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Mass Humanities

A Publication of the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities — Spring 2001

Letter from the Director

Dear Friends,

We have had a busy and productive fall and winter at MFH. Shortly after the last issue of *MassHumanities* came out last October, the Foundation sponsored **Humanities on the Hill**, where we invited Massachusetts legislators, directors of MFH-funded projects, and others to the Massachusetts State House to experience former U.S. Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky's Favorite Poem Project. Pinsky showed videos of ordinary people reading and discussing poems they cherished, and then several legislators took the podium to read their favorite poems—from "The Fishhouses" to "The Charge of the Light Brigade."

This spring we will continue work with MIT's Center for Educational Computing Initiatives to complete Phase I of **Bringing History Home**, the Foundation's two-year effort to develop software that allows history museums to create interactive narratives based on their collections. Funded in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Wellspring Foundation, Phase I involved the Paul Revere House, Plimoth Plantation, and the Lowell National Historical Park. MFH is seeking funding for Phase II, which will bring six additional Massachusetts history museums into this innovative Internet-based project.

For the second year, MFH sponsored the **Clemente Course in the Humanities**, the nationally acclaimed program that offers low-income people college-level classes in history, literature, philosophy, and art history, at the Care Center in Holyoke. Several first-year graduates of the course, which is based on the premise that all people have the right to the cultural knowledge, personal enrichment, and intellectual development that can be gained through humanities study, have now gone on to college. Recently, we entered into partnerships with the Codman Square Health Center in Dorchester and the Youth Development Gang, Inc., in Worcester, to offer this life-changing course in their communities next fall.

By the way, I traveled to Washington in December to attend the ceremony at which **Earl Shorris**, the founder of the Clemente Course, received the National Humanities Medal from President Clinton. [See Kristin O'Connell's interview with Earl Shorris in *MassHumanities*, Spring 2000.] Shorris's book about the course, *Riches for the Poor*, has just been published by W. W. Norton.

This month, the Foundation is piloting a new library reading and discussion series, **Desperate Journeys**. Using books about 19th

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The Magnificent Seven

An Interview with Historian Joseph J. Ellis

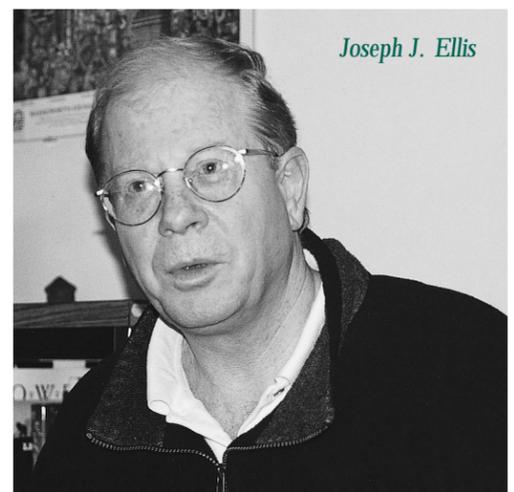
Joseph J. Ellis's newest book, *Founding Brothers, The Revolutionary Generation*, is a lively and illuminating study of the intertwined political lives of seven of the founders of the American republic — John Adams, Aaron Burr, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and George Washington. Two of them are subjects of previous books by Ellis, *Passionate Sage* (John Adams) and the National Book Award-winning *American Sphinx* (Thomas Jefferson), but here they are looked at in relationship to their peers.

Each chapter of *Founding Brothers* tells a distinct story which Ellis interprets in light of fundamental disagreements over the meaning of the American Revolution on the part of those who fought it and went on to create a new nation: Burr and Hamilton's deadly duel; Hamilton, Jefferson and Madison's secret dinner, during which the seat of the capital was exchanged for adoption of Hamilton's fiscal policy; Franklin's petition to end slavery — his last public act — and Madison's effort to quash it; Washington's precedent-setting Farewell Address; Adams's difficulties as Washington's successor and his alleged scheme to pass the presidency on to his son; and finally, Adams and Jefferson's renewed correspondence at the end of their lives, in which they came to terms with their very different views of the Revolution and its legacy.

Joe Ellis is the Ford Foundation Professor of History at Mount Holyoke College, where he has taught since 1972 and served as Dean of Faculty for 10 years. From 1979 to 1985 he served on the board of the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities, including three years on the Executive Committee. He was interviewed at the Foundation office in South Hadley by MFH Executive Director David Tebaldi.

David Tebaldi: At the beginning of your previous book, *American Sphinx*, you explain that your motivation for doing a study of Jefferson came from the public response you witnessed to Clay Jenkinson's portrayal of Thomas Jefferson at a public program at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester. Was there some similar particular experience that moved you to write *Founding Brothers*?

Joe Ellis: Well, the recollection of that moment in the Jefferson book, while true, was also a bit of an exaggeration. I was already pretty well committed to doing the Jefferson book, but seeing the reaction to Jenkinson's performance, and seeing the sort of electromagnetic power that Jefferson seemed to have among contemporary Americans, clinched it for me.



Joseph J. Ellis

Nothing quite so dramatic occurred with regard to *Founding Brothers*. While speaking to public audiences, I found myself saying that Jefferson might be the most overrated member of the revolutionary generation and John Adams the most underrated and underappreciated. But the operative question everyone seemed to ask was, "who was the greatest?" And I began to formulate an answer to that question, which was, "Well, in some sense that's the wrong question." The greatness of the founding generation was in large part a function of the fact that it was a collective. Moreover, to use a term in an old-fashioned sense that has acquired a different meaning in the late twentieth century, it is the diversity of the leadership class in the revolutionary generation that is largely responsible for the political success and the stability that it was able to achieve. If we try to appreciate the achievement of that generation, again realistically and unsentimentally, warts and all, we must see that these are not demigods, but real human beings with great faults. But it is the interaction of their talents and their faults that made things work as effectively as they did. So I found myself effectively working out the major argument of the *Founding Brothers* book in response to questions about the Jefferson book.

DT: And why did you choose the title *Founding Brothers*?

