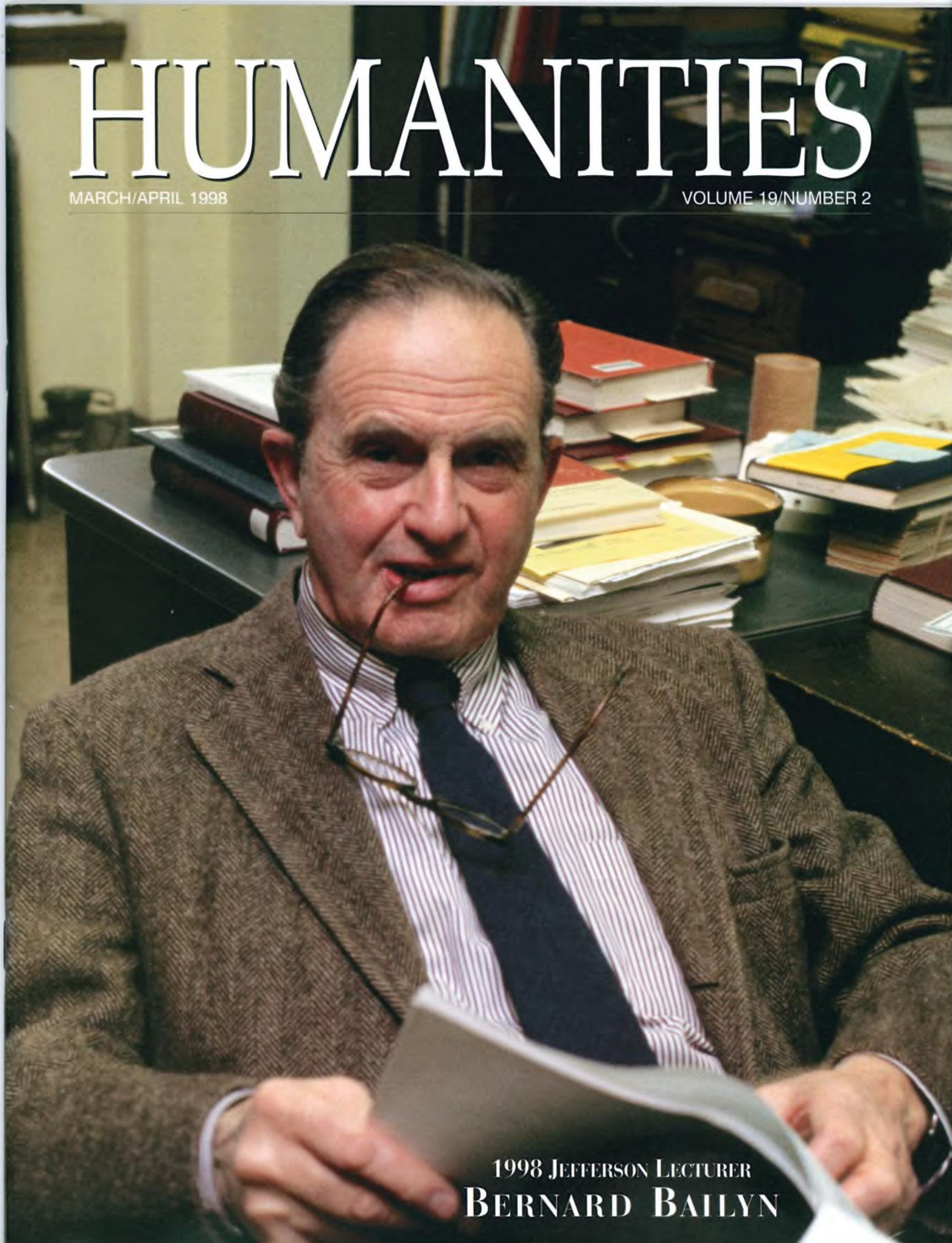


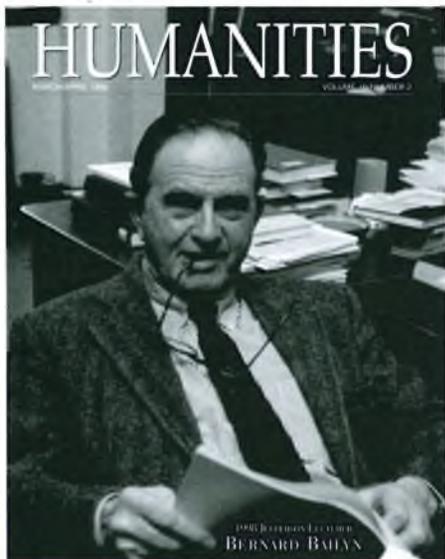
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BERNARD BAILYN



Bernard Bailyn, 1998 Jefferson Lecturer in the Humanities.

Humanities

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EDITOR'S NOTE

BERNARD BAILYN

By Bernard Bailyn's definition, the study of history is never a science, always a craft—and sometimes an art. Winner of two Pulitzer prizes in history, Bailyn is this year's Jefferson Lecturer in the Humanities, the highest honor the federal government bestows.

He has been practicing the art and teaching the craft to Harvard students for forty-five years. One of them, Jack Rakove, now a Stanford professor and a Pulitzer Prize-winner himself, writes about "the heady experience" of being in a graduate seminar with Bailyn. "For the first half of the course," he writes, "we were never quite sure what the subject was." The sessions would start off predictably enough with what had been discussed in the previous class, but then "it would be off to the races, as a whole new topic was introduced and brilliantly sketched, opening up interpretive vistas more rapidly than anyone could imagine." Bailyn's style was to leave them "to puzzle things out for ourselves, goaded only by his critical eye and his alarming propensity to call us up short with the most famous of all his questions: 'So what?'"

The measure of the man shows clearly in his books, Rakove writes. Bailyn's *Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, in Rakove's assessment, "transformed the writing of American history."

Bailyn won the Pulitzer Prize in history and the Bancroft Prize for *Ideological Origins*; he won another Pulitzer in 1986 for *Voyagers to the West*. Still another, *The Ordeal of Thomas Hutchinson*, won the National Book Award.

Bailyn did his undergraduate work at Williams College and earned his master's and doctorate from Harvard University. He has been teaching colonial history and the American Revolution at Harvard since 1953 and is Adams University Professor Emeritus. He is a former president of the American Historical Association, and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Royal Historical Society, the Mexican Academy of History and Geography, and the Russian Academy of Sciences.

History's role, he says, is to establish "in a realistic sense, as far as that's possible, what's happened and where we've come from, what experiences we've had." The alternative is the model offered in the nadir of the Soviet regime when "the past had to be twisted and turned" to fit the policy of the time.

These days Bailyn directs the International Seminar on Atlantic History, which brings together young historians from many countries to discuss questions in the history of Atlantic civilization. These young historians, it is hoped, will become old historians with a common ground. There is always a need, Bailyn said in a 1995 lecture, for "the establishment, in some significant degree, of a realistic understanding of the past, free of myths, wish-fulfillments, and partisan delusions. . . ."

When asked what history offers us, Bailyn replies: "Sanity. Social sanity." □

—Mary Lou Beatty

HUMANITIES

The Magazine of the National Endowment for the Humanities

March/April 1998

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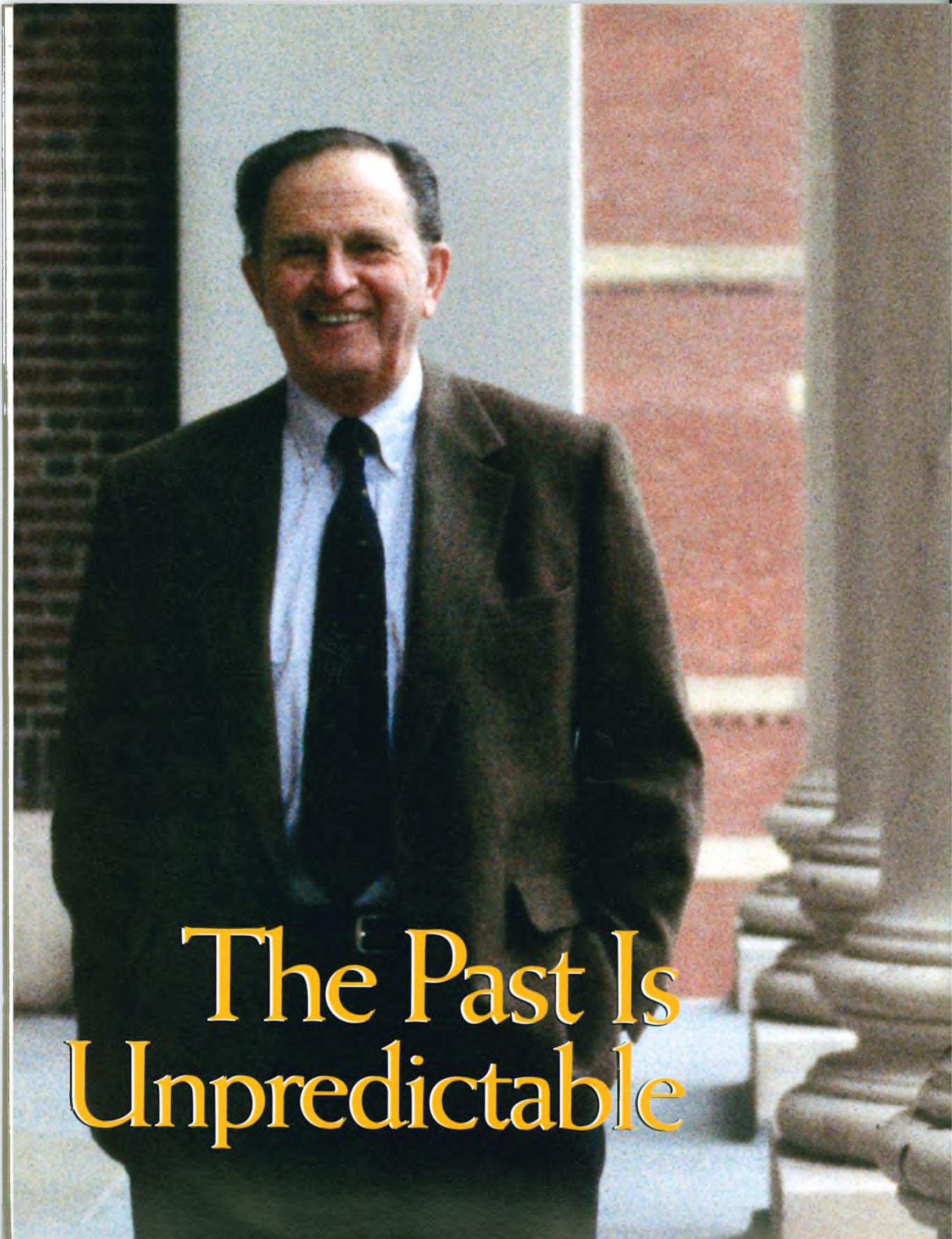
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The Past Is
Unpredictable

*A Conversation with
Bernard Bailyn*

Historian Bernard Bailyn, who has been chosen as the 1998 Jefferson Lecturer in the Humanities, spoke recently with editor Mary Lou Beatty about American history—how it is taught, how it is written, and how it fits into a larger transatlantic context. Bailyn, who is the Adams University Professor Emeritus at Harvard University, has written eleven books, two of them Pulitzer Prize winners, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* and *Voyagers to the West. The Ordeal of Thomas Hutchinson*, based on his Trevelyan Lectures at Cambridge University, won the National Book Award. A former president of the American Historical Association, Bailyn was elected in 1994 to the Russian Academy of Sciences, the first American historian to be elected to that body since George Bancroft in 1867.

MARY LOU BEATTY: Congratulations on your being chosen for the Jefferson lectureship. You've had a singular career as a historian, a professor for nearly fifty years at Harvard University, and the author of many highly regarded and influential books. Now, along with your series of books on the peopling of British North America, you've taken on a new project—something called the International Seminar on the History of the Atlantic World. What is that?

BERNARD BAILYN: It's an effort to bring together young historians from all over the Atlantic world to concentrate intensely for a short period of time—ten days or so—on common historical problems, on topics and problems they share. The purpose is to advance the first scholarly efforts of young historians of many nations, and to help them form associations during the seminar that will persist, and so build up an international cadre of young historians who then become not-so-young historians, and will carry on these connections into their later careers—and ultimately, through cooperation among historians, to further in some small degree at least, international understanding.

Also, it's a way of deepening historical understanding. We understand much more of our own national history by seeing it in the context of Atlantic civilization as a whole. This is not an entirely new idea, but because of recent research in historical studies it has become much more important.

Q: The seminar concentrates on 1500 to 1800?

BAILYN: Yes—that is the formative period in which the contacts between the western European nations and the Western Hemisphere were established. In that period, you can see the connections between Western Europe and the Western Hemisphere in their first, basic forms.

Q: Is there an effort to redress the subject of European relationships with Latin America as well?

BAILYN: It's to see the whole of the Atlantic world and its common characteristics. Slavery, for instance, developed in all of the regions of the Western Hemisphere as part of the economic development of Europe, but it took different forms in different places at different times, and those peculiarities can best, most fully, be seen in an Atlantic perspective. Similarly, imperial systems and colonial governments developed, and the differences and similarities are important to notice. The seminar is not formally concentrated on the United States, although what became the United States obviously was involved, directly or indirectly, in all of this.

Q: Is there new scholarship emerging?

BAILYN: It's enormously expanding. One of the most striking things about the current work of professional historians is the amount of technical research that's emerging on all of the great questions related to Western civilization, and in other regions as well. The problem is how to get the tech-



Courtesy Bernard Bailyn

nical work into a form that reaches a larger public. The technicians among the historians do a great deal of research and writing; how to fuse all this into presentations that can reach people generally is a real problem.

Q: But were the facts already there? Is it a case of analyzing—by computers or otherwise—what has already been discovered?

BAILYN: There is all sorts of research going on. The computer side is only one aspect. It's developing in many directions: in the examination of political theory; in the study of state systems as they emerged in the Atlantic world; in the history of commerce and migration. Especially migration. Migration studies are telling us far more about the initial composition of the American population than we ever knew before, by tracing the origins of people who came, not only to North America, but to the Caribbean and South America as well. There are studies now that we never had before of the origins of westward migrants—their origins in Germany, Spain, England, Scotland, Ireland, and so forth, which is partly quantitative but not entirely. We know an

enormous amount about all of this now. As I say, the question is how you can bring the technical scholarship into a general picture that can be conveyed to a broad audience.

Q: You have often said that working one's way back to the mentality of a lost world is very, very difficult. How do you apply that to these new bases of information?

BAILYN: Some of these problems that we're dealing with don't directly relate to that, but have to do simply with the objective phenomena of migration and economic development. But the ideological aspect of it is terribly important. In a way, that's where I started, in noticing how America's early development, through the Revolutionary period—where our ideas and principles as a nation took form—emerged from the European context.

Q: In terms of our own history, you have talked about the effects of passages of British history—the exclusion crisis, the Glorious Revolution—as antecedents of what happened here.

BAILYN: Such critical events in British history were very much in the minds of informed people in North America and became absorbed into their general picture of what their world was all about and where they were in this British context. They are not just quoting

At the Fujinomiya, Japan, American Studies Conference in 1975.



Courtesy Bernard Bailyn

As a trustee of Manhattanville College in 1967 with its president, Elizabeth McCormack, then Mother McCormack.

what happened in those events; they absorbed them into a larger picture. The difficulty—and, I think, the value—of writing about this is to show the way in which the particulars of these North American people's British, and more generally European and African, inheritance shaped their views of the world and then, under certain circumstances, led them to certain kinds of actions. That process is as applicable to South America and Central America as it is to the United States.

Q: In your book, *Faces of the Revolution*, I was particularly taken with the figure of John Adams. He comes across in unexpected ways; your view of Jefferson also seems an uncommon one. He comes across not as cerebral as I had thought, but as the consummate political tactician. And while Madison seems to be the brains of the operation, you chose not to write about him in this book.

BAILYN: Well, Madison as a personality, as opposed to Jefferson or Adams—especially Adams—is very elusive. He is never dramatic. He is not in any way theatrical. He is remarkably cerebral. Adams is the most open, as you see in his early writings, the diary and autobiography, which is a marvelous self-revelation. You see the emotional, questing,

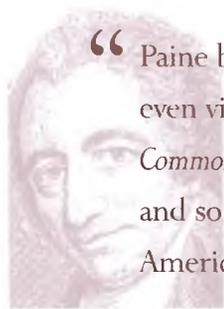
it is so brilliant a piece of rhetoric and so perverse and challenging an argument against all of the ordinary notions that Americans had as British subjects.

Q: He proclaimed the view that we had matured and were ready for independence, that corrupt, antiquated Britain was dragging us down, that we would have progressed faster, been richer and freer, on our own. That is the Paine thesis, isn't it?

BAILYN: Yes, Paine condemned the entire British world for all of the evils of a corrupt, monarchical system. There were many Americans in the Revolutionary movement who were not so convinced that the established forms were bad, only that they had been corrupted. But Paine laid out forceful arguments, in brilliant rhetoric, to condemn the entire system of European monarchy and aristocracy. Despite the fact that many Americans—John Adams, for example—couldn't easily stomach what he said, nevertheless, he had a great influence in his early years here.

Q: You point out that the colonies were not really so downtrodden in the pre-Revolutionary years as they were said by many to be.

BAILYN: That goes back to a larger issue, which is the degree to which America, before any of the Revolutionary developments took place, had already moved in directions that were quite different from the establishments in Europe—in regard to, for example, the position of religion in ordinary life, representative government, and a whole range of other traditional conditions. Before people started to apply any radical ideas of the late eighteenth century, the targets



“Paine brought over a different kind of combative, flamboyant, completely irreverent, even violent, consciousness into the American picture, and so his initial pamphlet, *Common Sense*, had a remarkable impact because it is so brilliant a piece of rhetoric and so perverse and challenging an argument against all of the ordinary notions that Americans had as British subjects.”

sensitive, romantic personality behind the facade. One can get at Jefferson too as a personality. But the biographers of Madison have a tougher time finding the person, the inner personality, as opposed to his ideas, which in my mind seem to be extremely concise and sharp and close to the inner grain of the problems that he's dealing with.

Q: You have written too about Thomas Paine, the “bankrupt British corset maker,” as some called him.

BAILYN: Paine is another character altogether. The thing that interested me in what I wrote about him is the brilliant rhetoric of his pamphleteering. His writing has an energy and drama and verbal flair that none of the American pamphleteers had. Paine brought over a different kind of combative, flamboyant, completely irreverent, even violent, consciousness into the American picture, and so his initial pamphlet, *Common Sense*, had a remarkable impact because

of reform here were already softening, so to speak, already changing toward more liberal forms. The way in which those early developments reinforced the ideas that came to maturity in the Revolution is one of the important elements in early American history.

Q: You have said that the Revolutionary War was not inevitable. Is the propelling figure, then, Thomas Hutchinson, the last royal governor of Massachusetts? Or is that too simple?

BAILYN: Hutchinson was the target of all of the radicals and many of the moderate Revolutionaries of the time. In in the research for the biography I wrote, I found him a very interesting person, with many sympathetic qualities. He was intelligent, extremely well-informed, deeply involved with his family and community, and also, incidentally,

Continued on page 44



BERNARD BAILYN
IN CLASS AT
HARVARD, 1997.



Encountering Bernard Bailyn

“A Transforming
Intellectual
Experience”

By Jack N. Rakove

COLORED ENGRAVING MADE
IN 1793 OF THE BOSTON
TEA PARTY, DECEMBER 16,
1773. THIS IS THE EARLIEST
KNOWN AMERICAN DEPICTION
OF THE EVENT.

