutes for College and University Faculty • Barbara A. Ashbrook 606-8380	April 1, 1993	October 1994
Projects in Science and Humanities • Susan Greenstein 606-8380	March 15, 1993	October 1, 1993
Core Curriculum Projects • 606-8380	April 1, 1993	October 1994
Two-Year Colleges • Judith Jeffrey Howard 606-8380	April 1, 1993	October 1994
Challenge Grants • Thomas Adams 606-8380	May 1, 1993	December 1, 1992
Elementary and Secondary Education in the Humanities • F. Bruce Robinson 606-8377	March 15, 1993	December 1993
Teacher-Scholar Program • Annette Palmer 606-8377	May 1, 1993	September 1994
Special Opportunity in Foreign Language Education	March 15, 1993	October 1993
Higher Education • Elizabeth Welles 606-8380		
Elementary and Secondary Education • F. Bruce Robinson 606-8377		

DIVISION OF FELLOWSHIPS AND SEMINARS

Marjorie A. Berlincourt, Director • 606-8458

	Deadline	Projects beginning
Fellowships for University Teachers • Maben D. Herring 606-8466	May 1, 1993	January 1, 1994
Fellowships for College Teachers and Independent Scholars • Joseph B. Neville 606-8466	May 1, 1993	January 1, 1994
Summer Stipends • Thomas O'Brien 606-8466	October 1, 1993	May 1, 1994
Dissertation Grants • Kathleen Mitchell 606-8463	November 16, 1992	June 1, 1993
Faculty Graduate Study Program for Historically Black Colleges and Universities	March 15, 1993	September 1, 1994
Maben D. Herring 606-8466		
Younger Scholars • Leon Bramson 606-8463	November 1, 1993	May 1, 1994
Study Grants for College and University Teachers • Clayton Lewis 606-8463	August 15, 1993	May 1, 1994
Summer Seminars for College Teachers • Joel Schwartz 606-8463		
Participants	March 1, 1993	Summer 1993
Directors	March 1, 1993	Summer 1994
Summer Seminars for School Teachers • Michael Hall 606-8463		
Participants	March 1, 1993	Summer 1993
Directors	April 1, 1993	Summer 1994

DIVISION OF PRESERVATION AND ACCESS

George F. Farr, Jr., Director • 606-8570

	Deadline	Projects beginning
Library and Archival Preservation Projects • Vanessa Piala 606-8570	June 1, 1993	July 1994
Library and Archival Preservation/Access Projects • Barbara Paulson 606-8570	June 1, 1993	July 1994
National Heritage Preservation Program • Richard Rose 606-8570	November 1, 1993	July 1994
U. S. Newspaper Program • Jeffrey Field 606-8570	June 1, 1992	July 1994

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

Telecommunications device for the deaf: 202/606-0282.

DEADLINES • DEADLINES • DEADLINES

DIVISION OF PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Donald Gibson, Director • 606-8267

Area code for all telephone numbers is 202.

	Deadline	Projects beginning
Humanities Projects in Media • James Dougherty 606-8278	March 12, 1993	October 1, 1993
Humanities Projects in Museums and Historical Organizations • Marsha Semmel 606-8284	December 3, 1993	July 1, 1994
Public Humanities Projects • Wilsonia Cherry 606-8271	March 12, 1993	October 1, 1993
Humanities Projects in Libraries • Thomas Phelps 606-8271		
Planning	November 5, 1993	April 1, 1994
Implementation	March 12, 1993	October 1, 1993
Challenge Grants • Abbie Cutter 606-8361	May 1, 1993	December 1, 1992

DIVISION OF RESEARCH PROGRAMS

J. Rufus Fears, Director • 606-8200

	Deadline	Projects beginning
Scholarly Publications • Margot Backas 606-8207		
Editions • Douglas Arnold 606-8207	June 1, 1993	April 1, 1994
Translations • Richard Lynn 606-8207	June 1, 1993	April 1, 1994
Subventions • 606-8207	March 15, 1993	October 1, 1993
Reference Materials • Jane Rosenberg 606-8358		
Tools • Helen Agüera 606-8358	September 1, 1993	July 1, 1994
Guides • Michael Poliakoff 606-8358	September 1, 1993	July 1, 1994
Challenge Grants • Bonnie Gould 606-8358	May 1, 1993	December 1, 1992
Interpretive Research • George Lucas 606-8210		
Collaborative Projects • David Wise 606-8210	October 15, 1993	July 1, 1994
Archaeology Projects • Murray McClellan 606-8210	October 15, 1993	April 1, 1994
Humanities, Science, and Technology • Daniel Jones 606-8210	October 15, 1993	July 1, 1994
Conferences • David Coder 606-8210	January 15, 1993	October 1, 1993
Centers • Christine Kalke 606-8210	October 1, 1993	July 1, 1994
International Research • Christine Kalke 606-8210	April 1, 1993	January 1, 1994

DIVISION OF STATE PROGRAMS

Carole Watson, Director • 606-8254

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

OFFICE OF CHALLENGE GRANTS

Harold Cannon, Director • 606-8361

	Deadline	Projects beginning
Coordination and Grant Administration	May 1, 1993	December 1, 1992

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