JE: It's "brothers" rather than "fathers" for two reasons. First, that's what they called themselves. Jefferson keeps talking about the "band of brothers," which sounds like Shakespeare's line out of *Henry V*. Second, the term "fathers" distances us from them. Fathers are omniscient; they can do no wrong, or, later on, can do no right. Brothers are closer to us; brothers can be fraternal but also great rivals

Interview continued on page 3

On the Road Again

by Cullen Murphy

Anyone who doubts that there is such a thing as human nature, durable over the eons, has only to pick up the *Sonnets* of Shakespeare or the *Odes of Horace* or the biblical *Song of Songs*. And anyone who doubts that there is such a thing called “national character,” durable even in a polity as messy and roiled as that of the United States, has only to pick up Alexis de Tocqueville.

That was a recurring thought as I read the fastidious new translation of Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America* by Harvey C. Mansfield, a professor of government at Harvard, and Delba Winthrop, the administrator of Harvard’s program on constitutional government. There may be various good reasons for a new translation of any venerable work — fresh scholarship, evolving public taste in language — but not the least of them is the inevitable second-order consequence: the simple fact of fresh attention. As a political observer, Tocqueville has been plundered for validation by both left and right. But his social observations, gleaned from a nine-month tour of the United States in 1831, represent a common stock of insight. Modern Americans still recognize themselves on page after page.

Americans today are profoundly aware of the economic and social churning all around. Here is Tocqueville: “In Europe we habitually regard restiveness of mind, immoderate desire for wealth, extreme love of independence as great social dangers. It is precisely all these things that guarantee a long and peaceful future to the American republics.” Americans display a profound ambivalence toward the news media. Here is Tocqueville: “To get the inestimable good that freedom of the press assures one must know how to submit to the inevitable evil it gives rise to.” We all complain about the short lifespan of commercial products (like computer hardware and software). Listen to Tocqueville: “I meet an American sailor and I ask him why his country’s vessels are built to last a short time, and he replies to me without hesitation that the art of navigation makes such rapid progress daily that the most beautiful ship would soon become almost useless if its existence were prolonged beyond a few years.”

But *Democracy in America* doesn’t just define something essential about the American character; it also embodies something essential. Though we don’t usually think of it in such terms, *Democracy in America* is basically a “road book”; and while Tocqueville couldn’t have known it, the road book—and, later, the road movie — was destined to become a staple of American literary and popular culture. To be sure, there are plenty of precursors of American road literature — Marco Polo’s *Description of the World*, say, or Homer’s *Odyssey* (which reminds us that before the road book there was the “ship” book). But the genre, whether fictional or factual, has been pursued in America with unparalleled intensity. Here, the very act of travelling is seen to hold a key to personal and social revelation. Think of Mark Twain’s *Huckleberry Finn* or John Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath*. Think of eighteenth-century testaments like the former slave Olaudah Equiano’s autobiography or Hector St. John de Crevecoeur’s *Letters From an American Farmer*, and twentieth-century testaments like Robert Pirsig’s *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* or Hunter S. Thompson’s *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* or (needless to say) Jack Kerouac’s *On the Road*. It is almost preposterous to start listing all the road movies, from *Easy Rider* through National Lampoon’s *Vacation to Thelma and Louise*.

Taken together, this creative road work presents an extraordinary panorama. I have my own shelf of literary favorites. One of them is John Gunther’s *Inside USA*, published in 1947 and little known and even littler read these days. It is at once a time capsule and a masterpiece. Gunther set out in 1944 on an excursion through every one of the forty-eight states — a “long circumnavigation,” as he put it, “of the greatest, craziest, most dangerous, least stable,

most spectacular, least grown-up, and most powerful and magnificent nation ever known.” *Inside USA* is memorable both for its journalistic ambition and for its trenchant judgments. Thus, Gunther observes of Ohio Senator John W. Bricker, the Republican vice-presidential candidate in 1944, that intellectually he resembled “interstellar space — a vast vacuum occasionally crossed by homeless, wandering clichés.”

Charles Dickens made a celebrated progress through the United States a century before Gunther did, traveling as far as St. Louis. In 1842 he published his travel diary, its entries by turn admiring and caustic, under the title *American Notes*. Dickens began his tour in Massachusetts, and his portrait of Boston society is generally respectful. His critical comments, though, display a confident awareness of persistent local characteristics — the same comments might have been made a hundred years earlier and a hundred years later. Here is Dickens on the power of religion: “In the kind of provincial life which prevails in cities such as this, the Pulpit has great influence. The peculiar province of the Pulpit in New England... would appear to be the denouncement of all innocent and rational amusements.”

My shelf of favorites also holds the *Journals of Lewis and Clark* (a road book in the form of a river book); the searing account of slavery by the actress Fanny Kemble in her *Journal of a Residence on a Georgia Plantation*; and the various writings of Captain John Smith. Though remembered chiefly for the disastrous Jamestown settlement and the Pocahontas affair, Smith was a frequent pre-Plymouth visitor to the shores of New England and a shrewd social observer. He advised John Winthrop that, in selecting colonists for Massachusetts, it was better to have “one hundred good labourers than a thousand such gallants as were sent to me.” (In that distinction between labourers and gallants one sees a division of cultural patrimony that separates New England and Virginia to this day.)

The Atlantic Monthly, where I’ve been fortunate to work for fifteen years, has indulged a great deal of road writing ever since its founding, in 1857. The magazine is too young to have published Tocqueville, alas, but it published James Bryce, whose *American Commonwealth* (1888) makes a natural successor volume to *Democracy in America*. In more recent years we have published William Least Heat Moon’s off-the-interstate best-seller, *Blue Highways*, and a selection of unpublished writings by Jack Kerouac, writings that help undermine the legend of *On the Road* as a product of feverish imagination rather than painstaking skill. As the editor Douglas Brinkley explained, “Kerouac preferred the image of a natural-born, wild-eyed Rimbaud-like genius to that of a careful cobbler of words such as John O’Hara. But Kerouac was a fastidious, old-fashioned craftsman. For every day he spent ‘on the road’ during his lifetime, gathering material, he toiled for a month in solitude — sketching, polishing, and typing.” (Incidentally, another fresh take on Kerouac is offered in the new documentary, *Lowell Blues*, a project supported by the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities.)