When I entered graduate school in the history department at Harvard in 1969, I knew almost nothing about Bernard Bailyn, nor was I interested in the field of early American history that he taught. The fact that his study of *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* had received the Pulitzer Prize in the spring of 1968 was lost on me, overshadowed by the tumultuous events that marked my final semester of college: the aftermath of the Tet offensive, Lyndon Johnson's abdication and the Gene McCarthy boomlet, the assassination of Martin Luther King. The notion that someone immersed in the events of the

1960s would want to carry his interest in American politics back to its eighteenth-century origins would have struck me as quaint. For all I knew or cared, real American history began sometime around the New Deal—the rest was prologue, nothing more. Of course, one might be expected to know something about the colonial and Revolutionary eras—but who would want to make them the subject of his own work?

A funny thing happened to me, though, on my way to becoming a historian of modern America. When I went to sign up for my first graduate seminar with the late Frank Freidel, a distin-

guished biographer of Franklin Roosevelt, he surprised me with his advice. “You’ll learn a lot more if you take Professor Bailyn’s seminar,” Frank said, smiling beneath the last flat-top haircut sported by any member of the Harvard faculty. I dutifully wandered down the corridor of the top floor of Widener Library to Bailyn’s office and secured the necessary permission.

For me, as for literally scores of his students, that seminar was a transforming intellectual experience. It also offers something of a key to understanding the distinctive contribution Bailyn has made to the study of American history in the half century since he

first came to Harvard, fresh from Williams College and the United States Army.

To an untutored naïf like myself, Bailyn's seminar was at once mystifying and elating. For the first half of the course, we were never quite sure what the subject was. Each week's readings were so eclectic that we went to class wondering what we would possibly discuss. Much of this reading lay in the general field of American and English history in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. But why were we reading Lord Denning's report on the Profumo spy scandal of 1963, or E. H. Carr's account of the nineteenth-century Russian liberal, Alexander Herzen, and his circle of like-minded exiles from tsarist autocracy? Or why should we bother with as downright moldy and justly neglected a piece of scholarship as Harlan Updegraff's *Origins of the Moving School in Massachusetts*?

Two answers began to emerge to the puzzle as the

weeks went by, and they guided our work ever after. First, the great conceptual challenge that a working historian faces is to define a good problem, and the essence of a good problem lies in identifying two points in time between which something significant (and often surprising) had happened. History is primarily about change and movement, Bailyn taught us; however hard we have to work to understand just what the past was like, the deeper challenge is to explain how one part of the past gave way to another. Second, because change can only be described through narrative, historians must be sensitive to all the matters of exposition that make narrative effective. Sometimes this meant recognizing the importance of adjectives (the point of reading Lord Denning's account, which interrupted its spare legal language to apply a few salacious modifiers to those two famous

prostitutes, Christine Keeler and Mandy Rice-Davies). Sometimes it meant recalling the importance of transitions (the point of reading David Cecil's brilliant Prologue to his life of Melbourne). Always it involved understanding that expository decisions are as essential to historians as their mastery of sources and all the other technical skills on which our scholarship depends.

With that seminar, I was hooked—a common fate for many of his students. The next year I was a teaching assistant in two of Bailyn's lecture courses. Here I saw a different facet of his approach to teaching. In his graduate courses,



REVOLUTIONARY WAR INFANTRYMAN CARRYING A LIGHT RIFLE, YORKTOWN CAMPAIGN, 1781. WATERCOLOR FROM THE WAR DIARY OF JEAN BAPTISTE DE VERGER, FRENCH OFFICER SERVING IN AMERICA DURING THE REVOLUTION.

—Anne S. K. Brown
Military Collection,
Brown University Library

Bailyn mustered an admirable patience that most professors find hard to sustain, making us kick problems around, false leads and all, before nudging us (or sometimes commanding us, with an imperious "Look!") to consider the points he wanted us to see. His undergraduate lectures took a different form. Bailyn was not a classroom lecturer in the grand style; he never gave the sort of polished performance that is full of bons mots and witticisms and manages to reach its scintillating conclusion seconds before the bell. For the first twenty minutes of class, one barely needed to take a note, because he usually spent the time restating the

NEW YORK HARBOR, CIRCA 1760. AT CENTER, A GROUP OF MILITIAMEN DRILL. A FRENCH SHIP, POSSIBLY CAUGHT BY A PRIVATEER, IS ANCHORED AT LEFT.



problem he had been discussing at the close of the previous class. But round about twenty-five minutes past the hour, it would be off to the races, as a whole new topic was introduced and brilliantly sketched, opening up interpretive vistas more rapidly than anyone could imagine. Bailyn's inclination to review and revolve problems gave his students a glimpse of how the analysis and interpretation of the past diverged from the simple narratives or stale controversies that (then and now) remain too much the stuff of history as it is taught in secondary schools.

Teaching has a chemistry of its own, and the personal bonds it forms explain much about how great scholars draw students into their fields of study. In his early years as a Harvard professor, it was the promise of future scholarship conveyed in his teaching that helped Bailyn attract such talented students as Richard Bushman, Stanley Katz, Michael Kammen, and Gordon Wood. But the examples by which scholars teach must ultimately be found in their writings.

Bailyn had published his first monograph, a study of *The New England Merchants in the Seventeenth Century*, in 1955, and several influential interpretive essays in the years that followed. But his arrival as a major force in American history and letters had to await the publication of the first edited volume of *Pamphlets of the American Revolution* in 1965. Its lengthy introduction, originally titled "The Transforming Radicalism of the American Revolution," was reprinted two years later as *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*. Not since Charles Beard published his *Economic Interpretation of the Constitution* in 1913 has a single book so radically

transformed the writing of American history. But where Beard's interpretive punch masked research that was both hasty and flawed, Bailyn's *Ideological Origins* has sources of power that will preserve its authority well into the new century.

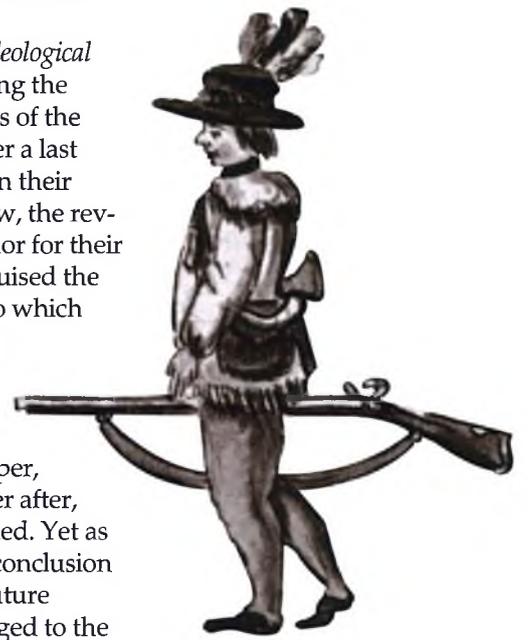
What did it mean to say that the origins of the American Revolution were ideological in nature? Since the 1950s, other scholars, notably Edmund Morgan of Yale, had demonstrated that the colonists were deeply principled and consistent in defending the rights that the British Empire set out to curtail after 1763. But Bailyn's use of the concept of ideology added a new and potent element to this view. Americans reacted to British policy as they did, Bailyn argued, because they had also absorbed, from English sources, a hard-edged, suspicious view of politics that emphasized the dangers that grasping wielders of power always posed to the rights of their subjects. Rather than dismiss British initiatives as honest mistakes or miscalculations, the colonists were predisposed to interpret each British miscue as evidence of a systematic plot to turn the virtuous Americans into political slaves. Independence came, Bailyn concluded, not only because Americans adhered to their principles, but also because their ideology—at times near-paranoiac in its obsessions—drove them into revolution.

But the telling of this ideological story occupied only half of the book, for in two concluding chapters, Bailyn offered a more complicated explanation of the radicalism of the Revolution. Its deeper significance lay, he argued, in the fundamental challenge it posed to much of the received political wisdom of the age. The decade of "pounding controversy" that followed the Stamp Act led

the colonists to give new shapes and meanings to such familiar concepts as representation, sovereignty, rights, and the nature of a constitution. And in developing these positions, Bailyn suggested, Americans also came to understand how different their society had become from the parent culture they had long sought to imitate. Now standing on native ground, Americans realized that they had already departed in bold and progressive ways from Old World norms. Some began to sense, too, that their new republic should carry this departure further, extending the revolutionary impulse to challenge other sources of power—established religion, chattel slavery, social hierarchies—that had not been at issue in 1765.

Bailyn closed *Ideological Origins* by allowing the loyalist opponents of the Revolution to offer a last word of rebuke. In their quite sensible view, the revolutionaries' clamor for their rights barely disguised the anarchic results to which their protests must lead. No form of authority, however traditional or proper, would be safe ever after, the loyalists warned. Yet as Bailyn's moving conclusion made clear, the future deservedly belonged to the revolutionaries. No intelligent reader could doubt that Bailyn's own sentiments lay with the revolutionaries and their "refusal to truckle" before any arbitrary source of authority.

Yet when Bailyn published his next book, in 1974, some critics (and even a few of his students) wondered whether he was either a closet Tory or a budding reactionary. In *The Ordeal of Thomas Hutchinson* (the next-to-last royal governor of Massachusetts), Bailyn



RIFLEMAN DEPICTED IN DE VERGER'S DIARY.

—Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library

offered an engrossing, sympathetic, and deeply moving portrait of the man whom the militant patriots of Boston—the Adamses and their allies—so detested. Bailyn's Hutchinson is an able public servant, equally committed to the welfare of his colony and the empire, and a thoroughly decent man, the moral superior to his detractors, who treated him as a lackey of his imperial bosses and a traitor to his native Massachusetts. How had this capable and decent man so gravely mistaken the nature of the revolutionary challenge, Bailyn asked, contributing by his very miscues to the political disaster he hoped to avert?

The answer to this question illuminates one of the recurring themes in Bailyn's writings. From his first book, Bailyn has always been fascinated by the difficulties that members of the colonial elite had repeatedly met in trying to set themselves up as New World avatars of an Old World aristocracy. In many ways Hutchinson personified everything a colonial aristocracy might have become, had the Revolution not intervened. And that was the source of his travail in Massachusetts, and the larger debacle to which his political errors led. Hutchinson ultimately failed, Bailyn suggested, because his very success in manipulating his imperial connections rendered him unable to grasp, much less respond to, the raw resentment his own privilege and power evoked. Bailyn writes that

habituated as Hutchinson was to the "closely calibrated world of status, deference, and degree—the Anglo-American political world of privilege and patronage and of limited, arbitrary access—he could not respond to the aroused moral passion and the optimistic and idealist impulses that gripped the minds of the Revolutionaries and that led them to condemn as corrupt and oppressive the whole system by which their world was governed." In social terms, Hutchinson was no more exalted a personage than his foes and rivals; he was only more successful in working the levers of imperial influence and privilege.

That was the world to which Americans were no longer willing to "truckle," as they imagined a society in which privilege and ascriptive power would lose their sway. But how had masses of colonists come to question the received wisdom that made hierarchy and deference natural building blocks of the social order? That question, too, had long intrigued Bailyn, going back to his early studies of the New England merchants and the emerging cousinry of great planters who governed Virginia. It was a question to which he returned as he put his studies of the Revolution behind him and took up the new project on which he is still at work: a projected multivolume study of immigration into the American colonies.

All the time he was working on the Revolution, Bailyn also monitored the flood of new monographs on the settlement of the American colonies that began to appear in the late 1960s. These

works were based on close analysis of the demography of settlement and the formation of local communities, and they provided a new and provocative portrait of colonial society. Bailyn was certainly impressed by the findings of these younger scholars, some of whom (like Philip Greven and Lois Green Carr) he had trained, and all of whom he had influenced. But the very technical exactitude of this scholarship, with its obsessive focus on family and community history, raised troubling questions for a historian who remained concerned with the imperative of narrative. How, Bailyn wondered, could historians transcend the gritty data on which so much of this new social history rested? How could they provide compelling accounts of what these discrete social processes meant both to the participants and the societies they were piecemeal creating?

Bailyn raised these questions in his presidential address to the American Historical Association in 1981, and then offered his own solutions in two books published almost simultaneously five years later. *The Peopling of British North America* was a set of three lectures designed to illustrate the proposition that the theme of immigration provided the one best rubric for incorporating all the disparate findings of the new studies into one comprehensive framework. It was quickly followed by the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Voyagers to the West*, which represented Bailyn's own self-conscious effort to provide a model version of a monograph in social history. Working outward from a single archive—a government survey of roughly ten thousand emigrants departing for America just before

the Revolution—Bailyn examined this outflow from Britain from four distinct perspectives.

Voyagers opens with an account of the problem that British policymakers faced when they finally grasped the sheer scale of the emigration to America that their victory in the Seven Years War (1756-63) had made possible. Working from the survey the government commissioned to assay this problem, Bailyn turns to a close quantitative assessment of the volume and flow of the emigration, demonstrating that it followed two distinct vectors. With this established, Bailyn next explores and details the structural links that entrepreneurs and speculators had to forge to transfer this population from one side of the Atlantic to the other. As in his first book on the early New England merchants, this section of *Voyagers* revealed Bailyn's fascination with the dynamics of commerce in all its marvelous complexity.

Had the book ended there, it would have been a wonderful study in the economics of emigration and settlement. Yet something vital would have been missing: an understanding of what migration had meant to the men and women whose life histories would be bound with America's long after the speculators had lost their investments and other entrepreneurs had moved on to new ventures. In the three hundred concluding pages—nearly a book in itself—Bailyn traced a set of voyages and voyagers as they carried emigrants from origins as out-of-the-way as the Hebrides and Orkney Islands off Scotland's northern coast to newly opening lands extending from Nova Scotia and central New York to Florida and the Mississippi delta.



MUSKETMAN FROM
DE VERGER'S DIARY.
—Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection,
Brown University Library



VIEW OF BOSTON HARBOR ENGRAVED IN 1768 BY PAUL REVERE, AND DEPICTING THE GATHERING OF BRITISH SHIPS UNLOADING THEIR TROOPS.

This section of *Voyagers* breathes life into the often-arid generalizations of social history, thereby fulfilling the challenge that Bailyn had set in his presidential address of 1981: to write a social history that would deploy all the tools of modern scholarship, yet still convey, through vivid narrative, the sensations of movement and experience that are always the ultimate stuff of history.

More than that still, Bailyn meant *Voyagers* to illustrate one of the great themes of his writings on the Revolution: the extent to which the emerging liberal society of eighteenth-century America was predicated on a rejection of the hierarchies and privileges of the old imperial regime. Bailyn's voyagers reached America too late, and were too preoccupied with settlement, to have much to do with the Revolution. But in their own way, they exem-

plified and reinforced its deepest tendencies. For these voyagers were seeking a measure of personal independence and self-sufficiency that Britain had not allowed them to enjoy, but which, if they were lucky enough to survive the tossings and turnings of migration, America promised to provide.

Teaching *Voyagers to the West* (as I regularly do) to our graduate students carries me back to the heady experience of Bailyn's seminar. For the one lesson I learned best in 1969 was that I was preparing to write a book (on what subject I hardly knew), and that when I did, Bailyn's extraordinary lessons and example would set the standard I would aspire to meet. That standard was never imposed, however; Bailyn left us to puzzle things out for ourselves, goaded only by his critical eye and his alarming propensity to call

us up short with the most famous of all his questions: "So what?"

Bernard Bailyn has just turned seventy-five, and he remains as actively engaged in original research as he was when he was the young star of the Harvard history department in the 1950s. His studies of the peopling of British North America continue, and for the past few years, he has been conducting a highly energized series of seminars and workshops on the settlement and economic development of the early modern Atlantic world. He is, in fact, the youngest historian I know. □

Jack N. Rakove won the 1997 Pulitzer Prize in history for his book, *ORIGINAL MEANINGS: POLITICS AND IDEAS IN THE MAKING OF THE CONSTITUTION*. He is the Coe Professor of History and American Studies at Stanford University.

The Rallying Cry

A NEW BOOK BY ERIC FONER,
THE STORY OF AMERICAN FREEDOM,
DESCRIBES HOW THE CONCEPT OF
LIBERTY GAINED NEW DIMENSIONS
IN COLONIAL AMERICA.

American freedom was born in revolution. Liberty, of course, did not suddenly enter the American vocabulary in 1776; indeed, few words were as ubiquitous in the transatlantic political discourse of the eighteenth century. Colonial America was heir to many understandings of liberty, some as old as the city-states of ancient Greece, others as new as the Enlightenment.

One common definition in British North America saw it less as a political or social status than as a spiritual condition. In the ancient world, lack of self-control was understood as a form of slavery, the antithesis of the free life. "Show me a man who isn't a slave," wrote Seneca. "One is a slave to sex, another to money, another to ambition." This understanding of freedom as submission to a moral code was central to the Christian cosmology that suffused the worldview of the early colonists. Wherever it flourished, Christianity enshrined the idea of liberation, but as a spiritual condition rather than a worldly one. Since the Fall, man had been prone to succumb to his lusts and passions. Freedom meant abandoning this life of sin to embrace the teachings of Christ. "Where the spirit of the Lord is," declares the New Testament, "there is liberty." In this definition, servitude and freedom were mutually reinforcing, not contradictory states, since those who accepted the teachings of Christ became "free from sin" and "servants to God" simultaneously.

(ABOVE)
WHERE LIBERTY DWELLS, THERE IS MY COUNTRY COVERLET OF
TOILE MANUFACTURED IN ENGLAND FOR SALE IN AMERICA, IN
WHICH A SHIELD-BEARING COLUMBIA, SYMBOLIZING
THE UNITED STATES, LEADS FRANKLIN IN HIS
ELEVATION TO DIVINE STATUS.

—Courtesy Winterthur Museum

(RIGHT)
LE DOCTEUR FRANCKLIN COURONNÉ PAR LA
LIBERTÉ, FRANKLIN BEING CROWNED BY LIBERTY.

—Courtesy Winterthur Museum



—Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division

RAISING

BY ERIC FONER



LIBERTY POLE, 1776. NINETEENTH-CENTURY ENGRAVING BY JOHN C. MCRAE, IN WHICH AMERICANS CELEBRATE THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE BY RAISING PATRIOTIC BANNERS WHILE REMOVING A SIGN BEARING THE LIKENESS OF KING GEORGE III.

The Puritan settlers of colonial Massachusetts, who believed their colony the embodiment of true Christianity, planted this spiritual definition of freedom on American soil. In a 1645 speech to the Massachusetts legislature that epitomized Puritan conceptions of freedom, John Winthrop, the colony's governor, distinguished sharply between "natural liberty," which suggested "a liberty to evil," and "moral liberty . . . a liberty to do only what is good." This definition of freedom as flowing from self-denial and moral choice was quite compatible with severe restraints on freedom of speech, religion, movement, and personal behavior. Individual desires must give way to the needs of the community, and "Christian liberty" meant submission not only to the will of God, but to secular authority as well, to a well-understood set of interconnected responsibilities and duties, a submission no less complete for being voluntary. The most common civil offence in the courts of colonial New England was "contempt of authority." The unrestrained individual enjoying natural rights, whom later generations would imagine as the embodiment of freedom, struck these Puritan settlers as the incarnation of anarchy. "When each man hath liberty to follow his own imagination," declared Puritan minister Thomas Hooker, disaster inevitably resulted, for "all prejudice the public good."

Communal authority was always weaker in the more secular colonies to the south of the Puritan commonwealth. Even in New England, willingness to accept community regimentation in the name of liberty soon waned. By the 1750s, the idea of New England's special place in God's plan for humanity had been subsumed in the more general celebration of the entire Anglo-American Protestant world as a bulwark against tyranny and popery. Yet the Christian understanding of liberty as spiritual salvation survived to the Revolution and, indeed, our own time. The religious revivals of the late colonial era, known to historians as the Great Awakening, reinforced this understanding of freedom. On the eve of independence, ministers like Jonathan Boucher were insisting that "true liberty" meant "a liberty to do every thing that is right, and being restrained from doing any thing that is wrong," not "a right to do every thing that we please."