What is probably the most enduring road work in *The Atlantic*’s pages comes in the form not of prose but of poetry — “The Road Not Taken,” the first poem published in America by the young Robert Frost. Its final lines encapsulate an outlook that Tocqueville would surely have recognized, lines that serve well as an epigraph to an entire genre:

“Two roads diverged in a wood, and I —
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.”

Cullen Murphy is Managing Editor of *The Atlantic Monthly* magazine and a member of the MFH board of directors.

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Democracy in America is basically a “road book”; and while Tocqueville couldn’t have known it, the road book — and, later, the road movie — was destined to become a staple of American literary and popular culture.

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THE HUMANITIES...

Are what we do when we reflect upon our lives, when we ask fundamental questions of value, purpose and meaning. The MFH conducts and provides grant support for humanities projects designed to foster critical inquiry, promote understanding of our diverse cultural heritages, and provide forums for the citizens of our state to engage actively in thoughtful public discourse about matters of individual choice and collective responsibility.

The Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities, a private, nonprofit, educational organization, receives funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency, and from private sources.

Unfinished Symphony

By Jesse Ruskin

Democracy is not what government does; democracy is what people do—people acting on behalf of important principles of freedom and justice. Sometimes it's with government — more often it's outside of government and against government, because very often the government is acting against democratic principles. Civil disobedience becomes a way of expressing democracy in a very live, vivid, dramatic form.

— Historian Howard Zinn, from *Unfinished Symphony*



When the nominations for the 2001 Sundance Film Festival were announced in November 2000, one of the nine documentaries selected was *Unfinished Symphony: Democracy and Dissent*, a film produced by Bestor Cram of Boston's Northern Light Productions and directed by Cram and Mike Majoros, a Rhode Island School of Design professor. Made over a period of six years in partnership with the Lexington Oral History Project (LOHP), the film received major funding from the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities. Additional funding came from the Soros Documentary Fund, LEF Foundation, and numerous individual contributors. *Unfinished Symphony* is a powerful exploration of the role of dissent in democratic society.

It centers on the 1971 antiwar protest in Lexington, led by the Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW), which resulted in the largest arrest in Massachusetts history. Over Memorial Day weekend in 1971, VVAW led an antiwar march from Concord, through Lexington and Charlestown, to Boston, retracing Paul Revere's historic ride in reverse. The veterans had planned to camp overnight on the Lexington Green, linking their dissent to the heroic actions of the Minutemen almost two hundred years before. Town officials opposed the veterans' action, and the night ended with the arrest of over 400 people — including many supporters from the community.

The film was born out of the Lexington Oral History Project's commitment to documenting a crucial moment in the town's history, which they feared was disappearing from public memory. Organized in 1991, LOHP collected over 70 videotaped interviews with townspeople, Vietnam veterans, and officials who were involved in the 1971 protest. One of the people they interviewed was Bestor Cram, a Vietnam veteran and a principal organizer of the demonstration. Cram himself was not a filmmaker in 1971, but he had arranged for Hart Perry Films, the award-winning camera crew that had photographed *Woodstock*, to document the event. With four to five cameras running, they filmed the march, the gatherings in Concord and Lexington, the debates in Lexington Town Hall, and the arrests.

After the protest, Cram moved to Vermont to participate in the Back to the Land movement and run wilderness camps for kids. He then moved to England and studied film at the West Surrey College of Art and Design. When he returned in 1974, he joined the film department at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He worked there for three years before establishing the company that eventually became Northern Light Productions in 1982. Cram and Northern Light have received numerous awards for their work. His cinematography credits include the PBS/BBC film *China, Born Under the Red Flag*, and the 1995 Academy Award-winning documentary *Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision*. He has been involved in a number of major PBS series including *Vietnam: A Television History*, *Eyes on the Prize*, *The War on Poverty*, *NOVA*, and *The American Experience*. Cram and Northern Light have received grants from MFH for a number of projects, and the firm produced MFH's 20th anniversary video, *Stories to be Told*.

In 1995 LOHP approached Cram and asked if he would like to be involved in making a film about the events in Lexington. A year later, LOHP teamed up with Cram and Northern Light and received a pre-production grant from MFH to develop a script for the film. In 1997 they returned for production funding. A large portion of the MFH grant was used to restore the Hart Perry footage, which had been archived since 1971 in ten-minute rolls with separate audio recordings. The footage had to be transferred to videotape for editing and matched with the audio. In the final film, the story that first galvanized the members of the LOHP—the division among Lexington citizens caused by the veterans' actions — is present but not central; yet oral history remains at the heart of the film's narrative.

The title of the film came from the decision, late in the process, to organize the film around Henryk Gorecki's third symphony, *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs*. The film is divided into three chapters corresponding to the three movements of the symphony. The music has a meditative quality, says Cram, which moves viewers to reflect on the ideas raised in the film.

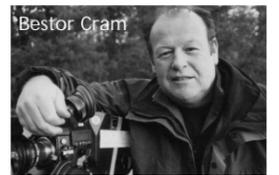
Bestor Cram considers *Unfinished Symphony* a "humanities challenge" — a challenge to both the

viewer and the filmmaker. "The experience of the humanities for me," he says, "is both intellectual and emotional, and the challenge is to find ways to express ideas that reach people on both levels — that of understanding something by the way you think about it as well as by the way you feel about it." The film has no narrator and does not attempt to direct the viewer. It juxtaposes unidentified voices, faces, and scenes without overt explanation, allowing viewers to interpret the events for themselves. Cram says, "It is not necessary for the work of an artist to persuade the viewer to a viewpoint, but rather to open up an arena for dialogue, to create the opportunity for conversation, interaction, and debate. This can be accomplished when a work transcends the urge to explain, when it avoids the insistence of definitive interpretation."

Another challenge of a humanities project, says Cram, is to "re-awaken ideas that people have grappled with before and to make them feel fresh." The film is shaped by Cram's commitment to look at the Vietnam antiwar movement in a new way and to break down the "historical stereotype" that has distorted the public's memory of the Vietnam era. "Historically," he says, "the antiwar movement has been misrepresented as being a radical element of our society, when in fact it was a very mainstream part of our society. In the end, almost everyone was against the war." Cram also points out that there has been very little information available to the public about the protesting veterans. The film shows that there were many servicemen involved in the antiwar movement and, as Cram emphasizes, they were extremely thoughtful about their role as soldiers and as citizens taking a stand against the war.

Unfinished Symphony asks what it means to be a responsible citizen in a democratic society. The Vietnam War, says Cram, left the American people so deeply divided that it has been difficult to maintain a dialogue about the often ambiguous moral issues it raised. The film is an attempt to recharge this unfinished conversation and to confront viewers with the ideas expressed by the antiwar veterans — that patriotism may mean challenging your government, rather than unquestioningly following it to war; that dissent, far from being unpatriotic is, in fact, a "fundamental right and responsibility of citizenship." Cram hopes that viewers will see the vitality of the ideas expressed by the veterans and will continue to explore them: "The legacy of the era is a part of our lives today — the need to reinvest our energies in understanding our dissenting roles in democracy is essential; what remains is the commitment to do the work, to finish the symphony."

Unfinished Symphony will be screened in Lexington at the Museum of Our National Heritage on Sunday, May 27th, the 30th anniversary of the protest. For more information, contact the museum at (781) 861-6559.



Stills from the film *Unfinished Symphony*

Letter, continued from page 1

and 20th-century adventurers, such as *The Worst Journey in the World*, an account of Robert Scott's fatal attempt to find the South Pole, the new series has a different structure from previous MFH-sponsored library programs. Instead of having scholars lead all the sessions, in **Desperate Journeys**, the scholar will lead only an introductory session; librarians and library patrons will be trained to lead subsequent sessions. The idea is to make the programs less expensive for libraries to sponsor and easier to set up.

Elsewhere in this issue of *MassHumanities* you can read about writer Barbara Neeley, our new host for **Commonwealth Journal**, the radio interview show we co-produce with WUMB Radio. For information about when and where you can listen to *CJ* in your area turn to the Humanities Calendar on page 7. Also, in partnership with MassINC, the Foundation sponsors **Commonwealth Forums**, a quarterly series of public discussions at the historic Parker House. At December's Forum, *Boston Globe* columnist Jeff Jacoby, former congressional Representative Mickey Edwards, and Massachusetts Republican leaders had a lively debate about the prospects for their party in this heavily Democratic state.

Throughout all this, of course, we continue to make **grants for public humanities programs**. Since our last newsletter in October, we have provided \$167,400 in grants to 24 organizations for films, exhibits, lectures, historical plays, and other projects. In March, we will award the first major grants under our new guidelines for humanities-based professional development programs for K-12 educators and for disseminating information about "best practices" in the field.

Finally, in December, the MFH board approved a five-year **Strategic Plan**, which calls upon us to strike out in several new directions, including increasing use of media and the Internet for wider access to the humanities; improving humanities instruction in our public schools; expanding the programs available through our Humanities Resource Center; and providing larger grants.

With the new Republican administration in Washington and tax cuts planned for our state, many of you have been wondering about the Foundation's financial future. We don't expect reductions in our funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities or the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Unfortunately, we don't expect increases, either. To maintain the high quality of our programming, to grow, and to reach new audiences with the community enrichment and sheer enjoyment that the humanities provide, we depend on the support of our donors. There is an envelope enclosed in this newsletter. **Please consider making a contribution.**

Sincerely,



David Tebaldi
Executive Director

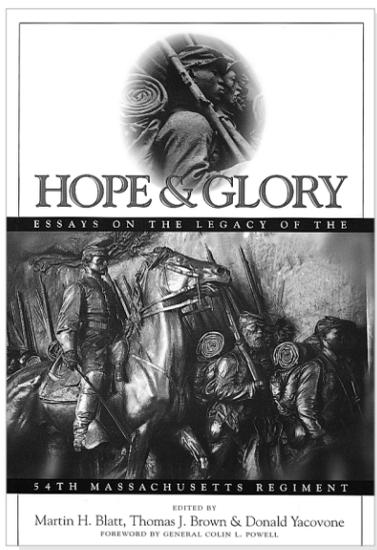
New Board Member



Chester G. Atkins of Concord has been elected to a three-year term on the Foundation's board of directors. He is founder and director of ADS Ventures, Inc., a consulting firm with offices in Concord and Washington, D.C., specializing in environmental affairs. Chet is a former state legislator and U.S. Congressman representing the 5th Congressional District of Massachusetts. While serving in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1984 to 1992, Chet was a member of the Subcommittee on Interior Appropriations, which has jurisdiction over federal funding for the arts and humanities. He is a member of several corporate and non-profit boards including Second Nature, Earthwatch, Appalachian Mountain Club, the Center for Justice and Accountability, and Refugees International. He lives in Concord with his wife, Cory, who currently represents the Concord-Acton District in the Massachusetts House of Representatives.

Nominations Welcome

The Foundation has additional vacancies on the board to fill, and we welcome nominations from our readers. Nominees must be residents of Massachusetts and have a strong interest in the humanities. At this time, we are especially interested in candidates who have ties to minority communities in the state and/or who live outside the greater Boston area. To nominate someone, or to find out more about the responsibilities of membership, contact David Tebaldi in the South Hadley office.



Hope & Glory: Essays on the Legacy of the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Regiment, edited by Martin H. Blatt, Thomas J. Brown, and Donald Yacovone, was recently published by the University of Massachusetts Press. This collection of 15 essays, introduced by General Colin Powell, grew out of the enormously successful public celebration in 1997 of the centennial of the Augustus Saint-Gaudens Monument to Robert Gould Shaw and the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts Regiment, which was funded in part by a major grant from the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities. The handsomely illustrated volume offers new scholarship on both the experience and the memorialization of the Fifty-fourth. It is organized into three sections, the first focusing on the regiment itself; the second on the commemoration of Shaw and the soldiers in the nineteenth-century, and the third on twentieth-century meditations on the meaning of the Fifty-fourth. Among the distinguished contributors to the collection are two past members of the MFH Board of Directors—Martin Blatt and Marilyn Richardson.

Interview, continued from page 1

within the family. I wanted to recover a sense of that fraternity and rivalry. I wanted to prevent them from being distant icons. Also, "Founding Brothers" as a title calls attention to the fact that they share a common experience. That common experience was the American Revolution, and as inevitable as that looks to us in retrospect—the inevitability of the Revolution's success—it was an extraordinarily improbable undertaking at the time. What bonded them was the fact that they had made a commitment, that they had put at risk their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor. No matter how many times they would disagree later on, they had that common experience to fall back on.