John Locke

—Courtesy Winterthur Museum

THE LAW WAS LIBERTY'S
"SALVATION," NOT ITS ADVERSARY.
LIBERTY, WROTE JOHN LOCKE,
MEANT NOT LEAVING EVERY
PERSON FREE TO DO AS HE DESIRED,
BUT "HAVING A STANDING RULE TO
LIVE BY, COMMON TO EVERY ONE OF
THAT SOCIETY, AND MADE BY THE
LEGISLATIVE POWER."

This equation of liberty with moral action flourished as well in a secularized form in the Atlantic world of the eighteenth century. If religious liberty meant obedience to God, "civil liberty" rested on obedience to law. As far back as the ancient world, Aristotle had cautioned men not to "think it slavery to live according to the rule of the constitution." The law was liberty's "salvation," not its adversary. Liberty, wrote John Locke, meant not leaving every person free to do as he desired, but "having a standing rule to live by, common to every one of that society, and made by the legislative power." As Locke's formulation suggests, liberty in its civil form depended on obedience to the law, so long as statutes were promulgated by elected representatives and did not operate in an arbitrary manner. Here lay the essence of the idea of British liberty, a central element of social and political thought on both sides of the Atlantic. Until the 1770s, most colonists believed themselves part of the freest political system mankind had ever known.

By the eighteenth century, the "invented tradition" of the freeborn Englishman had become a central fea-

ture of Anglo-American political culture and a major building block in the sense of nationhood then being consolidated in Britain. By self-definition, the British nation was a community of free individuals and its past a "history of liberty." Belief in freedom as the common heritage of all Britons and the British Empire as the world's sole repository of liberty had helped to legitimize the colonization of North America in the first place.

Of course the idea of freedom as the natural condition of mankind was hardly unknown in a nation that had produced the writings of John Milton and John Locke. But British freedom was anything but universal. Nationalist, often xenophobic, it viewed nearly every other nation on earth as "enslaved"—to popery, tyranny, or barbarism. "Freedom . . . in no other land will thrive," wrote the poet John Dryden; "Freedom is an English subject's sole prerogative." Britons saw no contradiction between proclaiming themselves citizens of a land of freedom precisely when British ships were transporting millions of Africans to bondage in the New World. "Britons never, never, never will be slaves," ran the popular song, "Rule Britannia." It did not say that Britons could not own slaves, since for most of the eighteenth century, almost no one seemed to consider Africans entitled to the rights of Englishmen.

Nor was British liberty incompatible with wide gradations in personal freedom at home—a hierarchical, aristocratic society with a restricted "political nation" (those entitled to vote and hold office). The common law's protections applied to everyone, but property qualifications and other restrictions limited the eighteenth-century electorate to less than 5 percent of the adult male population. (The "right of magistracy," wrote Joseph Priestley in his *Essay on the First Principles of Government* (1768), was not essential to British freedom. Men "may enjoy civil liberty, but not political liberty.") Nor did British law view laborers as wholly free. Vagrancy statutes punished those without visible means of support, "master and servant" laws

(RIGHT)
LIBERTY, IN THE FORM OF THE
GODDESS OF YOUTH. PAINTED
AND ENGRAVED BY EDWARD
SAVAGE (1761-1817), JUNE 11, 1796.



—Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division

required strict obedience of employees, and breaches of labor contracts carried criminal penalties. The very navy whose domination of the high seas secured the nation's freedom from foreign domination was manned by sailors seized by press gangs from the streets of London and Liverpool. In this sense, British freedom was the lineal descendant of an understanding of liberty derived from the Middle Ages, when "liberties" meant formal privileges such as self-government or exemption from taxation granted to particular groups by contract, charter, or royal decree. Only those who enjoyed the "freedom of the city," for example, could engage in certain economic activities.

Whatever its limitations and exclusions, it would be impossible, as one scholar writes, "to overemphasize the degree to which eighteenth-century Englishmen reveled in their worldwide reputation for freedom," an observation as applicable to the American colonies as the mother country. One could, if one desired, subdivide British liberty into its component parts, as many writers of the era were prone to do. Political liberty meant the right to participate in public affairs; civil liberty, protection of one's person and property against encroachment by government; personal liberty, freedom of conscience and movement; religious liberty, the right of Protestants to worship as they chose. But the whole exceeded the sum of these parts. British liberty was simultaneously a collection of specific rights, a national characteristic, and a state of mind. So ubiquitous and protean was the concept that what would later seem inconsistent elements managed happily to coexist.

British freedom, for example, incorporated contradictory attitudes about political power. Power and liberty were widely believed to be natural antagonists, and in their balanced constitution and the principle that no man, even the king, is above the law, Britons claimed to have devised the best means of preventing political absolutism. These ideas pervaded not just the political sector but far more broadly in British society. Laborers, sailors, and artisans spoke the language of common law rights and British freedom as insistently as pamphleteers and Parliamentarians. By the eighteenth century, the category of "free person" had become not simply a legal status, as in medieval times, but a powerful element of popular ideology.

On both sides of the Atlantic, liberty emerged as "the battle cry of the rebellious." Frequent crowd actions protesting infringements on traditional rights gave concrete expression to the definition of liberty as resistance to tyranny. "We are Free-men—British subjects—Not Born Slaves," was a rallying cry of the Regulators, who protested the underrepresentation of western settlements in the South Carolina legislature during the 1760s.

This tension between freedom as the power to participate in public affairs and freedom as a collection of individual rights requiring protection against governmental interference helps define the difference between two political languages that flourished in the Anglo-American world. One, termed by scholars republicanism (although few in eighteenth-century England used the word, which conjured up memories of the time when King Charles I went to the gallows), celebrated active participation in public life as the essence of liberty. Tracing its lineage back to Renaissance Florence and beyond that to the ancient world, republicanism held that as a social being, man reached his highest fulfillment in setting aside self-interest to pursue the common good. Republican freedom could be expansive and

"THE FREEDOM... THAT I LOVE,"
DECLARED EDMUND BURKE,
"IS NOT SOLITARY, UNCONNECTED,
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AS IF EVERY MAN WAS TO REGULATE
THE WHOLE OF HIS CONDUCT BY
HIS OWN WILL. THE LIBERTY I MEAN
IS SOCIAL LIBERTY."

democratic, as when it spoke of the common rights of the entire community. It also had an exclusive, class-based dimension, in its assumption that only property-owning citizens possessed the quality known as "virtue"—understood in the eighteenth century not simply as a personal, moral quality but as a willingness to subordinate private pas-

sions and desires to the public good. "Only a virtuous people are capable of freedom," wrote Benjamin Franklin.

If republican liberty was a civic and social quality, the freedom celebrated by eighteenth-century liberalism was essentially individual and private. According to John Locke, the founding father of modern liberalism, government is established to offer security to the "life, liberties, and estates" that are the natural rights of all mankind, and essentially should be limited to this task. For Locke and his eighteenth-century disciples, liberty meant not civic involvement but personal autonomy—"not to be subject to the inconstant, uncertain, unknown Arbitrary Will of another Man." Protecting freedom required shielding a realm of private life and personal concerns—including family relations, religious preferences, and economic activity—from interference by the state.

Critics condemned it as an excuse for selfishness and lack of civic-mindedness. "The freedom... that I love," declared Edmund Burke, "is not solitary, unconnected, individual, selfish Liberty. As if every Man was to regulate the whole of his conduct by his own will. The Liberty I mean is social liberty." Yet it is easy to understand liberalism's appeal in the hierarchical Atlantic world of the eighteenth century. It called into question all the legal privileges and governmental arrangements that impeded individual advancement, from the economic prerogatives of chartered corporations to legalized religious intolerance.

Eventually, liberalism and republicanism would come to be seen as alternative and contradictory understandings of freedom. In the eighteenth century, however, these languages overlapped and often reinforced one another. Many leaders of the Revolution seem to the modern eye simultaneously republican (in their concern for the public good and citizens' obligations to the polity) and liberal (in their preoccupation with individual rights). Both political ideologies could inspire a commitment to constitutional government, freedom of speech and religion, and restraints on arbitrary power. Both emphasized the security of property as a foundation of freedom. The pervasive influence of Protestant morality, moreover, tempered what later would come to be seen as liberalism's amorality.

Certainly, in the colonial era, "liberty" stood as a meeting point between liberal and republican understandings of government and society. Moreover, whether liberal, republican, or some combination of the two, most eighteenth-century commentators assumed that only certain kinds of persons were fully capable of enjoying the benefits and exercising the rights of freedom. On both sides of the Atlantic, it was an axiom of political thought that dependents lacked a will of their own and thus were incapable of participating in public affairs. Liberty, wrote the influential political theorist Richard Price, rested on "one general idea... the idea of self-direction or self-government." Those who did not control their own lives ought not to have a voice in governing the state. Political freedom required economic independence.

Property, therefore, was "interwoven" with eighteenth-century understandings of freedom, as New York publisher John Peter Zenger put it in 1735. The independence entailed by property was an indispensable basis of liberty. Samuel Johnson's dictionary defined "independence" as "freedom," and Thomas Jefferson insisted that dependence "begets subservience and venality, suffocates the germ of virtue, and prepares fit tools for the designs of ambition." Hence the ubiquity of property qualifications for voting in Britain and the colonies. The "true reason" for such requirements, William Blackstone explained in his *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, was that men without property would inevitably fall "under the immediate domination of others." Not only personal dependence, as in the case of a domestic servant, but working for wages was widely viewed as disreputable. Many years would pass before the idea gained acceptance that wage labor was compatible with genuine freedom.

Those who drew up plans to colonize British North America expected to reproduce the hierarchical social structure of the mother country. But from the earliest days of settlement, migrants from Europe saw in the New World the promise of liberation from the economic inequalities and widespread economic dependence of the Old. John Smith had barely landed at Jamestown in 1607 when he observed that in America, "every man may be master and owner of his owne labour

Continued on page 49



Photo by Richard M. Feldman © 1998

A HISTORIAN'S IMPERFECTIONS

I am not concerned with anything abstract, with anything that might be called the philosophy of history, nor with such fashionable topics as history as fiction or any of the postmodern theories. I am concerned with one of the central problems in the everyday practice of history that contemporary historians—working historians, not theorists of history—actually face, none of whom, as far as I know, believe naively that historians can attain perfect objectivity; none of whom dream that a historian can contemplate the past from some immaculate cosmic perch, free from the prejudices, assumptions, and biases of one's own time, place, and personality; none of whom deny that

E X C E R P T S

FROM THE WRITINGS OF *Bernard Bailyn*

facts are inert and meaningless until mobilized by an enquiring mind, and hence that, in Dorothy Ross's phrase, all knowledge of the past is interpretative knowledge; yet all of whom assume that the reality of the past can be subjected to useful enquiries, that among the responses to those enquiries some views can be shown to be more accurate depictions of what actually happened than others, and that the establishment, in some significant degree, of a realistic understanding of the past, free of myths, wish-fulfillments, and partisan delusions, is essential for social sanity. They know that history, never a science, sometimes an art, is essentially a craft, and they try to improve their craftsmanship, knowing that they will never achieve

anything like perfection, that in fact the inescapable limitations in what they can do will confine their work to crude approximations of what they seek, but that to despair for want of realizing the ideal would be to forfeit the mission which they are equipped to fulfill.

CONTEXT IN HISTORY
(*North American Studies*
Bernard Bailyn Lecture,
number 1). Victoria, Australia:
La Trobe University, 1995.

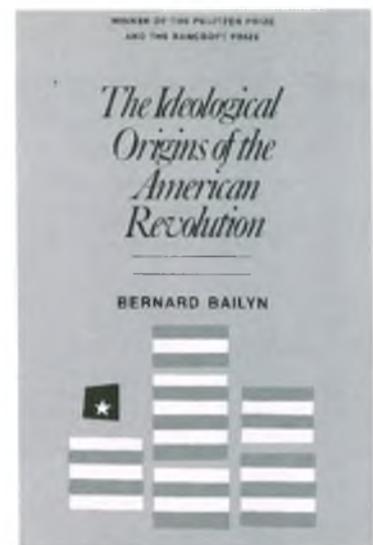
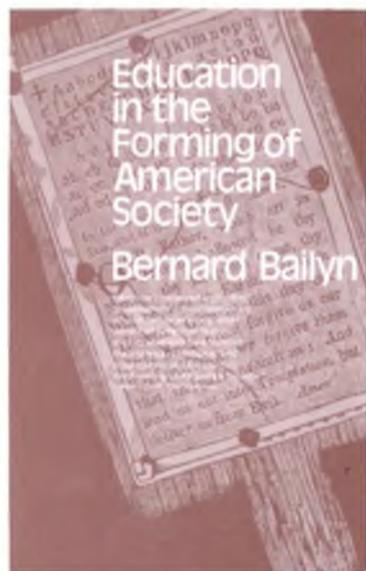
THE ROLE OF EDUCATION

It becomes apparent when one thinks of education not only as formal pedagogy but as the entire process by which a culture transmits itself across the generations; when one is prepared to see great variations in the role of formal institutions of instruction, to see schools

and universities fade into relative insignificance next to other social agencies; when one sees education in its elaborate, intricate involvements with the rest of society, and notes its shifting functions, meanings, and purposes. And it becomes evident also only when one assumes that the past was not incidentally but essentially different from the present; when one seeks as the points of greatest relevance those critical passages of history where elements of our familiar present, still part of an unfamiliar past, begin to disentangle themselves, begin to emerge amid confusion and uncertainty. For these soft, ambiguous moments where the words we use and the institutions we know are notably present but are still enmeshed in older meanings and different purposes — these are the moments of true origination. They reveal in purest form essential features which subsequent events complicate and modify but never completely transform.

EDUCATION IN THE FORMING OF AMERICAN SOCIETY.

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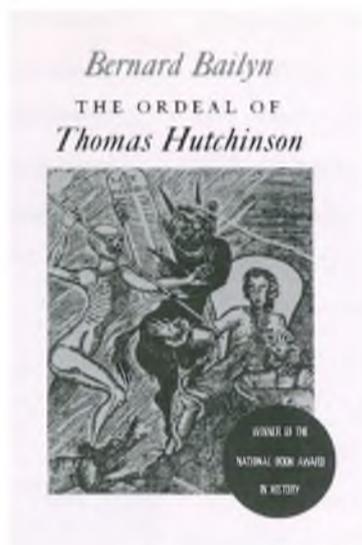


THE NATURE OF DEFIANCE

How else could it end? What reasonable social and political order could conceivably be built and maintained where authority was questioned before it was obeyed, where social differences were considered to be incidental rather than essential to community order, and where superiority, suspect in principle, was not allowed to concentrate in the hands of a few but was scattered broadly through the populace? No one could clearly say. But some, caught up in a vision of the future in which the peculiarities of American life became the marks of a chosen people, found in the defiance of traditional order the firmest of all grounds for their hope for a freer life. The details of this new world

were not as yet clearly depicted; but faith ran high that a better world than any that had ever been known could be built where authority was distrusted and held in constant scrutiny; where the status of men flowed from their achievements and from their personal qualities, not from distinctions ascribed to them at birth; and where the use of power over the lives of men was jealously guarded and severely restricted. It was only where there was this defiance, this refusal to truckle, this distrust of all authority, political or social, that institutions would express human aspirations, not crush them.

THE IDEOLOGICAL ORIGINS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION. ©1967, 1972 by the Presidents and Fellows of Harvard College. Reprinted by permission of Harvard University Press.



THE ORDEAL
OF HUTCHINSON

In 1760, as these changes began, Thomas Hutchinson was at the height of his powers. Forty-nine years of age, an experienced, successful, and influential public figure who prided himself on his ability to withstand the savagery of politics, he was moving toward the fulfillment of his career at the center of colonial affairs, where it was expected that his abilities would once more gain him success. And so they would have, if times had not changed—if politics had not entered a new phase. Never having felt deep personal discontent—never having passionately aspired—never having longed for some ideal and total betterment—never having found in some utopian vision a compelling

and transforming cause, he had never understood the motivations of the miserable, the visionary, and the committed, and he was unprepared to grapple with the politics they shaped.

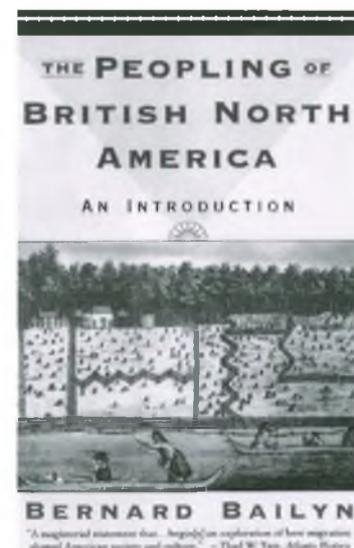
THE ORDEAL OF THOMAS HUTCHINSON. ©1974 by Bernard Bailyn. Reprinted by permission of Harvard University Press.

A PASSAGE
TO EPHRATA

Johann Conrad Beissel, an ignorant, mystical, tormented baker's boy from the German Palatinate, after flirting with several of the radical sects that struggled for existence in the spiritually burnt-over districts of the Rhineland, had joined the exodus to Pennsylvania; concocted, in a hermit's cabin near Germantown, his own brand of sabbatarian Dunkerism; gathered

a band of followers at Conestoga; and founded the Ephrata cloister, whose monks and nuns he ruled despotically, neurotically, and cruelly. God-possessed, immersed in the writings of the mystics, entranced by the secret rites of the Rosicrucians, he was a cyclone of energy, and he pursued his dream of a pure religion, unimpeded by state, society, or church. He was bizarre but unconfined, and the fame of his strange sect of emaciated celibates spread throughout the English as well as the German population of Pennsylvania and ultimately throughout the Rhineland and in France, through Voltaire, as well. Beissel preached with his eyes shut tight, passionately, ungrammatically, in incoherent torrents. If by chance his bowed congregation indicated

understanding in quiet murmurs of assent, he reversed his chaotic argument to demonstrate the incomprehensibility of God's truth. And he imposed on his half-starved followers—clothed in rough, Capuchin-like habits designed to hide all signs of human shape—a rule of such severe self-mortification that some went mad, while the elite enacted the secret rites of the Rosicrucians, to which neophytes sought admission by bodily ordeals that lasted forty days and forty nights. Yet . . . and yet . . . the art of book illumination was reinvented in Beissel's Ephrata, and from some spark of hidden genius the *Vorsteher* himself devised a form of polyphonic choral music, complete with his own system of notation, which, when sung falsetto by his



followers straining to reach ever higher, more "divine" notes, created an unearthly effect that enthralled everyone who ever heard it—and which caught the imagination, two centuries later, of another German immigrant in America, Thomas Mann, who, brooding on art and the German soul, immortalized Beissel in *Doctor Faustus*.

THE PEOPLING OF BRITISH NORTH AMERICA. ©1986 by Bernard Bailyn. Reprinted by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

THE DEATH OF A SLAVE

Then something strange happened. Dunbar's accused slave, sitting in the bottom of the boat "with his arms pinioned," managed, when the boat was in the middle of the river, "to throw himself

overboard and was immediately drowned." For Dunbar there could be only one interpretation of this desperate act—not that the slave was reacting to the hopelessness of the situation (four of the other suspects were hanged within twenty-four hours) but that he was demonstrating "evidence of his guilt." For, Dunbar reasoned, the slave must have been so "stung with the heinousness of his guilt, ashamed perhaps to look a master in the face against whom he could urge no plea to palliate his intended diabolical plan," that his only recourse had been suicide. The whole business was disappointing and disagreeable, it "occasioned such fatigues both of body and mind, that stave making hath been

discontinued." Furthermore, when it was all over, Dunbar was distressed to learn that it was impossible to enforce the colony's law providing that when Negroes were executed by a proper court their owners were entitled to compensation for their loss at the public's expense. . . .

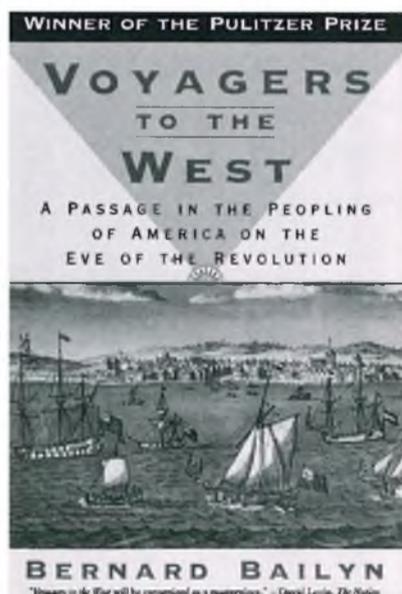
Dunbar, the young *érudite*, the Scottish scientist and man of letters, was no sadist. His plantation regime was, by the standards of the time, mild; he clothed and fed his slaves decently, and frequently relented in his more severe punishments. But four thousand miles from the sources of culture, alone on the far periphery of British civilization where physical survival was a daily struggle, where ruthless exploitation was a way of life, and where disorder, violence, and human degradation were commonplace, he had triumphed by successful adaptation. Endlessly enterprising and resourceful, his finer sensibilities dulled by the abrasions of frontier life, and feeling within himself a sense of authority and autonomy he had not known before, a force that flowed from his absolute control over the

lives of others, he emerged a distinctive new man, a borderland gentleman, a man of property in a raw, half-savage world.

VOYAGERS TO THE WEST.
© 1986 by Bernard Bailyn.
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JEFFERSON'S PRAGMATISM

Fearing concentrations of power, and arbitrary power of any kind—convinced that America's experimental achievements in freedom were beset by forces that would destroy them—but endowed, himself, with an instinct for power and with exceptional political and administrative skills, and blessed with many years of active life in politics—Jefferson, more than any of the Revolution's original leaders, explored the ambiguities of freedom. If the principles that had emerged in the great struggle with Britain before 1776 had not been so clear, so luminous and compelling, in his mind; or if he had remained on the sidelines, commenting like a Greek chorus on the great events of the day, the world would have been simpler for him, the ambiguities less painful,



and his reputation less complicated. As it was, he remained throughout his long career the clear voice of America's revolutionary ideology, its purest conscience, its most brilliant expositor, its true poet, while struggling to deal with the intractable mass of the developing nation's everyday problems. In this double role—ideologist and practical politician, theorist and pragmatist—he sought to realize the Revolution's glittering promise, and as he did so he learned the inner complexities of these ideals as well as their strengths. He never ceased to fear that the great experiment might fail, that the United States might be torn apart by its internal divisions or overwhelmed by the pressures of the outside world and, like so many other nations, in the end forfeit its freedom for a specious security. But he did not despair. He hoped, with increasing confidence, that the common sense of the people and their innate idealism would overcome the obstacles and somehow resolve the ambiguities, and that America would fulfill its destiny—which was, he believed, to preserve, and to extend to

other regions of the earth, "the sacred fire of freedom and self-government," and to liberate the human mind from every form of tyranny.

"JEFFERSON AND THE AMBIGUITIES OF FREEDOM." *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 137, no. 4 (1993).

THE ENDURING QUESTION OF POWER

For all its distance from us in time and culture, for all the changes that have overtaken the world since 1788, the *Federalist* papers remain relevant, and acutely relevant, because they address masterfully our permanent concerns with political power—under our Constitution and in general. The *Federalist* writers knew that a structure of power must exist in any stable, civilized society, but they knew too that power uncontrolled will certainly be abused. They had vividly in mind the principles of political freedom that had been formulated in the decade of pounding ideological debate before 1776 and then discussed again in the writing of the state constitutions in the years that followed. Defending

the establishment of sufficient national power to sustain a stable and effective society, they sought to preserve the maximum range of personal rights consistent with it. In this fundamental concern for the balance of power and liberty—which had been the central theme of America's earlier struggle with Britain—the *Federalist* writers, conservators of radical political principles, are our contemporaries. Their constitutional idiom is ours; their political problems at the deepest level are ours; and we share their cautious optimism that personal freedom and national power can be compatible. But maintaining that balance is still a struggle, at times a bitter struggle, and so we continue to look back to what these extraordinarily thoughtful men wrote so hurriedly under such intense pressure two hundred years ago. The *Federalist* papers—not a theoretical treatise on political philosophy but a practical commentary on the uses and misuses of power—still speak to us directly. □

THE FEDERALIST PAPERS.
Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1997.

Dissident
in Indonesia:
VISITING PAK PRAM



BY DAVID PAUL RAGAN

FOR FOURTEEN YEARS, from 1965 to 1979, Pramoedya Anata Toer was imprisoned without trial by the Indonesian government, enduring the brutal conditions of a remote island penitentiary. There, denied writing materials, Pramoedya orally composed *This Earth of Mankind*, the first installment of his *Buru Quartet*. He committed the stories to his memory and told them to his fellow prisoners, who retold them from barracks to barracks. It was the saga of a young Javanese hero named Minke, who fought against the Dutch colonial oppressors.

The *Quartet* is complete now, with the appearance of *Child of All Nations*, *Footsteps*, and *House of Glass*. Translated into English by Australian Max Lane, the books achieve a sweep of history and ideas. In the epic story of Minke, he is educated by the Dutch but comes to realize that he must confront the injustice and prejudice of the colonial system. As a journalist, he is intent upon awakening his countrymen to its evils. The books also tell a personal story of love and loss, of jealousy and misunderstanding, and ultimately, of persecution and destruction.

The *Quartet* has been translated into twenty languages and has brought international recognition to Pramoedya, known throughout Indonesia as Pak Pram. There is even recurring talk of a Nobel Prize in Literature. Yet Pak Pram's novels are banned in his own country, and he himself remains under city arrest in Jakarta.

I wanted to talk to him; to do so, it was clear I would have to travel to Jakarta.

I had spent the summer months of 1995 as a Fulbright Lecturer in Padang, West Sumatra. A teacher-scholar fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities had enabled me to extend my stay to begin research on Joseph Conrad and post-colonialism, exploring how writers in developing societies have reacted to the literary heritage of European domination. Pak Pram was one of the figures I had chosen to study. Conrad had set many of his finest novels in the archipelago now constituting Indonesia, *Almayer's Folly*, *Lord Jim*, *Victory*, and *The Rescue* among them. Contrasts with Conrad's works are immediately noticeable when reading Pak Pram's *This Earth of Mankind*: narration from the Javanese rather than European point of view, intimate acquaintance with the culture and psychology of the Asian characters, a more discriminating and critical indictment of European influence.

Yet tantalizing connections appear as well: female characters who incarnate the sensual pleasures of life in languid tropical climates, Dutch expatriates seduced by those pleasures who eventually degenerate into defeated relics, plots which turn on the fates of mixed-race daughters of the two. Finally, both novelists focus on the same historical period (though Pak Pram brings his characters into the twentieth century in their struggles for independence against the Dutch) and reveal the essential denial

"... denied writing

materials, Pramoedya orally

composed

THIS EARTH OF MANKIND,

the first installment

of his BURU QUARTET.

He committed the stories to

to his memory

and told them to

his fellow prisoners..."

This Earth of Mankind
Child of All Nations
Footsteps
House of Glass

"The 'obligation to be human': this is the theme Pak Pram asserted is at the core of all his books and of his life. His attitudes toward the subjects he has written about and the trials he has endured congregate around this notion."

This Earth of Mankind
Child of All Nations
Footsteps House of Glass

of human dignity which colonial regimes in these island cultures required. I was eager to find out if these connections were accidental, a function of historical realities, or reflections of Conrad's influence upon Pak Pram's writing.

Nelly Polhaupessy of the American Indonesian Exchange Foundation, which administers Fulbright grants, agreed to contact the novelist and request an interview.

Heated debates over Pak Pram had dominated Indonesian headlines throughout the summer: the Philippine Magsaysay Foundation presented him its 1995 award for literature, journalism, and communication arts. This prestigious honor brought protests from several Indonesian intellectuals who accused Pak Pram of having promoted book burnings and bans of his political enemies during the 1960s, while President Sukarno was in power. Pak Pram had been involved in an organization of leftist writers and artists called Lekra, which had close links to the Indonesian Communist Party, though he has denied having been a party member. He had, however, engaged in polemics against literary colleagues, some of them recipients of the same award. Writer Mochtar Lubis returned his medal to the Magsaysay Foundation in protest.

Despite the attacks, Pak Pram refused to apologize for his involvement with Lekra. As his supporters pointed out, he had suffered greatly for his opinions, imprisoned first by the Dutch in the 1940s, then briefly by the Sukarno regime in the early 1960s, and finally by the Suharto government on Buru Island, where for years he had been denied not only writing implements but even reading material except for certain Islamic texts.

I carefully indicated that my interest was in his work, not his political activities, and was delighted when he accepted the request for an interview. Nelly Polhaupessy would serve as translator, since Pramoedya did not feel comfortable in English and my Indonesian would be quickly exhausted. The Magsaysay award had drawn official attention to Pak Pram, and his house was under constant surveillance. A consular official at the U.S. Embassy warned me not to take papers or packages when I visited, that if questioned to say I was merely paying a social visit, and to

prepare to surrender any manuscripts or books. Fortunately, I had already sent Pak Pram a list of questions and resolved not to take notes during the interview itself, relying on reconstructing his responses with Nelly's help after the session. We had difficulty locating his residence in the maze of one-way streets. But Pak Pram is very well known. When we got close and asked directions of a group of small children, they all turned and solemnly pointed in unison, as if rehearsed, to a spacious white house behind a privacy wall. Cloth sacking had been woven into the wrought-iron security gate to cut off the view from the street.

Pak Pram admitted us personally. He appeared remarkably vigorous and youthful for a man of seventy who had endured torture and years of imprisonment. He was thin, tall and athletic, his eyes restless in his leonine head. He ushered us into his living room and introduced two young guests, associates of his publisher. According to Javanese custom, he ordered drinks and urged us to smoke, as he himself did continuously throughout our conversation.

Pak Pram projects himself differently for different interviewers, to some voicing anger at his treatment by the Indonesian government, to others offering an expansive and forgiving optimism. He has complained of writer's block for the past ten years, but then told a *New York Times*

David Paul Ragan
during his visit with
Pak Pram at the novelist's
home in Jakarta.



Courtesy David Paul Ragan

correspondent that he is writing. He no doubt is acutely attuned to the audiences who might encounter his opinions. In the Indonesian press a few months earlier he had sounded affronted, unrepentant, even occasionally disdainful of his critics. With international visitors, he had more often assumed the role of the distinguished and impartial man of letters, confident of the authority his artistic vision and accomplishment have conferred upon him. With me, he was casual and friendly, modest, a bit reserved, often humorous.

And often astonishing. Anxious to explore his acquaintance with Joseph Conrad, I posed the question immediately. Pak Pram recalled having read a Conrad novel as a youth in central Java fifty years ago. He hesitated a moment, searching for the title, but only for a moment. It had been *Almayer's Folly*, and he proceeded to outline the narrative, which has several affinities with *This Earth of Mankind*. He disclaimed much direct influence from Conrad, though, citing the more prominent roles played in his development by Steinbeck, Gorky, and Zola. These writers had taught him to erase the distinction between art and social realities. Mostly, he praised the influence of the Dutch writer Multatuli (1820-1887), who had first exposed colonial domination in Java. For one hundred years, the Javanese had suffered, Pak Pram explained, but they had not realized the extent of their suffering until Multatuli had made them aware.

The "obligation to be human": this is the theme Pak Pram asserted is at the core of all his books and of his life. His attitudes toward the subjects he has written about and the trials he has endured congregate around this notion. He prided himself on being part of the revolution which created Indonesia but bemoaned that he had lost so many productive years of independence to persecution and imprisonment. Though his novels primarily attack the exploitation of European colonialism, in conversation he indicted the excesses of the Cold



Pak Pram.

War and of western commercialism as most directly responsible for his personal tribulations. He asserted, though, that "suffering is the same" regardless of its causes. When he was arrested in the mid-1960s, rioters looted his house and burned all his books and research notes. He joked that the birth of his son had precipitated the crisis and added that the infant's diapers were among the articles confiscated. The irreplaceable loss was the fifteen unpublished manuscripts destroyed, yet remarkably he expressed no bitterness or regret. His voice became fierce only when he detailed the conditions which give rise to his countrymen's contemporary plight: the evils of what he called the New Order—pollution, environmental destruction, poverty. Neo-colonialism, the domination of international markets, oppresses people as forcefully as the earlier brand: greed leads to exploitation. For these influences Pak Pram blamed his own generation of revolutionaries, who accomplished the expulsion of the Dutch and then "became senile."

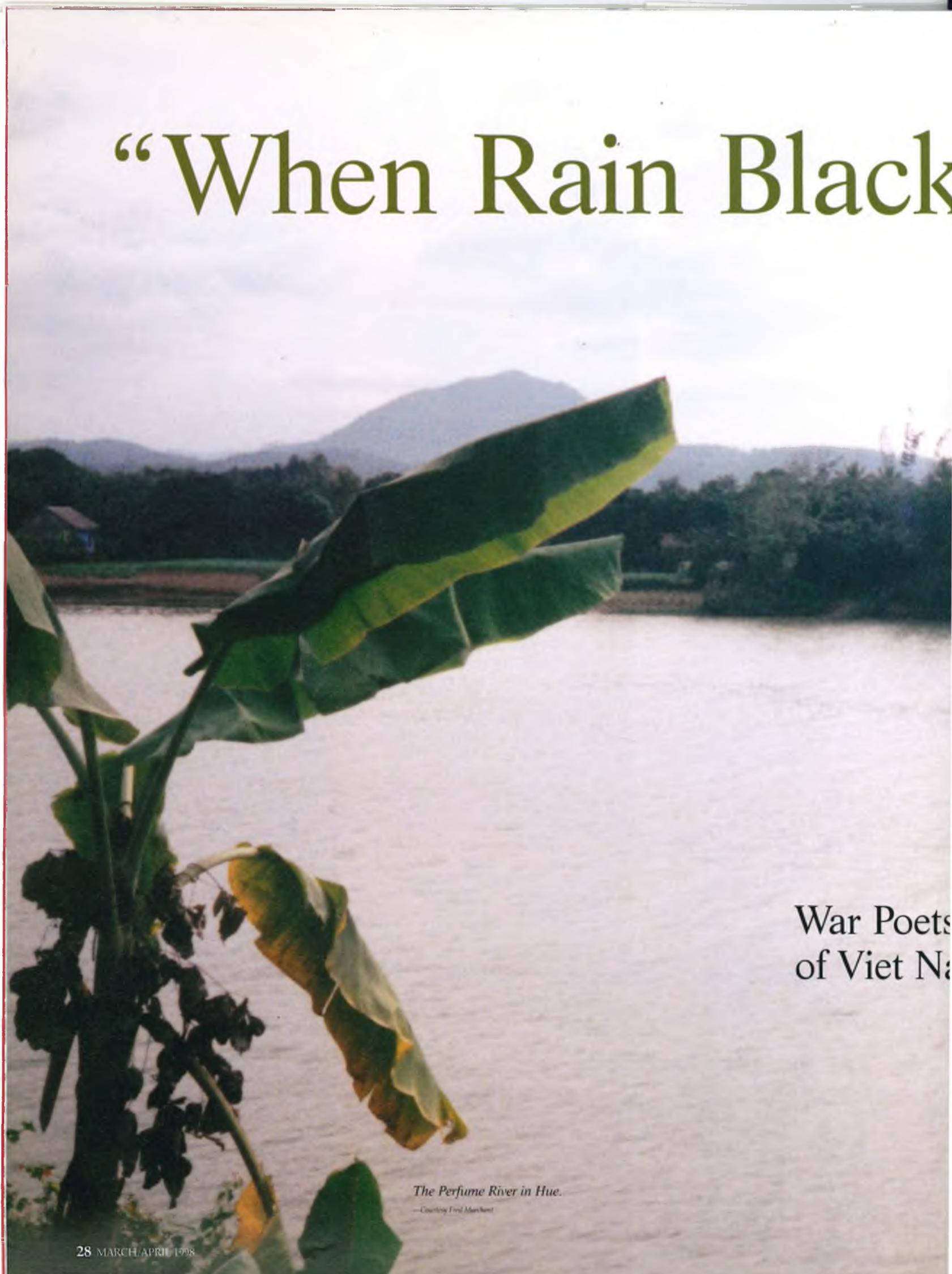
Only briefly did Pak Pram touch on the controversy concerning the Magsaysay award. Regarding his critics, he joked "*maling teriak maling*," the thief screams thief. He expressed no resentment toward them, only a slight condescension. He remained expansive and sensitive to his guests, encouraging Nelly and me to drink and to smoke. I finally accepted one of his clove cigarettes, and he smiled.

When he apologized for any offense his criticisms of America during the Cold War may have caused me, I informed him that an agency of the American government was funding my research into his work. He howled with delight and slapped me warmly on the shoulder, appreciating what he clearly took to be a delicious irony. I expressed respect for his writing, congratulations on his award, and hope that his reputation would continue to grow as he deserved. For once he responded in English with a quiet, modest smile: "Thank you very much."

Throughout our visit Pramoedya had been warm and open, the pressures of his work and his political jeopardy seemingly distant from his thoughts. When we departed, he accompanied Nelly and me to the gate, offering directions on how to find a taxi. When Pak Pram appeared the children fell silent and I recalled that he is a watched prisoner—an outsider in his own country.

Indonesia's ban on Pak Pram's books has been in effect since 1981. Possession of them constitutes a crime punishable by fines and imprisonment. The censors claim that the *Buru Quartet* contains Marxist-Leninist ideas so artfully concealed in Minke's story that the reader may be unaware of how he is being swayed. A more rational explanation is that in Minke's resistance to the repression of Dutch colonialism, today's Indonesian may recognize a modern analogy—the struggle to think independently, to grow spiritually as well as economically, and to alert the larger world to heroic individual resistance. □

David Paul Ragan is chair of the English department at Hammond School in Columbia, South Carolina. He was a 1995-96 NEH Teacher-Scholar recipient.

A photograph of the Perfume River in Hue, Vietnam. In the foreground, several large, green banana leaves are visible, some showing signs of being eaten or damaged. The river flows through the middle ground, with a dense line of trees and vegetation on the far bank. In the background, a range of mountains is visible under a cloudy sky. The overall scene is a rural landscape.

“When Rain Black

War Poets
of Viet Nam

The Perfume River in Hue.

—Courtesy Fred Marchant

ens The Sky”

BY FRED MARCHANT



There is a Vietnamese legend that in times of distress the nation will be blessed with the arrival of a child poet. During the years of the American war, in what Americans then called North Viet Nam, there was such a young poet. His name was Tran Dang Khoa.

Born in 1958, he grew up in a village fifty miles south of Hanoi in the rice-growing Red River delta. Near the village was Phu Luong Bridge, one of the main routes for soldiers heading south into combat. The bridge was bombed regularly, and whenever the bridge was down, there would be dented barges to ferry troops and supplies across the river at night.