DT: Can you explain your rationale for including just these seven men (and one woman)? Was there some set of criteria they all met?

JE: I had two criteria. First, you had to have been a major player in the 1760s or 70s in the winning of the war for independence at the national level. Again, I want to reiterate that the chances of this group of thirteen embryonic colonies successfully defeating the major military and political power in the world were about one in 10,000, so by signing your name to that document called the Declaration of Independence most of them thought they were signing their death warrant. To make my little repertory company, you had to have been in the group that made that bold and quite radical decision. And second, you had to have been part of either the Constitutional Convention or the creation of the federal government in the 1790s. So you had to meet two tests. You had to have been a contributor to both founding moments: '76, when we declare our independence, and '87, when we declare our nationhood.

There are a few people who could have made the list but didn't. One is John Marshall. I like Marshall a lot; he's an extraordinarily attractive character. His major contribution, however, occurs after 1800 as the first great American Supreme Court Justice. John Jay is another one. Jay was the equivalent of the American Secretary of State during the Confederation Government in the 1780s and had a lot to say about American foreign policy in the 1780s and the 90s. The Jay Treaty of 1795 is a major statement. But Jay's papers are less revealing than those of the other founders. If you were selecting characters for a novel, you would omit Jay because he doesn't give you the color you would like to have. I'm glad that I have Abigail Adams in there, even though she somewhat falsifies the idea of founding *brothers*. She is a sister among the brothers, but I want to make it clear that she's a significant player and that the Adams presidency is really a political partnership in which Abigail is his one-woman cabinet.

DT: Aaron Burr is an interesting choice. Any qualms about including the villain in there?

JE: Having Burr in there is probably driven by dramatic more than purely historic considerations. I knew I wanted to begin with the duel because it's a great story designed to catch the reader's attention. More importantly, Burr is the anti-hero. He is the person whom they worry about, for in order for this Republic to succeed the leadership class needs to be capable of what they call "virtue." And they understood that to mean the ability to sacrifice your own personal interest for the larger interest of the public. Burr was the creature who could not be trusted to do that. And by telling the story of the duel, it allows me to talk about character and honor as central ingredients in the way in which this generation saw itself.

You can make a case for Burr; there are even Burr Societies throughout America that think he has been vilified. But in the end Burr is an example of a political leader who consistently acts on his own self-interest and makes no decision that qualifies as virtuous in the classic sense of the term.

DT: I had no idea until I read your book how close

he came to becoming our third president.

JE: That's right. When the duel actually happens in 1804, Burr is the vice president. Prior to the passage of the Twelfth Amendment, the voters didn't vote for two people on a ticket, president and vice president, they just voted for two people, and the person who got the most votes was the president and the person who got the next most votes was the vice-president. That's how Jefferson ended up being vice-president under Adams. But in the election of 1800, Burr and Jefferson got exactly the same number of votes. So it was a tie, went to the House of Representatives, and took thirty-six ballots before Jefferson was eventually chosen, even though everybody knew that Jefferson was the real choice for president and Burr was not. This is typical Burr. He made no statement suggesting that he was prepared to step aside. He didn't campaign for himself, but he was willing to allow himself to be named by those Federalists who thought this would be a great way to block Jefferson. Once Burr took that position during the debate in the House of Representatives, however, Jefferson from that moment forward never consulted him, even though he served out the rest of his vice-presidency.

DT: Can you speculate a little bit on how the history of the early Republic might have gone if Burr had become president instead of Jefferson?

JE: This is all hypothetical, of course. On the positive side, Burr is one of the more outspoken enemies of slavery, partly because he's from New York and not from the South.

DT: But there were a lot of slaves in New York.

JE: There were a lot of slaves in New York, that's true. New York had more slaves than in any other northern state and it's one of the reasons that it took longer for slavery to end in New York than in any other state north of the Potomac. But there were also in New York City strong anti-slavery societies and Burr was prominently involved with them. So was Hamilton. On gender-related issues Burr was one of the more liberated characters. He has a kind of partnership marriage with his wife, who died in the 1780s, and a daughter named Theodosia, whom he raised in a very progressive fashion. She's probably the best-educated young woman in the early Republic. But on the negative side, I think that if Burr had achieved the presidency, it's very likely that the Republic would have dissolved into regional blocks. We would have ended up being more like Europe than a united country.

DT: And there might not have been a Civil War.

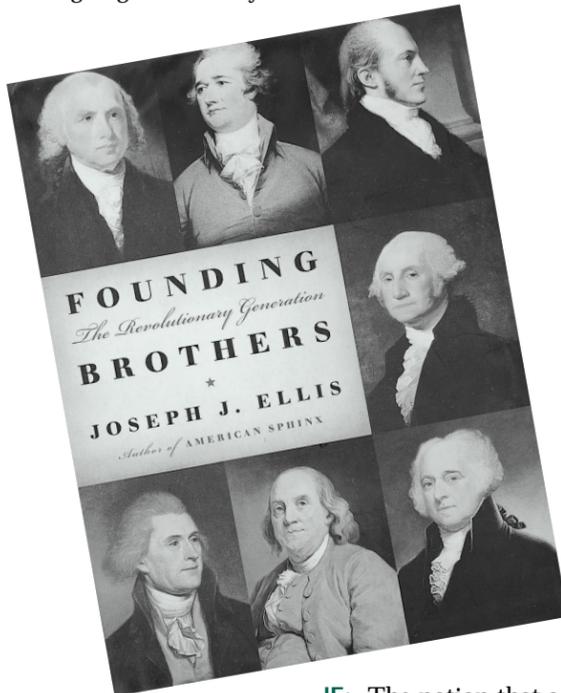
JE: Well there might have been another kind of Civil War, between the West and the East. I think that slavery lurks as the major threat to the Union and to the survival of the Republic from the get-go, and no matter who was in charge of the nation, the failure to resolve that question in the late eighteenth century meant that it was eventually going to be resolved in blood somewhere in the nineteenth century.