Khoa escorted me through the Hai Hung province on my first visit to Viet Nam in 1994. With him was a fellow writer who told me as we looked at the

still-unrepaired bridge that the soldiers there would hope for a daylight B-52 raid on the bridge. This would mean that the soldiers would have to be sheltered in Khoa's village, and this would allow them to ask the child poet to recite some of his verses for them. Or perhaps it might be more accurate to say recite his verses "over" them, for my host implied that for the soldiers to hear Khoa say his poems was very much like having him bless them as they went off to fight. This poetry was simple, clear, exceptionally musical, and very unwarlike. Its primary intent seemed to be to celebrate and savor the enduring delights of agricultural life. In "The Alabaster Stork" the stork's appearance announces the return of the rains in early spring, and the resumption of rice-planting.

When rain blackens the sky
 in the east,
when rain blackens the sky
 in the west,
when rain blackens the sky
 in the south, the north,

I see a stork white as alabaster
take wing and usher in the rain. . .

Rice in the paddy ripples
 like a broad flag,
potato plants send up
 their dark green leaves,
the palm tree opens
 its fronds to catch the drops.
The toads and frogs
 sing all day and all night,
and fish flicker away
 dancing to that tune.

But no one sees in the branches
the stork shivering in the cold. . .

When rain blackens again
 the sky in the east,
when rain blackens again
 the sky in the west,
when rain blackens again
 the sky in the south, the north,

I see that stork white as alabaster
take wing to proclaim the rain again.

(Translated by Nguyen Ba Chung and Fred Marchant)



Fred Marchant with Tran Dang Khoa in Hanoi, March 1997.

Even though the war is unmentioned in the poem, it is palpably present. The stork is the broad-winged antithesis of the silvery bombers flying overhead. It proclaims that life on the earth will go on, and that it proceeds according to certain unvarying laws that are not halted by war.

To the left and right of me as I looked at the bombed-out bridge I could see the dikes we tried to bomb. The strategic idea was to flood the ricefields and disrupt the food supply. Trimming the dikes were stands of trees, and white storks within them. Beyond were some recently plowed fields. Khoa pointed out to me that they still had bomb-craters, and they were being used as lotus ponds.

In the distance was a cluster of small mountains, one the retreat of the great fifteenth-century poet Nguyen Trai, who had been a master strategist and military leader in Viet Nam's struggle against the Chinese colonial authority centuries ago. When Khoa brought me and the American poet Martha Collins to Nguyen Trai's mountain hermitage, I think he was showing us more than the provincial sights. He was tacitly claiming his poetic lineage, and teaching us how poetry had always been inherently important to the Vietnamese people. Any schoolchild might know a score of poems by heart, and ordinary adults who had nothing to do with writing or publishing poems, would at least remember a few and could recite them.

Literacy had been an essential virtue of the centuries' long anticolonial struggle. The Roman script of the language had been an act of defiance against Chinese cultural imperialism, which in the eighteenth century had seemed far more threatening than that of the French. As with Nguyen Trai, it was not at all uncommon for leaders of the anticolonial struggle to be themselves accomplished literary people. Reading, writing, recitation, and performance had for centuries been one of the ways to forge a national identity. During my first week in Hanoi I remember being distressed by some unnamed matter which only occurred to me when I was leaving to go to Hue in the south. As I said good-bye to Khoa and other writers I realized that I had just spent a week in a society where poetry and poets were considered national treasures.

In the twentieth century, certainly the poet who drew directly on the model provided by Nguyen Trai was Nguyen Ai Quoc, more commonly known as Ho Chi Minh. Aside from his prison diary collection of poems, Ho was in the habit, from 1947 to his death in 1969, of composing a poem for Tet, the lunar New Year. In 1948 he wrote:

FULL MOON IN JANUARY

Now comes the first full moon of the year.
Rivers rise in mists to join spring skies.
We talk of strategy by slow burning fires.
Yes, sell the compass, come on the boat of the full moon.

(Translated by Kevin Bowen)

The poem tells us that the enterprise Ho and his comrades have embarked upon depends on something greater than strategic planning and tactical equipment. Their cause is more like a force of nature than a military operation. Joining Ho is like following the river course, or turning with the tides, or planting according to the cycles of the moon. Their revolution, Ho is saying, reflects an order beyond human desires or weaknesses, aspirations or fears. It is a destiny, and no one who trusts it will lose his or her way.

Much of the North Vietnamese poetry of the war years would have to be classified as inspirational verse. But as with Khoa's and Ho's poems, such a classification would miss the surprising suppleness and subtlety of the work. Probably the most renowned poems of the war years is "Drivers of Lorries Without Windows," by Pham Tien Duat. Born in 1942, Duat was a literature student at the University of Hanoi when he entered the army. His military occupational specialty was poetry. His job was to travel up and down the Ho Chi Minh Trail and recite his poems and organize poetry readings for the troops in transit. "Drivers" strives to capture the feel of life during the bombing. Duat tells us how his truck has no windows, no roof, no lights. The night air covers his face with dew, rain, dust. The vehicle is falling apart, Duat says, but as long as "there's a heart inside, it's enough." At one point Duat says, "when we pass friends along the trail/we shake hands through broken windscreens." At another point, when the soldiers see how the dust has powdered their hair and faces white, they "burst out laughing at one another." Uplifting as they are intended to be, these images also convey a youthful sense of pleasure in the adventure. If not exactly on a lark, the misery of all this nonetheless makes the poet feel like singing.

The high spirits of youth, however, do in reality only go so far. On this trail and elsewhere there is death to meet and loss to endure. In "A Piece of Sky Without Bombs" Lam Thi My Da writes about life and death on the Ho Chi Minh Trail. It is an elegy for a fellow female soldier who was blown apart by a bomb.

Your friends said that you, a roadbuilder,
had such love for our country, you rushed
down the trail that night, waving your torch
to save the convoy, calling the bombs down on yourself.

We passed by the spot where you died,
tried to picture the young girl you once had been.
We pitched stones up on the barren grave,
adding our love to a rising pile of stone.

I gaze into the center of the crater
where you died and saw the sky in the pool
of rain water. Our country is so kind:
water from the sky washes the pain away.

Now you rest deep in the ground,
quiet as the sky that rests in the crater.
At night your soul pours down,
bright as the stars.

I wonder, could it be your soft skin
changed into columns of white clouds?
Could it be that when we passed that day,
it was not the sun but your heart breaking through?

This jungle trail now bears your name;
the skies reach down to your death and touch it;
and we, who never saw your face,
each wear a trace of you, bright on our cheek.

(Translated by Ngo Vinh Hai and Kevin Bowen)

In an essay titled "Some Other Poets of the War" (1994), Kevin Bowen remarks that what is central to this poem is the enduring connection between land and people. "The belief in the power of the land," writes Bowen, "to sustain



Vo Que with Maxine Hong Kingston in Hue, March 1997.

and transform the terms of struggle is pivotal to both poem and culture." Undergraduates in a course on the history and literature of the war I co-teach with historian Ken Greenberg have consistently responded deeply to Da's poem. So, too, with thirty-five secondary school teachers in a 1996 NEH summer seminar I co-taught with the poet Kevin Bowen, and historians David Hunt and Marilyn Young. I am not sure why this poem should appeal so much to American readers. Lam Thi My Da today lives and writes in Hue, and each time I have told her how much her poem resonates with American readers she is genuinely surprised and genuinely intrigued. Perhaps it is the quiet tone, the way in which she gently transforms agony into meaning. There is also no blame in My Da's poem, and as a result perhaps we feel freer to participate in the elegy's feelings. My Da also spent ten years of her life on the trail, and this poem seems to be an effort at making sure those years didn't deaden the heart.

One of the most common themes in Vietnamese poetry from the war years is the guarding against such hardening of feeling. Of course the war poetry is meant to be inspirational and morale-lifting, and there isn't much in the way of criticism of North Vietnamese government policies. But there is another and perhaps deeper critical function at work in this poetry. Its purpose is to argue and work against psychic numbing. One can see this function in some poems written shortly after the war. Vo Que's "Where the River Flowed," written in 1983, concerns a visit by the poet to his native city, Quang Tri City, the capital of what had been the northernmost province of South Viet Nam.

I returned to the old city,
to where the silver flood waters once overflowed
to memories of an afternoon far past,
to our native town, yours and mine.

That beautiful day still alive in my mind:
you and your white hat, the afternoon light in the
small street,
your purple dress, your long hair fluttering in the wind,
and the church bells sounding a thousand times.

Old city destroyed in the war.
I ache for your every small street,
ache as if my blood ran through those flamboyant flowers,
part of me falling away with each lost petal.

But in my dreams the city was untouched,
the streets were alive, rippling like waves.
Your smile was a rose just blossoming;
your eyes burned like stars through my heart.

How I miss those flowing waters,
a past that can never return,
your look in the weak winter light,
the long reeds leaning on the far side of the river.

How memory and longing fill my heart;
how the old city fills my mind;
how my love for you has remained with the years,
and my hair grown grey like the tall reed flowers.

(Translated by Ngo Vinh Hai and Kevin Bowen)

An elegy for the destroyed city, the poem is also an elegy for a lost youth and a lost love as well. The emotional calculus of the poem measures the costs of the war, not only in material, but in terms of feeling. The most remarkable image here is that "ache" in the third stanza. It is a pain which feels some connection to every small street, to every petal falling. It is as if the lifeblood of the tree and the lifeblood of the city and the lifeblood of the poet are for that moment bound in one larger, palpable sense of loss.

Quang Tri City was as much a casualty of the Communists' victory as it was a victim of the southern regimes and the American presence. Vo Que himself, when he was a student in Hue, had been active against the war and was involved with the National Liberation Front in Quang Tri province. He was arrested and imprisoned in the infamous Tiger Cages near Saigon, where he was tortured. He wrote poems on scraps of paper and had them smuggled out inside of old toothpaste tubes, after which they would be clandestinely published and circulated among the guerrillas. Now, having won the civil war, Vo Que looks at the city and assesses the cost. There is great sorrow and great loss. But there is also a tacit sense of life, of heart, and of a capacity to feel the loss. The memory of the streets alive and the roses blossoming is just as real as the ache.

There is even a small, quiet note of reconciliation in this poem. The poet takes a non-partisan stance, and like Lam Thi My Da does not dispense blame, rancor, or rage. It is worth recalling—as the poem at least in its title does—Ho Chi Minh's 1948 Tet poem. This is where the river has flowed, and this is perhaps what had to be. I also suspect the absence

of rancor may reflect the intuitive certainty that for all those involved in a civil war, the enemy of the past would someday have to return and try to live again as brother or sister.

Nguyen Ba Chung has written a superb essay on the history of Vietnamese poetry, an essay to which I am greatly indebted. In "Imagining the Nation," Chung writes that in a war for independence which lasted more than a hundred years, "millions of Vietnamese were perished or were displaced." He goes on to note that the land "is covered with unclaimed bones and unmarked graves." Quite literally the land has been nourished by the dead. This overwhelming fact infuses the minds of the poets. From Tran Dang Khoa through Ho Chi Minh, from Pham Tien Duat to Lam Thi My Da, each of them are what we in this country would call "poets of place." That is to say, the war poetry of Viet Nam is a poetry of the river and field, the forest and moon, the mountain and the plain, the agonized surface of the earth and, in Nguyen Duy's words from his poem "Red Earth, Blue Water," the honey within. It is rarely crude wartime propaganda, although I am sure such poems may exist. But at its heights, this war poetry bears witness to and foregrounds love, endurance, sorrow, and ultimately the desire for peace. If in a literal sense the sweetness of blue water must come from springs underneath the war-torn earth, it also must come from deep within the war-torn self.

Fred Marchant is professor of English and director of the creative writing program at Suffolk University in Boston. He is the author of TIPPING POINT, winner of the 1993 Washington Prize in Poetry. An affiliate of the Joiner Center for the Study of War and Social Consequences at the University of Massachusetts-Boston, Marchant served in the Marine Corps from 1968 to 1970, when he was one of the first Marine officers to be discharged honorably as a conscientious objector. NEH funded a 1995 institute for high school teachers at the Joiner Center on teaching the Viet Nam War through literature, film, and history. □

More Poetry from Viet Nam

The poems cited here all come from the side that won Viet Nam's defining civil war. I wonder what poems from the South might lie in neglected books and notes awaiting translation. In the nearly twenty years since the end of the war, the most comprehensive collection of war poetry in English translation was *Vietnamese Literature*, a volume edited by Nguyen Khac Vien and Huu Ngoc and published in Hanoi by

the State publishing house. Only in recent years, through translation projects sponsored by the Joiner Center, has this situation started to change. In 1994, University of Massachusetts Press brought out *Poems from Captured Documents*, translated by Nguyen Thank and Bruce Weigl. In 1996 the same press brought out an anthology of writings by veterans of both sides, *Writing Between the Lines*, and last year brought out Nguyen

Quang Thieu's *The River Carry River Water*, co-translated with the author by Martha Collins. This spring, the University of Massachusetts Press will publish *Mountain River*, an anthology of Vietnamese poetry written since 1945. With this anthology, American readers will have a chance to measure for themselves the startling importance of poetry during the last tumultuous fifty years in Vietnamese history. □

*View of the Red River near
Tran Dang Khoa's village.*
—Courtesy Fred Marchant



Around *the* NATION

A ROUNDUP OF ACTIVITIES OF
STATE HUMANITIES COUNCILS
AROUND THE COUNTRY DURING
MARCH AND APRIL.

Compiled by Amy Lifson

CLOSE-UP OF HANDS
OF ETHNOMUSICOLOGIST
LAUREN PELON PLAYING
THE LUTE.

ARIZONA

The first Arizona Book Festival will be held April 4 at Margaret T. Hance Deck Park in Phoenix. Authors, chautauqua performers, book dealers, and vendors will participate in this daylong event. Speakers include NEH Chairman William R. Ferris, who will deliver the Lorraine W. Frank Lecture that evening. During the week, more book-related events will be held throughout the state, including programs at the Grand Canyon, Lake Havasu City, Tucson, and Yuma.



JUDY TEMPLE PORTRAYS
WRITER MARY AUSTIN
AT THE FIRST ARIZONA
BOOK FESTIVAL.

CALIFORNIA

Chautauqua performances of notable Californians are part of the California Council's sesquicentennial commemoration of the Gold Rush. Two women of that era, Mary Ellen Pleasant and Juana Briones, will be portrayed in a performance March 25 at the Oakland Museum of California in conjunction with the exhibition "Gold Fever!" at the museum.

At San Diego State University, the "Border Voices Poetry and Humanities Fair" April 3 and 4 will include lectures and readings by U.S. Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky and novelist Victor Martinez.

COLORADO

In conjunction with the exhibition "Brave Little Girls" at the Denver Public Library, several family programs will be held through March 31, including an appearance March 8 by illustrator and Caldecott winner Janet Stevens, followed by a workshop on illustration for children and their parents.

Musician and educator Lauren Pelon will demonstrate more than twenty-five ancient and modern instruments in presentations about world culture, March 14 in Trinidad, March 17 in Stratton, and March 29 in Sterling.

An oral history project about the San Luis Valley will result in a half-hour radio program April 29 at 8:30 a.m. on KRZA-FM, Alamosa and Taos. The valley is the most extensive wetland area in Colorado because of a relatively untapped ground water aquifer. Friends of the Saguache County Public Library and the Nature Conservancy will conduct interviews with second- and third-generation settlers to help tell the history of the area. A public discussion follows on May 13 at the Saguache Community Building.

DELAWARE

Four Delaware citizens—two Union soldiers, a Confederate, and a Copperhead—are recreated by performers for a one-hour "talk show" about the Civil War. The characters in "A House Divided," presented by the Civil War Round Table of Wilmington, will share their experiences with audiences at Ingleside Retirement Center and Padua Academy, April 1 and April 30, in Wilmington.

What do Absalom Jones, the first black ordained minister of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America, Wallace Carothers, one of the people who helped develop nylon, and Mary Ann Shadd, the first black woman in America to publish her own newspaper, have in common? They are all Delawareans who will be featured in a monthly newspaper series about the state's distinguished citizens. The series, sponsored by the Delaware Humanities Forum, runs through December and will appear

in newspapers throughout the state.

In March and April, twelve libraries in Delaware will host a discussion series, "Choices for the Twenty-first Century: Defining Our Role in a Changing World," which addresses public policy issues.

FLORIDA

Polk County, citrus capital of Florida, is the site for this year's Florida Gathering, March 27-29. The weekend event is an opportunity for Floridians to explore the archaeology, history, and culture of this part of their state. Activities include an architectural tour of buildings in Lakeland designed by Frank Lloyd Wright; an exploration of fossils in the local phosphate mines guided by a paleontologist; and environmental tours of the Lake Wales Ridge ecosystem.

GEORGIA

"Women, Military, and War" is the topic of a conference March 4-5 at North Georgia College and State

University, the state's senior military college, which is celebrating its 125th anniversary. The keynote speaker is author Bette Bao Lord. A panel discussion will feature the first dean of women from the Citadel, and students and alumni from other military academies.

An old church gets a new life as a monument to the Civil Rights Movement. See page 39.

HAWAII

How does the history of commerce in Hawai'i affect family life, ethnic identity, cultural heritage, and community? The Hawai'i Committee for the Humanities is supporting a series of lectures and public discussions in Hilo at Lyman House Memorial Museum on "Commerce in Hawai'i: From 'Ohana to Corporation and Union." Topics range from the economy before European contact to the impact of sandalwood trade, whaling, ranching, sugar plantations, and tourism. "Missionary Influence in Nineteenth-

century Commerce" will be discussed March 26, and "The Rise of King Sugar" on April 23. The series continues through December 3.

LOUISIANA

The 1998 Tennessee Williams/New Orleans Literary Festival takes place March 12-15 with theatrical productions, master classes, a book fair, and walking tours in New Orleans.

Ogden Museum of Southern Art in New Orleans hosts a three-day symposium March 19-21 on the meaning of regionalism in Southern art in "Boundaries, Barriers, and Bridges: Creating Inclusive Audiences for Southern Art."

Continuing through May 31 at the Louisiana Arts and Science Center in Baton Rouge are sixty works of art created under the Works Project Administration in the exhibition "New Deal Art in Louisiana, 1933-1943."

McNeese State University in Lake Charles will offer five lectures and two exhibitions as part of their

THIS YEAR'S FLORIDA GATHERING TAKES PLACE IN POLK COUNTY,
CITRUS CAPITAL OF THE STATE.



—Florida Humanities Council



—Louisiana Arts & Science Center

THE CHECKER GAME BY WILLIAM PERKINS IS PART OF A NEW DEAL ART EXHIBITION IN LOUISIANA.

Banners Arts and Humanities Series. Pulitzer Prize-winning authors Robert Olen Butler and Oscar Hijuelos will be featured in the series, which runs through April 2.

MARYLAND
The lecture and film series "African Women: Between Tradition and Modernity"

continues with talks on March 6 and 24 and April 2 at Hood College in Frederick.

The Maryland Speakers Bureau presents several new topics this spring. March 11 in Annapolis, Judith Smith talks about the life and work of landscape designer Frederick Law Olmsted; March 28 at

the Forest Park Branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore, Priscilla Ramsey discusses the themes and techniques of the Harlem Renaissance writers; March 27 at Westminster High School and March 28 at St. Matthew's Church in Baltimore, Marsha Darling presents an overview of social justice

movements of this century and their roots in early America; March 29 at Belair Mansion in Bowie, Peter Bardaglio discusses the experience of children and adolescents, white and black, during the Civil War; April 2 at Johns Hopkins Hospital, John Charles Camp talks about the

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Women in Combat

By Erin Erickson

In recent years an unlikely population has been rediscovered—Soviet women combat veterans. Great losses of Soviet men during World War II made women in the military essential. Their numbers reached nearly one million, in which a few were directly involved in combat. Most of these women volunteered—they loved their motherland and would fight to save her. The amazing stories of twenty-seven of them will be told in an upcoming exhibition in Ohio.