DT: Let's talk a little bit about the writing of the book. This is now the third book you have written, the sixth book really, but the third focusing specifically on these characters. Did you learn anything new or come to any new understanding or interpretation of these men or the relationships among them during the course of writing this book?

JE: The other books that I've done on the late eighteenth century, on Adams and Jefferson, forced me to read a great deal of the correspondence of the Revolutionary generation and exposed me to the incredibly valuable editions of the papers of these figures. These collections of papers have been going on for fifty years. By the way, the National Endowment for the Humanities has been central in seeing to their survival. I had already taken forays into the papers of other figures, like Madison, like Franklin, like Washington. The idea for this book became real in my mind when I recognized that all I had to do was finish off, if you will, the reading

that I had already begun. I've been reading around in these collections for almost thirty years, teaching courses about them, studying parts of the careers of each of these people. Once I started writing, I realized that I had accumulated an awful lot of information. The act of writing then forced me to extend my thoughts and see things that I wouldn't have otherwise. The act of research and the act of writing are not separate processes for me. One of the pieces of advice I offer gratuitously to some people who ask, "How do you write books?" is to start writing before you think you are ready, because you won't know where you want to go as a researcher until you've begun the process of pushing your thinking to the edge of where it can be. And that can only happen as you are trying to be creative at the writing desk.

DT: I think it's a common understanding that fiction writers operate in that fashion, but it's surprising to think that a historian might not know where he is going with a story.



JE: The notion that a historian sort of takes the notes on index cards, shuffles them, outlines, and then lets the story tell itself is a horrible simplification. If, in fact, that ends up being the way you actually work, you are going to end up with an erector-set style. I think that the ultimate insights of history require a measure of fluency to reach a recognition of irony and paradox. What most of us who read about personalities in the past are really asking ourselves is: In this thing called 'living life,' how did others do it? Those people that preceded me in this limited time that we have on earth, how did they manage that? In what sense can it help me to manage my time on the planet better? So you're inherently engaged in a dialogue with yourself as well as with the material, and your writing ought to reflect that. I'm not a novelist. I'm also not a person who believes that there is no fundamental distinction between fiction and nonfiction. But any historian worthy of the title must trust his or her imagination. The difference between the historian and the novelist is that the historian's imagination must be tethered to the evidence.

DT: You must know Simon Schama's book, *Dead Certainties*? The argument that he makes there is not exactly that there is no distinction between history and fiction, but that the writing of history involves an act of imagination like that of a novelist and that you are always trying to fill in the details. There's a certain amount of making it up as you go along, a likely story, to try to give coherence to the events.

JE: I completely concur that the act of writing history involves the use of the imagination. If it doesn't, it's not very good history. But I also think that what Edmund Morris did in the book *Dutch*, making up characters that didn't exist, or what Oliver Stone did in the movie *JFK*, splicing together kinescopes of real scenes with acted scenes, is not legitimate. In the end there's an ironclad rule in history and biography that's been true for at least three hundred years: you cannot make it up. And that doesn't

mean that you shouldn't use your imagination. But your imagination has to be working with the material that we call the historical evidence.

DT: Let's get back to the Founding Brothers again for a moment. It's clear that you have a very high opinion of John Adams and that if you were to rank the seven of them, Adams would be somewhere very near the top, and yet in the public perception he hardly shows up at all. Why is Adams not adequately appreciated?

JE: The succinct answer is because Adams is short, stout, and not physically attractive. Jefferson is tall, lean and the leading man. But that's a glib answer. A somewhat less glib answer that gets at a truth, though, is that Jefferson tells us what we want to hear and Adams, in my judgment, tells us what we need to know. Adams is the person who is an instinctive contrarian. Burr, as I said earlier, is the kind of person who always pursues his own personal interest. Adams suspects that whenever something is in his personal interest, it can't be the right thing to do. The archetypal thing for Adams to do is to defend the British troops in the Boston Massacre, or to insist on a negotiated peace with France in 1798-99 even though it means he is going to lose the election of 1800 by so doing. Adams has a greater sense of civic responsibility and of virtue. I would not rank Adams at the very top in terms of the contributions that he made to the early Republic. I would rank Washington at the very top, and I would put Franklin just below Washington. But then I would place Adams just below them.

From a historian's point of view, Adams is irresistible because his papers actually tell you what he is thinking and feeling at every moment . . . Jefferson, on the other hand, kept no diary. Jefferson didn't want you to know what he was really thinking at any one moment, much less what he was feeling. Jefferson is a series of shifting personae that talk to us but don't talk to each other. He is like the Mona Lisa. Adams is more like that Copley portrait of Paul Revere holding the pewter teapot, looking straight at you, close up. He's the most colorful, he's the most candid, he has the best sense of humor. He's tough on everybody, but he's toughest on himself. And so part of my attraction to Adams has to do with the way in which his correspondence, once you immerse yourself in it, just wins you over. And I venture the guess that David McCullough's book on Adams, due come out this spring, will make the same point to a larger audience than I've ever been able to reach. You're going to see a movement for a major commercial film on Adams and monuments to Adams. Then the JE position on Adams won't look so odd.

DT: I was struck by a full-page ad, I think it was in the *New York Times*, with a picture of George W. Bush and there was a quote that he uttered in his speech to the nation just after Gore finally conceded the election in which he said, "I've not been elected president of one party, I've been elected president of one nation." It's almost verbatim John Adams, I think I found it in your book, and I wondered if Bush had any idea.

JE: I don't think so. I think that Bush, or perhaps Bush's speechwriters, are more drawn to Jefferson. Bush alluded to that famous line in Jefferson's first inaugural: "Every difference of opinion is not a difference of principle. We are all Federalists. We are all Republicans." And that bipartisan message is something that Mr. Bush's speechwriters find resonant for his presidency. In truth, Jefferson was elected in 1800 because of his highly partisan political behavior, and Adams was speaking more truthfully about his own deepest convictions, namely that the president of the United States should not be the head of a political party. Adams wanted the presidency of the United States to stand above all partisan factions and all political parties. One of the reasons that Jefferson is the first modern president is he recognized that any president of the United States is going to have to be the head of a

Interview, continued on page 6

political party. Adams was a traditionalist, as was Washington, who could never shake his conviction that political parties are inherently evil.

DT: Is this an extension of the notion of personal virtue that you mentioned earlier?

JE: That's right. The term 'party' as understood by most members of the Revolutionary generation, even including Jefferson, was used as an insult. Jefferson at one point says, "If I must go to heaven in a political party, I prefer not to go at all." They believed that belonging to a political party drains you of the capacity to be intellectually independent, and prevents you from making decisions based on the larger collective national interest. A political party has a partisan interest and a constituency-based approach, which is not the way in which men at the top ought to be making policy. But in truth, once you get political parties actually functioning, the only way to get elected is to be a leader of a party. The founders, in a sense, were inventing a form of politics before they had a vocabulary to be able to talk about it.

DT: I am curious what you think about the possibilities of a really significant third party ever emerging in this country. Are we forever and ever a two-party state?

JE: If history is a guide, the only future that any third party has is to eventually make itself one of the two parties. That's the history of the nineteenth-century Republican Party. It was a minority party and eventually replaced the Whigs. I think that the founders established a system in which there is a fundamental conflict between two competing views. It's difficult to talk succinctly about what those views are. They are views about the relative power of the federal government, about a realistic versus an idealistic foreign policy, about an individualistic versus civic notion of citizenship. The two political parties represent the routinized continuation of the argument over those issues. One of my points in *Founding Brothers* is that we've been having the same argument for two hundred years: Is government "us" or is it "them?" About our role in the world, should we project our own ideals throughout the rest of the globe, or should we recognize that many parts of the world are not suited for the kind of democratic values that we believe in? Is your highest responsibility to pursue your own happiness in a very solitary and individualistic way, or does each citizen owe a responsibility to the collective? That's an ongoing argument.

DT: That's an ongoing argument, and one of the other clear points of *Founding Brothers* is that part of the genius of the founders was to develop a system in which that argument could be carried on indefinitely because it couldn't be resolved.

JE: That's right. One of the brilliant insights of the revolutionary generation is to say we don't have to resolve that argument; in fact any resolution of it is going to be temporary. What they did was to set up a framework in which the argument can persist in a full-blooded, robust way. Notice how different that is from what the political leadership did after the French Revolution, and then what they did after the Russian and Chinese Revolutions, where the victorious party imposed its own version of the answer, and in the end established a closed, totalitarian system. Another way to think of it is to say that they designed a political culture, not just a constitution but a political culture, that initiated and sustains an ongoing conversation. Once you get the conversation going, once it's framed, once that's the rule, once the rule of law is established around that argument, then it doesn't make too much difference who the president is. I suppose that's the reason why one pundit observed that the American political system was "designed by geniuses so that it could be run by idiots."

DT: That might be a good way to end. Thank you, Joe.

New Host on Commonwealth Journal

The Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities and the University of Massachusetts at Boston are pleased to announce that Boston-based author Barbara Neely is the new host of *Commonwealth Journal*, the weekly half-hour program that airs on WUMB and 14 other AM and FM stations around the state. Neely replaces Elizabeth Sherman, who so ably hosted the program through its first year on the air.

In her popular novels featuring Blanche White, an African-American domestic worker — *Blanche on the Lam*, *Blanche Among the Talented Tenth*, *Blanche Cleans Up*, and her newest book, *Blanche Passes Go* — Neely uses the mystery genre to write social commentary. In a *Commonwealth Journal* interview broadcast in November, she explained, "I don't think of Blanche as a detective at all, not even an amateur detective. Some people describe her as nosey. She says she has a healthy interest in other people's lives, and I think that's a good definition of her. She is a middle-aged African-American woman, on the heavy side, large-boned, extremely dark-skinned, big gap between her front teeth, the kind of woman who has an invisible banner on her forehead that says 'Don't even try it.'" Neely recalled that when she began working on the first book in 1992, she met "a woman in North Carolina whose name was Blanche. The woman in my books looks exactly like her. I remember when I met her thinking that we needed a heroine who looked like her because these are NOT the women



Barbara Neely

who get to star in anything. She does day work essentially by choice because she prefers to be her own boss. She has, as you might imagine, a great deal of problem with authority. She's extremely intelligent and intuitive and funny — and vulnerable."

Barbara Neely herself has a healthy interest in other people's lives, which will no doubt make her an excellent host for *Commonwealth Journal*. A self-described "avid public radio listener, general reader, and news consumer with a wide interest in the Commonwealth and the world at large," her professional background includes stints as Executive Director of Women for Economic Justice, producer for Africa News Service, circulation manager for *Southern Exposure Magazine*, and planner and program analyst for criminal justice programs.

For a schedule of upcoming shows and a list of stations that broadcast *Commonwealth Journal*, please go to www.mfh.org or directly to the WUMB website (www.wumb.org/commonwealthjournal).

For the year 2001, *Commonwealth*

Journal is underwritten by a generous grant from Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Massachusetts.



PHILANTHROPY SEMINAR

On December 15, a diverse group of lawyers, foundation staff and board members, financial advisers, and established and potential donors attended the final session of *Deepening the Dialogue on Philanthropy*, an MFH-sponsored seminar. Funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the *Boston Globe* Foundation, the four-session Massachusetts seminar was based on one originally developed by the Maine Humanities Council in 1997 as part of the Tocqueville Seminars for Civic Leadership, a national program. Its purpose was to promote philanthropy in the state, which currently ranks last in the U.S. in the percentage of income taxpayers donate to charity, according to an August survey in the *Chronicle of Philanthropy*. (Utah, with its large population of tithing Mormons, ranks first.) The seminar, led by former MFH board vice president and Williams College professor of history and American studies Robert Dalzell, aimed to accomplish this not by providing hands-on information about how and where to donate, a function that is performed by an increasing number of community foundations, banks, and financial advisers, but rather by encouraging participants to reflect on the history and purposes of philanthropy.

Explained MFH executive director David Tebaldi, "The MFH has considerable expertise in bringing scholars in the humanities together with both general audiences and special interest groups to achieve a fuller understanding of the issues of the day. *Deepening the Dialogue on Philanthropy* will provide a way for potential donors to see themselves as the bearers of a vital and uniquely American civic tradition."