How the exhibition of Soviet combat veterans came to Ohio is intriguing. In 1990, Noel Julnes-Dahner, an ordained Episcopalian priest, went to Kharkiv, Ukraine, under the Cincinnati-Kharkiv sister city project. She was graciously received by the Ukrainians, who made an event of her arrival. A lavish reception was held in the veterans hall where the veterans donned their medals, and spoke of their times with the Americans during World War II. Curiously,



—Photo reproduction by Andrei Plotnikov

many of the veterans were women. Had these women been in combat? Could there be an untold story behind these faces?

Unfortunately, Noel Julnes-Dehner's stay in the Ukraine would not provide the time to explore the histories of these veterans. She returned to the U.S. with no answers, but armed with a new pursuit—she would one day go back to the Ukraine and uncover the stories of these women, so their lives could be shared with the people of Ohio.

In October of 1996, Julnes-Dehner and a colleague, Joanne Lindy, departed for Kharkiv. Ten days with twenty-seven women combat veterans produced narratives, photos, newspaper articles and a new perspective on World War II. "Their poignant stories of the war brought about great emotion," says Lindy.

Take the story of Lydia Vasilievna Sitalskaya, a corporal during the war: "Kharkiv was taken by the Germans in October, 1941. I was there. We saw everything. There was no water on our street. Children went to get some water and the Germans shot them." Lydia joined the army in 1943 after Kharkiv was liberated. She was a good soldier and after the war received the Order of Glory, the highest medal, for her actions in Moldavia. It was there, on the border, that she took five prisoners-of-war. "We went into the village to find them. Another communications officer and I had radios and so when the shooting started, our soldiers came to help us. Then I was left alone and I had to lead the five German prisoners. When they realized I was the only one there, a woman, they started running through the field. I took a gun and killed three of them. I could do nothing else."

Natalia Zakrzhetskaya was seventeen when her father was killed at Stalingrad. The retreating Germans then burned their house. She could no longer watch the atrocities—she had to fight. Natalia spent nearly two years on the battlefield. Only a teenager, she was exposed to things that most adults will never see. "Our commander, the tankman, and I were under a tank. A bomb exploded nearby. All of a sudden, I saw the head of our commander, in a uniform cap, rolling by." And that was not the worst. "My worst experience? Everything was hard. The worst experience was burying my friends, our tankmen, seeing

Soviet pilot Eugenia Ustimchouk, left, with two of her comrades in arms.



(Opposite) Unknown Soviet women soldiers in World War II.

—Courtesy of Eugenia Ustimchouk, reproduction by Andrei Plotnikov

cripples, holding my fellow soldiers as they died in my arms."

The emotional toll on these women was great. Lydia Sokolova-Korchmar, a sniper during the war, describes one experience. "The Germans were so close. . . I started shooting. They were so close that I thought if I would aim higher, I might miss. So I aimed at their legs. That was the thing that saved me. They were falling down on me, . . . The Germans thought I was dead."

Eugenia Ustimchouk was one of the rare women pilots. She was admitted in January of 1942 in the same unit as her husband. Each flew in their own plane. "We had a women's bomber pilot regiment who flew heavy planes called P-2. I remember one, Liuba Gubena, who studied with me and flew that plane. German planes were pursuing her and her plane caught on fire. She gave her crew the command to bail out, but her navigator's parachute got caught on the plane's tail. Liuba started to do all kinds of maneuvers to throw off the navigator, to save her. Liuba Gubena, in trying to save her navigator, perished herself."

Watching so many die made life after the war difficult, but these women retained a passion for life and learning. "After the victory, my fiancé and I got married in Czechoslovakia. . . I got my education degree. . . and worked as a nursery school teacher for twenty-one years. My dream came true. Later I got a degree from the teachers' college. . . and became principal at a nursery school. I brought up a lot of students to be patriotic, kind, honest, respectful of older people. I raised three good children of my own. . . My family

knows about my military experience and they are proud of me. I brought up my children on the examples of heroism of our soldiers at the front. . . We love our motherland, our beautiful and blooming Ukraine!" says Natalia Zakrzhetskaya.

Today the women are unable to come to agreement on the role of women in the military. Many feel they had no choice—they had to fight for their motherland. "About going to war," says Zakrzhetskaya, "I would tell my daughters, 'Defend our motherland and be as brave, honest and courageous as my generation, as your parents.'"

Not all women combat veterans agree. "If there were a war now," Lydia Vasilievna Sitalskaya says, "I wouldn't go. . . Let the men go. It is not for women. . . Women exist to create, not to destroy."

These Soviet women combat veterans shared a courage and spirit that even age has not marred. At the closing reception held in their honor, they sang old war songs and danced throughout the night. □

"Under Fire: Soviet Women Combat Veterans" is a travelling documentary exhibition of the wartime experiences of twenty-seven Red Army women veterans. The exhibition will travel to five sites in Cincinnati and Lorain, Ohio.



Eugenia Ustimchouk today

—Courtesy of Eugenia Ustimchouk

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importance of domestic customs passed on among generations of the Amish community near Redhouse.

Lectures, panels, and a symposium at the University of Maryland Baltimore County will explore the idea of the creative act in literature, science, and the arts. The all-day symposium, titled "The Creative Act: Diverse Perspectives," takes place April 10.

Goucher College, Towson University, and the Baltimore Public Library have teamed up to celebrate National Library Week and National Poetry Month in April by featuring Maryland poets in a series of public programs. Activities include a poetry writing contest, readings by established poets and contest winners, interactive remote learning classes about poetry, and poetry exhibitions. The interactive program, "Poets and Protégés," takes place April 23. A public poetry program and reception will be held April 26 at the Baltimore County Public Library in Towson.

A post-performance discussion of the Olney Theater production of *Amadeus*, the story of Mozart told through rival composer Salieri, will take place April 22 at the theater center.

Fourth and fifth graders at Carver Elementary School continue studying colonial Maryland with the help of living-history interpreters from St. Mary's City, one of the state's early settlements. After the research ends in April, the students intend to publish a book on what they studied.

MINNESOTA

Four teacher institutes will be held this spring at the Humanities Education Center in St. Paul: "Into the Woods: Folk and Fairy Tales in Multicultural America"—March 1-6; "The Information Age: Hype and Hope"—March 15-20; "Go Tell It on the Mountain: Spirituals, Blues, and Gospel"—March 29-April 3; and "The Jewel in the Crown: The Art and Architecture of India"—April 26-May 1.

A reception for Nancye Gaj, founder of the Motherhead program, will take place on April 17. Motherhead/Fatheread training continues in March and April.

MISSISSIPPI

Mount Bayou was established in 1887 by former slave Isaiah Montgomery as a city where blacks could be safe from racial hostilities. A public archaeological dig at the site of the Bank of Mount Bayou will be held March 9-13. Information discovered by the dig will be presented at future public forums.

Two hundred years ago, the Spanish left the Natchez Territory, but their contribution to the area's culture will be highlighted in programs March 27 and 28 in the city of Natchez. Lectures, parades, and a re-creation of the 1798 encampment on the Rosalie grounds are featured activities.

An international symposium about the history of the Chateau of Versailles will take place in Jackson on April 3 and 4. Participants include

Pierre Arizzoli-Clementel, director general of the Museum Chateau of Versailles and Claire Constans, chief curator of paintings.

MISSOURI

How small museums should display and interpret their "legacy" collections is the topic for a conference held at the Andrew County Museum in Savannah, Missouri, on April 24. Andrew County's own collection of nineteenth-century dolls will be used as an example for designers, architects, and curators to experiment with.

NEW JERSEY

Author and ABC news correspondent Lynn Sherr will speak on March 14 at Trenton's Old Barracks Museum about the role of women in the field of historic preservation. The one-day conference will look at the contributions of women to historic preservation and changes in the field brought about by the growth of women's studies.

An international conference on Portuguese literature runs April 3 and 4 at Rutgers University in Newark.

The works of jazz artists Jelly Roll Morton and James P. Johnson will be among those featured at the Rutgers/New Brunswick Jazz Celebration on April 17 at New Brunswick's Crossroads Theater. The Rutgers Institute for Jazz Studies, a cosponsor of the event, houses the world's largest collection of jazz-related materials.

NEW YORK

"Books in the Morning" concludes its 1997-1998 season with three meetings in Bethlehem, New York. This is the third year of a reading program geared to retired persons and parents of young children. Meeting at the Bethlehem Town Hall on March 13, April 3, and April 24, participants will discuss Henry James's *The Ambassadors*, Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, and James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

OHIO

The former Soviet Union was the first country to mobilize women in armed combat as a matter of policy. "Under Fire: Soviet Women Combat Veterans" is a traveling photography exhibition, which documents the wartime experiences and personal narratives of twenty-seven Red Army women veterans who served as nurses, pilots, and snipers during World War II. See page 36.

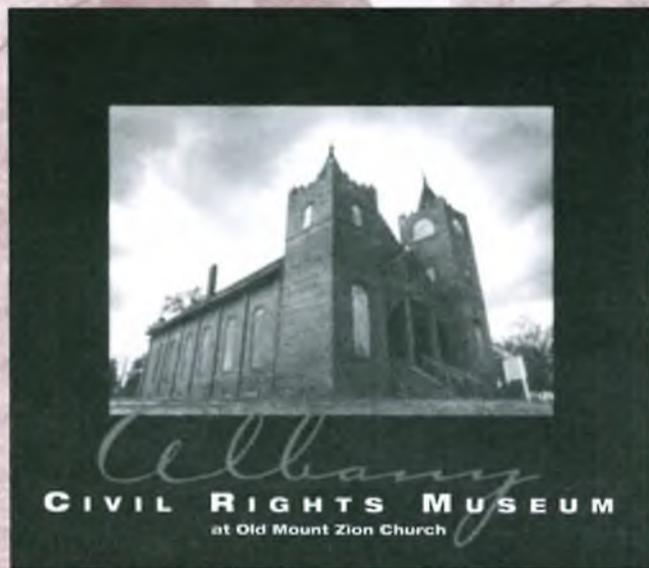
Visitors to the Pump House Art Gallery in Chillicothe can trace routes used by fugitive slaves on the Underground Railroad and explore re-created safehouses in a new exhibition. Programs related to the exhibition include history performances, seminars, guided tours, and children's workshops focusing on the abolition movement and the participants of the Underground Railroad.

PENNSYLVANIA Berks Community Television will air six ninety-minute live television programs on *Seeing Ourselves: Berks County Media*

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Georgia Church

Becomes Museum



The windows of the Old Mount Zion Church have been boarded up for more than twenty years. The congregation has moved, and the church has stood as an empty memorial to the Civil Rights Movement that had its early beginnings in Albany, Georgia.

Within the walls of the church are nearly a century of memories. At one time the voices of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the freedom singers rang through the stained glass windows.

Now, after months of renovation, the church will reopen as The Mount Zion Albany Civil Rights Movement Museum. Photographer Danny Lyon has donated thirty pictures he took of the Civil Rights Movement in Albany. The exhibition will contain artifacts from those days, including the signs designating segregated drinking fountains "colored" and "white" and letters written from jail.

These relics portray the struggles of those "who were willing to go against the standard of the day, who stepped forward and took a public stand," says Lee Formwalt, interim dean of the graduate school at Albany State University, an historically black university. The museum will be under the auspices of Formwalt and other community members and former civil

rights activists. Formwalt participated last year in an NEH-funded seminar at Harvard on "Teaching the History of the Southern Civil Rights Movement, 1865–1965."

The movement in Albany had its beginnings in early 1961, when the Students Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) arrived there to begin a voting rights drive. Local groups joined in; they staged protests that ended with many in jail. Lyon's photos depict the crowded cells where they spent time.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was called to Albany in December of 1961. "Before victory is won," he told the crowd, "some must face physical death to free their children from a life of psychological handicaps. But we shall overcome."

Although King's message was one of nonviolent resistance, the protest in Albany got hotter and by July had escalated into open battle between enraged civil rights activists and the authorities. The struggle would go on for years.

On March 11, Albany State University will hold a symposium and hear veterans of the Albany civil rights struggle describe those days. A reception will follow in The Mount Zion Civil Rights Museum. The symposium is part of a series sponsored in part by the Georgia Humanities Council. □

—Erin Erickson

Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow on March 19 and 26 and April 2, 9, 16, and 23. Scholars will interact with media professionals and the public about how the development of newspapers, radio, television, and the Internet have changed and are changing Berks County.

Michener's Art Museum's lecture series on the history of art in Bucks County continues with "The New Hope School of American Impressionism" at Warminster Township Free Library on March 14. Following that will be "Twentieth-Century Art and the Development of the New Hope Modernists" at the Levittown Regional Library on March 16, and "From Hicks to Hammerstein: A Brief History of the Arts in Bucks County" at Riegelsville Public Library on March 15, at Northampton Free Library on April 1, and at Southampton Free Library on April 21.

As part of an African American history initiative, two programs will be presented this spring. A lecture and discussion on "Railroading in Pennsylvania: African American Perspectives" will be held at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania in Strasburg on March 4; a panel will discuss "Pennsylvania's Military Experience 1942-1945: African American Perspectives" at the Best Western in State College on April 4.

SOUTH CAROLINA
The South Carolina Humanities Council's second annual statewide book

festival and antiquarian book fair runs April 18 and 19 at the Carolina Coliseum in Columbia.

SOUTH DAKOTA
The role of Elaine Goodale Eastman in the history of Indians in the Dakota territory will be discussed March 5 at Mount Marty College in Yankton. Elaine was a white woman married to Charles Eastman, a mixed-blood Indian graduate of Dartmouth with a medical degree from Boston University who served as a physician on the Pine Ridge reservation during the Wounded Knee massacre. Elaine helped her husband publish eleven books including *Indian Boyhood* (1902), and *The Soul of the Indian* (1911), which have been republished by the University of Nebraska Press.

Arab dance, presented by Jordan choreographer Rania Kamhawi, will be compared side by side with Native American dance, performed by Lakota hoop dancer Kevin Locke, in the program "The Inter-Connectedness of Indigenous Cultures as Seen through Dance"—April 12 at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion.

Faith Sullivan, author of *Cape Ann* and *The Empress of One*, discusses the impact of a literary life on emotional and physical well-being, April 21 at Augustana College in Sioux Falls.

UTAH
The library series that explores current events from a humanities perspective, "Choices for the Twenty-first Century,"

continues programs in March and April in Roosevelt, Park City, and Huntsville.

VIRGINIA
A fund-raiser for the Virginia Festival of the Book features a Gershwin concert at the University of Virginia on March 6. The festival itself takes place March 18-22 in Charlottesville. Poet laureates Rita Dove and Robert Pinsky will appear at an evening poetry event. Other activities include a panel discussion on African American women's humor, a storytelling workshop, the art of the thriller, and publishing seminars and displays.

WASHINGTON
The Scandinavian Film Festival takes place in Seattle and Spokane this March to introduce the recent works of Scandinavian cinema to the Pacific Northwest. Icelandic director Hrafn Gunnlaugsson (*In the Shadow of the Raven*) will attend the

festival, and Danish film scholar and director Esben Hrilund-Carlsen will deliver a talk March 14 at the Broadway Performance Hall in Seattle. The Seattle programs run from March 12 through 15, and Spokane's from March 28 through 29.

"Produce for Victory: Posters on the American Home Front, 1941-1945" appears at Goldendale Community Library through March 27 and then travels to Dayton Historical Depot, where it will be on exhibition from April 4 through May 29.

WISCONSIN
"Shouts from the Wall," an exhibition of posters brought back by Americans who volunteered to fight against the fascist forces during the Spanish Civil War, appears from April 4 through May 18 at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum in Madison. The exhibition is accompanied by four lectures by visiting scholars and veterans. □



MOVIE STILL FROM *IN THE SHADOW OF THE RAVEN*
FOR WASHINGTON FILM FESTIVAL.

WASHINGTON BEFORE
PRINCETON (after
Charles Willson Peale).
General Washington's
twin victories at Tren-
ton and Princeton in
1776-77 are credited
by some with saving the
American Revolution.



Not the Man in the Gilbert Portrait

A New Exhibition
on George Washington

BY MEREDITH HINDLEY

My movements to the chair of Government," wrote George Washington to Henry Knox in April 1789, "will be accompanied by feelings not unlike those of a culprit who is going to the place of his execution."

The very self-confidence that propelled Washington to a successful military and political career, temporarily languished as he prepared to become the first president. It was a stark confession of uncertainty from a man who many believed was the only person capable of leading the American republic through its first tenuous years.

Washington's journey from a loyal British subject to one of the leaders of the American Revolution is the subject of a new exhibition marking the two-hundredth anniversary of his death. The Huntington Library, in collaboration with the Pierpont Morgan Library, is mounting "The Great Experiment: George Washington and the American Republic." The exhibition, which opens in October 1998, uses Washington's life as a lens through which to view the American Revolution and the creation of the United States. The exhibition is expressly designed to counteract the idea that the American Revolution was a conservative event and Washington, as the Revolution's leader, a conservative statesman. Drawing on the work of historian Gordon Wood, who also serves as a consultant, the exhibition

*The 1754
journal of
Major George
Washington.*



—Huntington Library

portrays the Revolution as an event that fundamentally altered the political and social fabric of America. By using the class conflicts and peasant uprisings of the French and Russian revolutions as litmus tests, Wood believes that historians have overlooked the radical nature of what the revolutionaries were trying to accomplish. As he sees it, in the eighteenth century, most people could not conceive of a society that was distinct from government. Therefore, changing the system of government—throwing out the British and setting up a republic—constituted a fundamentally radical act that changed the political system and reordered society itself. The Revolution also institutionalized basic ideas that continue to shape our society today: the commitment to freedom, equality, and the general well-being of ordinary citizens.

While highlighting Washington's role as a radical statesman, the exhibition also explores lesser-known aspects of his life and character. "People commonly think of Washington as the old man in the Gilbert portrait, which was done at the end of his life,"

says John Rhodehamel, the Huntington curator overseeing the exhibition. "Washington as his contemporaries knew him was more vital."

From an early age, Washington experienced firsthand the inequities of the British imperial system. Born into Virginia's gentry, he found his situation drastically changed at age eleven when his father died. His father left him land, but none of the economic resources necessary to maintain it. There wasn't even enough money for Washington to attend school in England, as had his half-brothers.

In order to establish himself as a gentleman, Washington cultivated relationships with influential Virginia families. He hoped that social connections would make up for his paltry economic resources. In 1749, with the influence of the powerful Fairfax family, Washington received a profitable commission to be the surveyor of Culpeper County. Working as surveyor exposed Washington to the colonial frontier, an experience that fueled his interest in land speculation throughout his life.



*REPRESENTATION
DU FEU TERRIBLE À
NOUVELLE YORCK...
19 SEPTEMBRE 1776.
The colonists lost New
York City when the
British routed Wash-
ington's army at the
battle of Manhattan. A
few days later, much of
the city was consumed
by a fire that colonial
arsonists may have set.
Painting by François
X. Habermann, 1778.*

—Huntington Library

The French and Indian War, which convinced Britain of the need to tighten her military and financial hold on the colonies, provided the deeply ambitious Washington with an opportunity to make a name for himself. In 1753, as a twenty-year-old major in the Virginia militia, Washington carried out a dangerous diplomatic mission. Rushed into print, *The Journal of Major George Washington* documented his exploits and his personal courage, earning him a reputation on both sides of the Atlantic. As preacher Samuel Davies noted in a 1755 sermon: "I may point out to the Public that heroic Youth Col. Washington, who I cannot but hope Providence has hitherto preserved in so signal a Manner for some important Service to his Country."

The Journal also revealed another facet of Washington's character—his sheer, naked ambition. While ambition had helped him establish himself as a young gentleman, it also proved to be limiting. In a display of hubris, the newly promoted colonel penned a fifty-page letter to the Earl of Loudoun lobbying for a commission in the British Army, while simultaneously complaining about the lack of respect given to militia officers. Denied a commission, Washington regarded the slight as evidence of the inequity of the British system.

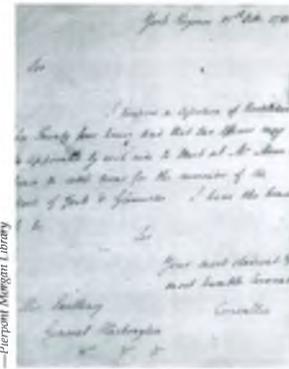
After the French and Indian War, a disappointed Washington resigned his military commission and returned home to Virginia. Settling into Mount Vernon with his new bride, Martha Custis, he struggled to turn a profit growing tobacco. He also pursued his interest in land speculation, acquiring tens of thousands of acres of frontier lands specifically earmarked for veterans of the French and Indian war.

Washington again soon found himself thrust to the center of action as colonial America began protesting its treatment by the British Parliament. "The cause of Boston is the cause of America," declared Washington after hearing about Boston's rebellious response to the 1765 Stamp Act. "It's hard for us to imagine today," says Rhodehamel, "but the idea of taxation without representation was terrifying because it meant that the British could do anything to the American colonists." Many colonists feared

that the Stamp Act opened the door to more burdensome taxation measures. Particularly troubling, however, was the exclusion of the American people from the decision-making process. Britain's actions played into Washington's own beliefs that the British colonial system exploited American colonists. While the crises of the 1760s helped foster the discussion of republican ideas among the colonists, few were willing to admit that independence from Britain was an immediate goal.

Colonial sentiments grew more radical in the early 1770s as Britain continued its attempts to pump more revenue from its American possessions. Washington attended the First Continental Congress in 1774, as one of seven delegates from Virginia. At the congress, the colonies proclaimed their autonomous status within the British Empire and launched an economic war against the British. After fighting broke out between Massachusetts militia and the British army at Lexington, Washington was unanimously elected "General" of the Continental Army. No other native-born American had as much military experience. Rhodehamel notes that by the time Washington assumed command of the Continental Army, the ambition that had driven him as a young man had been subsumed into working for the American cause. It wasn't that Washington had lost his ambition, but that he recognized the success of the Revolution would bring him personal success.

"The Great Experiment" uses artifacts and Washington's own words to illustrate his evolution from gentleman to military officer to well-known political figure. About 130 items will be on display, including: handwritten letters by Washington, a family tree, a first printing of the Declaration of Independence, a 1787 edition of the Constitution inscribed by Benjamin Franklin, portraits used to create Washington's likeness on the dollar bill and twenty-five cent piece, letters



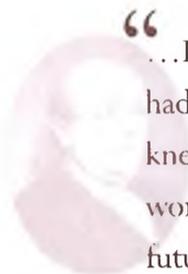
Letter of surrender from Charles, Earl Cornwallis to George Washington, October 17, 1781.

by Martha Washington describing the hardship conditions in the Continental Army camp, and household items from Mount Vernon.

Many of the artifacts come directly from the Huntington and Pierpont Morgan's own collections. Of particular note is the inclusion of Charles Willson Peale's full-length portrait of "Washington Before Princeton" (c. 1780). Private collectors and other institutions, such as the Mount Vernon Ladies Association and the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, have also loaned items for the exhibition.

After its October 1998 opening, the exhibition runs for eight months at the Huntington before moving to the Pierpont Morgan Library for four months. Accompanying the exhibition is a catalog, published by Yale University Press, a CD-ROM, and a variety of educational and public outreach programs. Nearly 450 teachers will attend seminars on Washington and receive lesson plans for the 1998-99 school year. The teachers will also take 12,000 students to see "The Great Experiment." The Huntington plans to host a symposium and lecture series to discuss current scholarship on Washington and the early Republic.

Washington observed to Catherine Macauley Graham in January 1790 that "the establishment of our new Government seemed to be the last great experiment, for promoting human happiness, by reasonable compact, in civil society." It may not have been the last experiment of its type, but no other has endured for more than two hundred years. □



“...Franklin was remarkably bifocal. He loved England, although not its aristocracy. He had a limited circle of friends and acquaintances in and around London, and what he knew of them and of their England he liked. But he was devoted, too, to the American world, and knew better than anyone else of his time what its potential was, what its future could be.”

Continued from page 7

an excellent historian. But despite all that, he was the most accursed figure of the Anglo-American establishment. Many decent people never changed their belief that he was the villain behind all of the evils attributed to Britain. For all his talents and real devotion to America, he failed, as a politician and as a thinker. His failure was his inability to sense the motion of the time, people's feelings toward the public issues of his age, and a new kind of political morality. He was deeply committed to things as they were, and insensitive to the deepest moral issues of his time. He acted on traditional, received assumptions about how politicians should behave and how public life is organized, when all those things were being undermined and were moving in new directions. He could not respond to the issues that were moving to more sensitive and imaginative people. Consequently, being in power when the crisis exploded — a position he came to hate and tried to evade — he ended up, in public opinion, as one of the great villains of his time. But as I say, I found him a complex and interesting person, much more tragic than villainous.

Q: Did Ben Franklin do him in? Was he the agent provocateur in pushing us toward a permanent break with England?

BAILYN: That has to do with Franklin's publication — rather devious publication — in 1773 of letters Hutchinson had written in the late 1760s to an official in England. Read in a certain way, they seemed to indicate that Hutchinson sympathized with, even encouraged, constraints on liberty in America. In fact, that was a misinterpretation. For Franklin, who had once worked with Hutchinson but who apparently believed it, it was a very useful thing to publicize. By attributing the evils of British policies to the recommendations of this American official and other such people, it would take the blame off the British crown and Parliament and create some cooling off of the controversy. Franklin himself was very much involved in backstairs negotiation in the months before the final break; he wanted room to maneuver, and was still hoping for reconciliation.

Q: Was Franklin a born-again Tory?

BAILYN: No, but Franklin was remarkably bifocal. He loved England, although not its aristocracy. He had a limited circle of friends and acquaintances in and around London, and what he knew of them and of their England he liked. But he was devoted, too, to the American world, and knew better than anyone else of his time what its potential was, what its future could be. So he saw the conflict both ways. Until about 1774, he was hoping for and trying to bring about a reconciliation. When that clearly failed, he landed with both feet in the American camp.

Q: I want to play some theoreticals with you. What if Britain had won the war? There was an upper Canadian rebellion that preceded our own and had a quite different outcome.

BAILYN: I've written a bit about this. If there hadn't been a Revolution, America would still have modernized politically and economically, in the same way that Canada and Australia have done. These settler societies of the British world developed into modern, capitalist democracies, and so would we have done without the Revolution. But the fact that the Revolution happened, with the ideas, the ideological commitments, and the institutions that came out of the Revolutionary upheaval, has made an enormous difference. We were formed by that experience as others were not, and we emerged into the modern period with basic commitments — to constraints on the use of power and to the equality of access and opportunity — as others did not.

Q: So the Revolution, though not the upheaval that the French Revolution was, made a difference.

BAILYN: Yes, the Revolution made a great difference. As I say, we would have become a modern liberal democratic capitalist nation in any case, but the speed of that development and its peculiar institutional and ideological character were in large part the result of the Revolution. But the Revolution, though it was formative in our life, did not do everything. Its social effect was initially circumscribed — it did nothing to improve the lot of slaves or women, for example. It was focused on the single, basic question of what a free political system should be. The way that question was answered has per-

“America in Distress,” an engraving by Paul Revere, which was adapted from a 1770 British cartoon. Thomas Hutchinson is at far left.





—By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University

Popular hatred of Thomas Hutchinson is vividly depicted in a cartoon in *THE MASSACHUSETTS CALENDAR* in 1774.

manently shaped our public life, and in the end has affected all the elements of our society that were once excluded.

The areas that seemed peripheral in the eighteenth century were gradually affected, as the effects of the Revolution's radicalism radiated out. We are still, to this day, groping with the Revolution's implications. The greatest problems of our time, the most vital contemporary issues we struggle with, are implicit in the Revolution: the meaning of equality and the uses and misuses of power.

Q: Was the overriding notion the idea that power itself is inherently evil?

BAILYN: The most fundamental issue that they had to deal with was how to construct a state system that has the power that's necessary in a civilized society and that at the same time does not impair individual freedom—in fact protects it. They recognized perfectly well the need for power. That's why we have the Constitution we have, which created a national power system. But they hoped that the system would work in such a way that it

would itself limit the abuses of power, and they were well aware of what those abuses could be.

One of the most interesting aspects of all this is that it happened more than two hundred years ago, and in a very different world—preindustrial, preromantic. Despite that fact, so much of their thinking remains relevant to us. If you stop to think about it, it is astonishing that people should still read *The Federalist* as some kind of deep expression of what America is all about politically, some kind of profoundly relevant commentary. That's extraordinary. The reason for that, I think, is because in the end they were concerned very much with what we're concerned about, namely, the uses and abuses of public power with respect to the rights of individuals. That's what it was all about. And their comments on that remain not only relevant but truly penetrating despite the fact that they lived in a very different world.

Q: I remember as a newspaper editor going back to *The Federalist* to try to understand English common law regarding high crimes and misdemeanors.



BAILYN: People do that all the time. There are very few people concerned with French political life who draw their ideas from what went on in 1790. And in Britain, they don't celebrate Pitt or Burke in contemporary politics the way we do Jefferson or Washington.

We're thought of often as a "young" people who don't have much history and are not much involved with what history we do have. But in fact our references in public life back to that historical period are continuous and significant—our eighteenth-century past is more deeply relevant than equivalent periods are for any other nation I can think of, with the possible exception of Ireland.

Q: You mentioned earlier, in talking about your seminar on the Atlantic world, that new information is emerging on the roles of people—slaves and women, for instance—who have not been featured in our history before. Is that changing our understanding of the period?

BAILYN: I think we have a much richer history now than we had when I started studying history. In the past twenty-five years, there's been an immense broadening of understanding of areas of history we hadn't probed before. All of that is deepening our understanding of how we got to be the way we are. The difficulty is, as you expand these subjects—and should do—how can you bring everything

together into some kind of coherent general picture of what our historical development has been?

Q: In refocusing history we inevitably raise issues such as poverty, social inequalities, racism. And in delving more deeply, historians seem to be making moral judgments. Is this valid for a historian to do?

BAILYN: Historians are people, and consequently they're going to have their own views, moral and otherwise, on these and other issues. But their obligation is to describe and to analyze properly, as far as they can, what happened. Their own views will emerge, and they will comment on such things. But it isn't a profession that's devoted to working out moral codes for humanity.

Q: I want to quote Professor Bailyn back to Professor Bailyn.

BAILYN: What did I say?

Q: In your book, *On the Teaching and Writing of History*, you wrote, "Without presenting the past in the correct context of its own time, and somehow disengaging it from one's present—without grasping the past as the present it once was—one can never understand what really happened or how that distant present changed . . . eventually, into the present we ourselves are experiencing." Isn't that virtually impossible to achieve?

“There are very few people concerned with French political life who draw their ideas from what went on in 1790. And in Britain, they do not celebrate Pitt or Burke in contemporary politics the way we do Jefferson or Washington.”

With Prince Charles at Harvard's 350th anniversary celebration in 1986.

BAILYN: First of all, I approve of that saying (laughter). I'm glad to hear it. Sure, it's impossible, in any pure sense. There's no perfect recovery of a past situation. It's impossible to get wholly into other people's minds or to appreciate fully the conditions that shaped their experience and sensibilities. But to try—to approach that ideal as far as possible—is part of the obligation that historians have.

It doesn't take a philosopher, an epistemologist, to note that it's impossible to recover fully a past situation if only because we know what the outcome was while the people at the time did not. That lack of knowledge of the outcome is the most profoundly shaping element in any past situation, just as it is for us now. Nevertheless, it is still the obligation of historians to get as close to that past reality—whose future we know but they did not—as they can. That this can be done in any pure and perfect sense, as I say, is impossible. Nobody can do that, but you try to approach it, simply to know what happened and why, to better understand where we've come from and what our present world is composed of.

Q: You have talked about the teaching of history helping in the writing of it. In fact, one of your books carries a dedication to your graduate students. I'll quote you to you again: "When you say something aloud to another person or a group of people, you can hear falsenesses that you otherwise aren't aware of." I thought that was a wonderful moment, and all too true.

BAILYN: I've often brought in some of my own research to my students. When you're alone working on material, your critical powers get absorbed in your own concentration, but when you hear yourself saying it, you can clearly hear things that are simply repetitive or boring or off the point. I found it very useful to be able to lecture on things that I was writing about.

Q: History, both written and taught, you refer to as a craft. You say that, at its best, it can be an art form. Setting your own books aside for the moment, what books do you think have achieved art?

BAILYN: Well, there are classic books that survive as literature—Macaulay's *History of England*, for example.

I still have students reading Macaulay; otherwise, I don't think they'd ever look at it. His are wonderfully crafted pieces of literature, which is why they were so widely read in his own time. I don't think anybody reads Gibbon now in order to understand Byzantine history—there are modern books that are technically more up to date, more accurate, deeper—but one reads Gibbon for pleasure because of the art that's involved in it. Those are classic works. Some modern historians have that literary capacity as well, and they are read for that reason.

Q: Arthur Schlesinger's *Age of Jackson*?

BAILYN: That was a very popular book for the right reason.

Q: And Oscar Handlin's *The Uprooted*?

BAILYN: These are books that were, and I think still are, widely read because they're written so well and because they reach into large problems and have something important to say. But however history is written, it is essentially a craft, which has established methods and controls, a discipline and a basic intellectual responsibility.

Q: But there are intellectual limits. You quoted the physicist Richard Feynman, "Creativity in science is imagination in a straitjacket." And you added, "So, too, is creativity in history."

BAILYN: Exactly.

Q: How did you come to be interested in history?

BAILYN: My interest developed when I was in college, doing mainly English literature and some philosophy and discovering more and more that the kind of literary studies that interested me were really contextual, that is, what interested me most were the circumstances, the contexts, of literary works. And I was involved with a professor of philosophy at Williams College, where I was a student, who was a Hegelian and very much an Emersonian aphorist. He

was quite brilliant, but very difficult to pin down. Nothing he said was within any kind of critical control, and so while he was himself pretty rigorous, as far as I could tell, his students were not. They were given to saying anything that came into their heads, with no kind of control, and the more impressive it sounded, the better they liked it. I reacted pretty severely against this, and it seemed to me that history was a way of studying many aspects of life that had some kind of control and where one could be proved right or wrong to some extent. It seemed to me, as I went through those two and a half years of college, interrupted by the war, that it made more sense for me to study history than either literature or philosophy. And during the war years, I was even more convinced of that. By the time I was out of the army, it was clear that I would do history.



Courtesy Bernard Bailyn

At Villa Serbelloni in Bellagio, Italy, in 1983, with Lotte Bailyn. She is T. Wilson Professor of Management at Sloan School of Management, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Q: Your military biography is a little cryptic. Were you in intelligence?

BAILYN: I was with the Army Security Agency, where I worked on what was called traffic analysis, which is the analysis of intercepted radio contacts among scattered enemy forces, and tracking their movements. I was involved in that for some time, but I was also trained in German for the occupation and ended up in Germany briefly.

Q: So you were disciplined in the hunting for clues to things.

BAILYN: Exactly. And the similarity of military traffic analysis to the historical study of transoceanic commercial links is really quite striking. I was surprised to notice this when I began to study the history of transatlantic trade.

Q: You've been married to a distinguished professor for forty-five years now.

BAILYN: She gets more distinguished by the year.

Q: That's a lovely thing to say. You have two sons. Are they in the academic world?

BAILYN: Yes. One is a professor of astronomy at Yale, the other teaches linguistics and Slavic languages at Stony Brook. This year he has spent most of his time in Russia.

Q: The family tradition is continuing.

BAILYN: It seems to be.

Q: How do you see the role of historians? What does a historian contribute to the rest of us?

BAILYN: Sanity. History, in some very basic way, contributes to social sanity in the sense that it establishes in a realistic sense, as far as that's possible, what's happened and where we've come from, what experiences we've had. It's interesting that people who design a completely enclosed, tyrannical or negative utopian world, as Orwell

did in 1984, always show the necessity in those worlds to falsify history.

In the worst times in the Soviet regime there was a wonderfully bitter and profound saying among intellectuals — that the past is unpredictable. They knew that the past was being manipulated — falsified — to support current policy, as a kind of control over the present. The truth of what had happened, which could be legitimate grounds for dissent, was a threat to the stability of the regime, so the past had to be twisted and turned in whatever way would seem to support present policies. It seems to me that historians are doing exactly the opposite. They are trying to establish what happened in a way that will allow people to realistically understand their own world, to make informed choices, and so to control their own lives. Historians aim to establish the course of development that explains why we are what we are, and what our values and experiences have been.

And beyond that, historians broaden ordinary experience, so that people know more about other people and other situations and other values and ways of life than they otherwise would, and so have a broader understanding of life.

Q: I'm going to turn to the future for a moment. Where do you see the profession of history taking us in the next fifty years? What new explorations await us all?

BAILYN: That's very hard to say. I think we're on an expansive road at the moment, broadening in all sorts of ways. Some years ago I tried to sketch what I thought those new ways might be, or at least what some of the dominant new lines might be. One, I thought, which is already happening but will develop much more in the future, is the exploration of what might be called latent events—underlying conditions, like slow demographic changes, all those deep, underlying shifts and movements that people at the time were not aware of but that basically shaped, limited, and conditioned their lives. Another is the broadening range of historians' perspectives—the enlargement of the units of what they study, away from local or national units, toward international, even global developments. My own project on Atlantic history is an example, as are transnational and comparative studies which bring together phenomena that once were discussed in isolation. Two years ago an international historical organization appeared called the Forum on European Expansion and Global Interaction; it already has about two hundred members from all over the world. And a third line that is developing and will certainly continue to in the future is the study of subjective experiences—*mentalité*, peoples' deeper, interior lives. All of this will, I think, continue strongly in the future and enrich the whole field of history. But will these be the only ones? Who knows? There's no telling what new ideas, new approaches, new ways of thinking about the past will appear. In this sense, the past is unpredictable.

Q: Well, thank you very much. This has been fascinating. □

At Seoul National University, Korea, in 1996.



Courtesy Bernard Bailyn

Illustrations: P. 7, Thomas Paine, Dover Books; p. 44, Benjamin Franklin, Dover Books; p. 46, left, George Washington, courtesy Winterthur Museum; p. 46, right, Thomas Jefferson, courtesy Monticello, the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation, Inc., and the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.

Continued from page 18
 and land." During the whole of the colonial era, most free immigrants expected to achieve economic autonomy in America. The visions of liberty that emigrants brought to colonial America always included the promise of economic independence and the ability to pass a freehold on to one's children.

Defining freedom in terms of economic independence drew a sharp line between those classes capable of fully enjoying its benefits and those who were not. In the eighteenth century, economic autonomy was far beyond the reach of most Britons. Even in colonial America, most of the population was not, by this standard, truly free. Lacking a hereditary aristocracy like that of England, colonists prided themselves on having "no rank above that of freeman." But there were many ranks below. The half million slaves who labored in the mainland colonies on the eve of independence obviously stood outside the circle of free persons. For free women, whose identity was dependent upon that of their fathers or husbands, opportunities for economic autonomy barely existed. Women, moreover, were deemed by men deficient in rationality, courage, and the broad capacity for self-determination—the qualities necessary in the public-spirited citizen. Whether in the economy or polity, autonomy was a masculine trait, dependence the normal lot of women.

Even among the white male population, it is sometimes forgotten, many varieties of partial freedom coexisted in colonial America, including indentured servants, apprentices, domestic laborers, transported convicts, and sailors impressed into service in the British navy. Freedom in colonial America existed along a continuum from the slave, stripped of all rights, to the independent property owner, and during a lifetime an individual might well occupy more than one place on this spectrum. Indentured servants, who voluntarily surrendered their freedom for a specified time, comprised a major part of the non-slave labor force throughout the colonial era. As late as the early 1770s, nearly half the immigrants who arrived in America from England and Scotland had entered into contracts for a fixed period of labor in exchange for passage. Indentured servants often worked in the fields alongside slaves.



ENGRAVED ENGLISH TOBACCO LABEL, CIRCA 1700, DEPICTING SLAVES ON A VIRGINIA TOBACCO PLANTATION.

Like slaves, servants could be bought and sold, were subject to corporal punishment, and their obligation to fulfill their duties was enforced by the courts. "Many Negroes are better used," complained one female indentured servant in 1756; she went on to describe being forced to work "day and night . . . then tied up and whipped." But, of course, unlike slaves, servants could look forward to freedom from their servitude. Assuming they survived their period of labor (and many in the early years did not), servants would be released from dependency and receive "freedom dues." Servants, a Pennsylvania judge remarked in 1793, occupied "a middle rank between slaves and freemen."

The prevalence of so many less-than-free workers underpinned

the widespread reality of economic independence, and therefore freedom, for propertied male heads of households. This was most obvious in the case of slaveholding planters, who already equated freedom with mastership, but also true of the countless artisans in Northern cities who owned a slave or two and employed indentured servants and apprentices. (In New York City and Philadelphia, artisans and tradesmen, who prided themselves on their own independence, dominated the ranks of slaveholders.) And the vaunted independence of the yeoman farmer depended in considerable measure on the labor of women. The cooking, cleaning, sewing, and assistance in agricultural chores by farmers' wives and daughters often spelled the difference between self-sufficiency and

economic dependence. In the household-based economy of colonial America, autonomy rested on command over others.

The eighteenth century witnessed an increase in social stratification in colonial America and the rise of a wealthy gentry exercising more and more dominance over civil, religious, and economic institutions and demanding deference from their social inferiors. Nonetheless, by the time of the Revolution, the majority of the nonslave male population were farmers who owned their own land. With the household still the center of economic production, the propertyless were a far smaller proportion of the population than in Britain and wage labor far less prevalent. Among the free population, property was more widely distributed than anywhere in Europe. In colonial America, writes one historian, lived "thousands of the freest individuals the Western world had ever known."

Thus, an abhorrence of personal dependence and the equation of freedom with autonomy sank deep roots in British North America not simply as part of an ideological inheritance, but because these beliefs accorded with social reality—a wide distribution of productive property that made a modicum of economic independence part of the lived experience of large numbers of colonists. What the French essayist Hector St. John Crèvecoeur identified in 1782 as the hallmark of American society—its "pleasing uniformity of decent competence"—would form the material basis for the later definition of the United States as a "producer's republic," as well as its corollary, that widespread ownership of property was the social precondition of freedom.

With its wide distribution of property (and therefore a broadly participatory political life), its weak aristocratic power, and an established church far less powerful than in Britain, colonial America was a society with deep democratic potential. But it took the struggle for independence to transform this society not only into a republican polity without a king, but into a nation that enshrined equality and opportunity as its *raison d'être* and proudly proclaimed itself an asylum for liberty for all mankind. The Revolution unleashed public debates and political and social struggles that democratized the concept of freedom.

The American Revolution was fought in the name of liberty. On the road to independence, no word was more frequently invoked, although it rarely received precise definition. There were liberty trees, liberty poles, Sons and Daughters of Liberty, and an endless parade of pamphlets with titles like *A Chariot of Liberty* and *Oration on the Beauties of Liberty*. Throughout the colonies, British measures like the Stamp Act of 1765 were greeted by mock funerals of liberty, carefully choreographed spectacles in which a coffin was carried to a burial ground only to have the occupant miraculously revived at the last moment (whereupon the assembled

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multitude repaired to a tavern to celebrate). Liberty was more than an idea for those resisting British authority; it was a passion. Sober men spoke longingly of the "sweets of liberty." All sorts of hopes and expectations came to be embodied in the idea of freedom. Commented a British emigrant who arrived in Maryland early in 1775: "They are all liberty mad."

Americans during the age of revolution did not start out to transform the rights of Englishmen into the rights of man. The very first colonial charter—Virginia's, in 1606—had granted settlers the same "Liberties, Franchises, and Immunities" as if they resided "in our Realm of England." And a century and a half later, American colonists shared in the intensification of British nationalism, reaffirming their loyalty to king and constitution. Resistance to British revenue measures of the 1760s began by invoking Americans' "rights as British subjects" within the framework established by the British constitution, "the best that ever existed among men." At the outset, opposition to imperial policies invoked time-honored British princi-

ples (no taxation without representation, trial by jury) and employed modes of resistance long familiar in the mother country, from petitions and pamphlets to crowd activity. British measures of the 1760s such as the Stamp Act, Quartering Act, and Townshend Duties were sometimes assailed in terms of natural rights, but far more frequently in the name of the "rights and privileges of freeborn Englishmen," especially freedom from arbitrary government, security of property, and the right to live in a political community to whose laws a people, through their representatives, had given consent. As late as 1774, appeals to natural law were often combined with a hodgepodge of other claims to liberty, as in the "ancient, constitutional, and chartered Rights" invoked by Virginians. In the same year, the first Continental Congress defended its actions by appealing to the "principles of the English constitution" and the "liberties . . . of free and natural-born subjects, within the realm of England."

As the conflict deepened, however, colonial leaders came to interpret metropolitan policies as part and parcel of an immense conspiracy to destroy the liberty of America, and their own resistance not merely as a struggle over specific legislation but as an episode in a global conflict between freedom and despotism. The Intolerable Acts of 1774, which suspended the Massachusetts legislature and closed the port of Boston, represented the final stage in this British design "for enslaving the colonies." Now, the right to resist arbitrary authority and the identification of liberty with the cause of God, so deeply ingrained by the imperial struggles of the eighteenth century, were invoked against Britain itself.

The coming of independence rendered the rights of freeborn Englishmen irrelevant in America. As late as March 1775, Edmund Burke assured the British Parliament that the colonists were devoted not to "abstract liberty" but to "liberty according to English ideas, and on English principles." The deepening crisis inevitably pushed Americans to ground their claims in the more abstract language of natural rights and universal liberty. In a merging of the evangelical belief in the New World as the future seat of "perfect freedom" with the secular vision of the Old as sunk in debauchery and arbitrary rule, the idea of British liberty was

This Indenture MADE the *Thirteenth* Day of *May* in the Year of our Lord one thousand, seven hundred and *eighty four* BETWEEN *Alex^r Beard of Broughsham in the County of Wiltshire by Consent of his Father* of the one Part, and *John Duke of Gullybath* of the other Part, WITNESSETH, that the said *Alex^r Beard* doth hereby covenant, promise and grant, to and with the said *John Duke* — *his* — Executors, Administrators and Assigns, from the Day of the Date hereof until the first and next Arrival at *Philadelphia* in America, and after for and during the Term of *Three* Years to serve in such Service and Employment as the said *John Duke* — or his Assigns shall there employ *him* according to the Custom of the Country in the like Kind. In Consideration whereof the said *John Duke* doth hereby covenant and grant to and with the said *Alex^r Beard* to pay for *his* Passage, and to find allow *him* Meat, Drink, Apparel and Lodging, with other Necessaries, during the said Term; and at the End of the said Term to pay unto *him* the usual Allowance, according to the Custom of the Country in the like Kind. IN WITNESS whereof the Parties above-mentioned to these Indentures have interchangeably put their Hands and Seals, the Day and Year first above written.

Signed, Sealed, and Delivered,
in the Presence of

Esther Dillon
John Wiers

Alex^r Beard
John Duke

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THIS CERTIFICATE OF INDENTURE IS DATED MAY 13, 1784, RELATIVELY LATE IN THE HISTORY OF INDENTURED SERVITUDE IN AMERICA. THE PRINTED FORM SUGGESTS THAT THE SYSTEM WAS BECOMING STANDARDIZED. ORIGINALLY, CONTRACTS WERE WRITTEN IN TWO IDENTICAL PARTS ON A SINGLE SHEET WHICH WAS TORN IN HALF, GIVING THE DOCUMENTS INDENTED (OR "INDENTURED") EDGES, A TERM BY WHICH THE CONTRACTS AND THE ENTIRE SYSTEM LATER BECAME KNOWN.

transformed into a set of universal rights, with America a sanctuary of freedom for humanity. Ironically, it took an emigrant from the lower classes of England, who only arrived in America in 1774, fully to grasp this breathtaking vision of the meaning of independence. As Thomas Paine proclaimed in January 1776 in the most widely-read pamphlet of the era, *Common Sense*:

O! ye that love mankind. . . stand forth! Every spot of the old world is overrun with oppression. Freedom hath been hunted round the globe. Asia and Africa have long expelled her. Europe regards her as a stranger, and England hath given her warning to depart. O! receive the fugitive, and prepare in time an asylum for mankind.

Written, as Paine later observed, to help men "to be free," *Common Sense* announced a prophecy from which

would spring the nineteenth-century idea of the United States as an "empire of liberty." Unburdened by the institutions that oppressed the peoples of the Old World—monarchy, aristocracy, hereditary privilege—America, and America alone, was the place where the principle of universal freedom could take root. Six months later, the Declaration of Independence would legitimate American rebellion not merely by invoking British efforts to establish "absolute tyranny" over the colonies, but by referring to the natural, unalienable rights of mankind, among which liberty was second only to life itself. In the Declaration, "the Laws and Nature and Nature's God," not the British constitution or the heritage of the freeborn Englishman, justified independence. The idea of liberty as a natural right became a revolutionary rallying cry, a standard by which to

judge existing institutions and a justification for their overthrow. No longer a set of specific rights, no longer a privilege to be enjoyed by a corporate body or people in specific social circumstances, liberty had become a universal, open-ended entitlement. And the contradiction between the ideal of universal liberty and the reality of a society beset with inequalities would bedevil American public life during the Revolution and long thereafter. □

Eric Foner is the DeWitt Clinton Professor of History at Columbia University. This article is adapted from THE STORY OF AMERICAN FREEDOM, to be published in October by W. W. Norton. Research for the book was supported by an NEH grant. Foner won the Bancroft Prize for an earlier work, RECONSTRUCTION: AMERICA'S UNFINISHED REVOLUTION, 1863-1877.

Calendar

MARCH ♦ APRIL

BY STEVEN SNODGRASS



—Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin, Ohio

SAINT SEBASTIAN ATTENDED BY SAINT IRENE (1625)
by Hendrick Ter Brugghen.

"Masters of Light: Dutch Painters in Utrecht during the Golden Age" brings together seventy-two paintings from masters who influenced Rembrandt, Vermeer, and others. "Masters of Light" is at the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore through April 5.



—Tennessee State Museum Collection

Andrew Johnson's Masonic apron.

A national experiment in interracial democracy is examined in "America's Reconstruction: People and Politics after the Civil War." Created by the Virginia Historical Society and the Valentine Museum, the exhibition opens April 17 at the Museum of Florida History in Tallahassee.

"John Steuart Curry: Inventing the Middle West" features nearly fifty drawings and paintings, including *Tornado* (1929). The exhibition is at the Elvehjem Museum of Art at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



—Museum of Art

ENDOWMENT-SUPPORTED EVENTS



—B. McWayne, Alaska State Museum

Paddle-shaped mask.

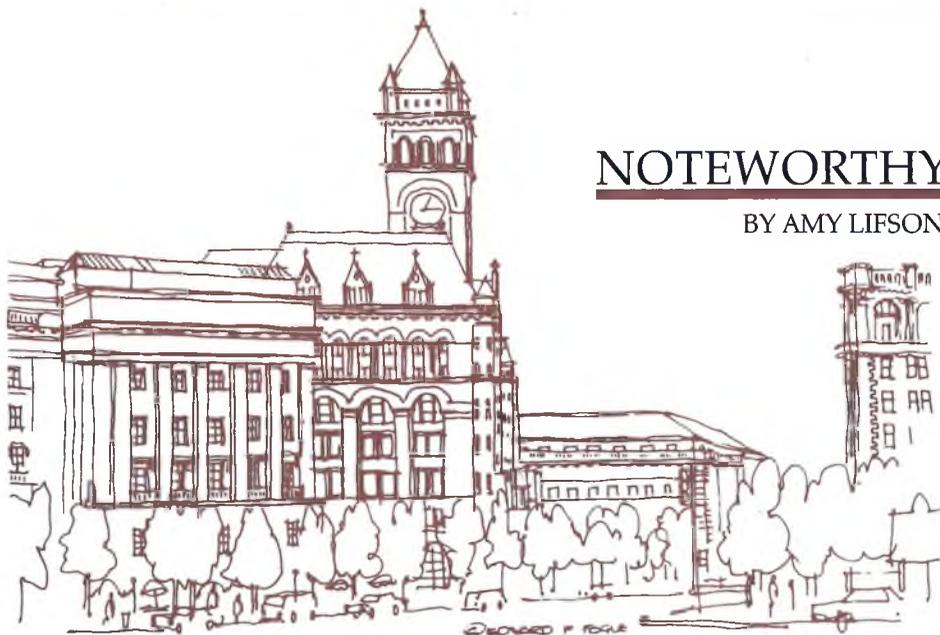
Welcoming Spring from the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368) is featured in "When Silk Was Gold." Tapestries, silks, and embroideries from China and Central Asia are on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.



—Metropolitan Museum of Art, Dillon Fund Gift

Welcoming Spring.

"*Agayuliyararput* (Our Way of Making Prayer): The Living Tradition of Yup'ik Masks" is at the Seattle Art Museum. More than two hundred face and finger masks of the Central Yup'ik Eskimos of Alaska are on display.



NOTEWORTHY

BY AMY LIFSON

AN OSCAR

Long before the sequined spectacle of Academy Awards night, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences paid tribute to a scientific advancement that will extend the life of acetate film. Director James Reilly and his colleagues at Rochester Institute of Technology won an Oscar for a device for the early detection of film deterioration. The project, supported by NEH, received a Technical Achievement Award at a daytime awards ceremony.

The device, called an A-D strip, is placed in the film canister and changes color to indicate the level of acetic acid being given off by the film, an indication of deterioration known as "vinegar syndrome." The A-D strip will enable conservators to determine which films need different kind of storage and which may need duplication. An accompanying guide for storing acetate film, produced through five years of NEH-funded research, is available through the Image Permanence Institute at RIT.

GOING UNDERGROUND

The exhibition "Steel, Stone, and Backbone: Building New York's Subways 1900-1925" received the Society for the History of Technology 1997 Dibner Award. The prize recognizes museums that effectively interpret the history of technology in order to teach and stimulate the public. The NEH-supported exhibition opened on March 26, 1996 at the New York Transit Museum, which is housed in a decommissioned 1930s subway station in Brooklyn. Through photographs, videos and artifacts, "Steel, Stone, and Backbone" tells the story of the thirty thousand workers who built New York's vast subway system.

MILLENNIUM PARTNERSHIP

Two hundred years ago, Bernard Bailyn noted to a White House audience, "transportation and communication were essentially the same as they had been at the time of the first millennium. Washington, D.C. was a rustic wasteland. A muddy, disease-ridden collection of rubbish heaps, tree stumps, bogs, marshes, and rows of bleak wooden houses hastily thrown together. Hogs rooted in the refuse and wandered around the one, unfinished hotel.

"The carriages of diplomats, in full regalia, got stuck axle-deep in mud. And the secretary of state recorded success in trapping a two-foot snake at the foot of his staircase."

So began the first of the Millennium Evenings at the White House, a series cosponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities. The first speaker was our Jefferson Lecturer Bernard Bailyn on February 11. The second is physicist Stephen Hawking on March 6.

Bailyn's talk was the first event to be cybercast from the East Room, with

live video, audio, and interactive capability; it was underwritten by Sun Microsystems. Twenty state humanities councils helped coordinate the local downlinking and distribution of the program around the country. According to the White House, "Millennium Evenings are part of the White House programs running until the year 2000 to celebrate the arrival of the new century. People who are great thinkers, great artists, and great visionaries will reflect the millennium theme: Honor the past, imagine the future."

HUMANITIES BY THE NUMBERS

Now available through the NEH website are statistics about humanities education. The Endowment recently acquired and indexed more than one hundred datasets maintained by the U.S. Department of Education, libraries, and educational organizations. The datasets carry statistical information on education from primary through postdoctoral programs, ranging from bibliographies to surveys. The index includes the nature of the information, who maintains it, in what form it is available, and how frequently it is updated. Material already online is linked through the NEH website.

MORE PRIZES

Books resulting from two NEH-funded research projects have received accolades. David E. Kyvig's *Explicit and Authentic Acts: Amending the U.S. Constitution, 1776-1995* received the 1997 Bancroft Prize for distinguished work in American history and diplomacy. Steven B. Smith's *Spinoza, Liberalism, and the Question of Jewish Identity* won the Phi Beta Kappa 1997 Ralph Waldo Emerson Award for the outstanding book on the intellectual and cultural condition of man. □



Building the New York subway at Lexington Avenue and 42nd Street, 1900.

—New York Transit Museum Archives, Brooklyn

DEADLINES DEADLINES DEADLINES

DIVISION OF PRESERVATION AND ACCESS *George F. Farr Jr., Director • 202-606-8570*

e-mail address: preservation@neh.gov	Deadline	Projects beginning
All applications for preservation and access projects	July 1, 1998	May 1999

DIVISION OF PUBLIC PROGRAMS *Nancy Rogers, Director • 202-606-8267*

e-mail address: publicpgms@neh.gov	Deadline	Projects beginning
All applications for public programs (planning, scripting, and implementation)	January 12, 1998	September 1998

DIVISION OF RESEARCH AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS *James Herbert, Director • 202-606-8373*

e-mail addresses: research@neh.gov , education@neh.gov	Deadline	Projects beginning
Fellowships and Stipends • 202-606-8466		
Faculty Graduate Study Program for Historically Black Colleges and Universities	March 15, 1998	September 1998
Fellowships for University and College Teachers and Independent Scholars	May 1, 1998	January 1999
Summer Stipends	October 1, 1998	May 1999
Education Development and Demonstration (includes technology-related projects) • 202-606-8380		
Schools for a New Millennium Planning Grants	April 1, 1998	September 1998
Humanities Focus Grants	April 17, 1998	September 1998
Education Development and Demonstration Projects	October 15, 1998	May 1999
Research • 202-606-8210		
Collaborative Research	September 1, 1998	May 1999
Fellowship Programs at Independent Research Institutions	September 1, 1998	September 1999
Seminars and Institutes • 202-606-8463		
Participants	March 1, 1998	Summer 1998
Directors	March 1, 1998	Summer 1999

OFFICE OF CHALLENGE GRANTS *Stephen M. Ross, Director • 202-606-8309*

e-mail address: challenge@neh.gov	Deadline	Projects beginning
All applications should be submitted to the Office of Challenge Grants	May 1, 1998	December 1998

FEDERAL-STATE PARTNERSHIP *Edythe R. Manza, Director • 202-606-8254*

e-mail address: fedstate@neh.gov

Each state humanities council establishes its own grant guidelines and application deadlines.

World Wide Web Home Page: <http://www.neh.gov>

To receive guidelines for any NEH program, contact the Office of Publications and Public Affairs at 202-606-8400 or by e-mail at info@neh.gov. Guidelines are available at least two months in advance of application deadlines.

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

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