The 20 seminar participants read essays ranging from "A Model of Christian Charity" by John Winthrop through works by Alexis de Toqueville, Jane Addams, Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller, Sr., and *Bowling Alone* author Robert Putnam. Discussions were lively, attrition was minimal, and participants appreciated the opportunity to discuss and analyze challenging intellectual material, which many said they had not done since college or graduate school.

Because the seminar was a pilot project, the organizing committee of MFH staff and board members, Dalzell, and Kelley McLendon, Director of Charitable Trust Services at FleetBoston Financial, is now evaluating it to find out whether participants felt it had an impact on their attitudes and philanthropic behavior, whether they liked the seminar format and readings, and other issues. MFH plans to hold additional seminars based on the results and eventually to develop and distribute a curriculum that can be used in a variety of settings to foster an appreciation of the place of philanthropy in American civic life.

The pilot seminar met at the offices of Harvard Pilgrim Health Care in Wellesley, which donated the meeting space.

For more information on *Deepening the Dialogue on Philanthropy*, contact Amy Hoffman, MFH Program and Development Officer, (617) 923-1678; ahoffman@mfh.org.

Humanities Calendar

All programs are open to the public free of charge unless otherwise noted.

Exhibitions

Signs of the Market

An exhibition featuring handpainted Cambodian shop signs and photographs of Cambodian advertising art by Bill Burke. The signs advertise a range of everyday activities and provide a window into the traditional culture of Cambodians and Cambodian-Americans. Themes explored include beauty and gender; aesthetics and popular art; local businesses and everyday life; and transnationalism and ethnic identity.

When: Friday, March 2–Saturday, April 28, 2001; open Wednesday–Sunday, 1:00–4:00 pm; Thursday–Saturday, 7:00–10:00 pm
Where: Mills Gallery, Boston Center for the Arts, Boston
Phone: (617) 426-5000

Symphony of a City

A public art project in which images and live audio, originating from 16 Bostonians from different neighborhoods and backgrounds, will be projected at specific outdoor sites in the Boston area, including Boston City Hall. A webcast of streaming video will also be available for viewing at www.symphonycity.org. The webcast will be accompanied by a scholar-moderated chat room. *Symphony of a City* premieres at the 2001 Boston Cyberarts Festival.

When: Friday, April 27, 2001 and Friday, May 4, 2001, 7:30 pm until the last participant goes to bed.
Where: Boston City Hall, Boston; third and fourth dates and locations to be announced
Phone: (617) 666-5122

Business and Industry—North Adams Exhibit

An exhibit tracing North Adams' evolution from an agricultural community to an industrial center and featuring photographs, artifacts, and videotaped oral histories.

When: May 2001; Museum hours: Thursday–Saturday, 10:00 am–4:00 pm; Sunday, 1:00 pm–4:00 pm
Where: North Adams Museum of History and Science, North Adams
Phone: (413) 664-4700

Transportation Innovations: Changing Our Communities and Changing Our Lives

A new, permanent exhibit on the impact of changing transportation technology displayed in a restored, 1944 caboose. The exhibit includes photographs, illustrations, documents, and an audio featuring readings from nineteenth-century documents about the railroad and interviews with Greenfield residents discussing the impact of trains and cars on their lives.

When: Opens May 19, 2001
Where: Greenfield Energy Park, Greenfield
Phone: (413) 774-6051

Lectures

Architects for Worcester's Gilded Age

The third lecture in Preservation Worcester's 2001 noontime lecture series, "Worcester Architects—1800 to 1950."

When: Tuesday, April 10, 2001, noon
Where: Preservation Worcester, Worcester
Phone: (508) 754-8760

Beethoven: The Revelation on Period Instruments

Pre-performance lecture given by Marilyn McDonald, Professor of Baroque Violin at Oberlin Conservatory. The performance following is of Beethoven's Symphony No. 3 ('Eroica') and the Violin Concerto.

When: Friday, May 4, 2001 and Saturday, May 5, 2001; Lectures at 6:45 pm, Concerts at 8:00 pm
Where: Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston
Phone: (617) 484-9200
Cost: Concert ticket prices range from \$19 to \$48, depending on seat. Lectures free to all ticket holders.

Lucius Briggs, Returning to Classical Revival

The fourth lecture in Preservation Worcester's 2001 noontime lecture series, "Worcester Architects—1800 to 1950," with an exhibit of Briggs's original plans and drawings.

When: Tuesday, May 8, 2001, noon
Where: Preservation Worcester, Worcester
Phone: (508) 754-8760

Greenfield Classic Day

The seventh annual community gathering, this year's theme being transportation. The centerpiece of the event is the opening of an exhibit on the history of transportation in a restored, 1944 caboose. Participants will also enjoy a parade of past and future transportation (including antique cars, bicycles, and scooters as well as electric cars and bicycles), a display of antique vehicles and train memorabilia, and live music.

When: Saturday, May 19, 2001
Where: Greenfield Energy Park, Greenfield
Phone: (413) 774-6051

The Role of the Arts in Urban Revitalization

A public forum on how resident involvement in the arts and creative expression contributes to a sense of place in Holyoke and might contribute further to urban economic redevelopment.

When: Late summer, 2001
Where: Location to be announced, Holyoke
Phone: (413) 559-5457

Transportation Innovations: Planning for the Future

Community forum on how Greenfield and Franklin County can plan for their future transportation needs. The forum is sponsored by the Transportation Subcommittee of the Franklin County Council of Governments.

When: Wednesday, September 19, 2001, 5:00 pm
Where: 278 Main Street, Greenfield
Phone: (413) 774-6051

Audio

Commonwealth Journal

A weekly, half-hour radio program featuring interviews with scholars, writers, cultural workers and public officials examining current topics and issues of particular interest to Massachusetts listeners.

Segments may be about summer theater programs in the Berkshires, the history of the Customs House in Boston, new Massachusetts welfare regulations, MCAS testing, or a recent Supreme Court ruling. *Commonwealth Journal* informs Massachusetts residents about what is happening in, around, and to their state; or addresses national and international issues from a Massachusetts perspective. The program is produced by WUMB Radio and the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities at the University of Massachusetts Boston. The host of *Commonwealth Journal* is Barbara Neely.

Boston: WUMB 91.9FM—Sundays, 7:00 pm
Boston/Framingham: WMEX 106.0AM—Sundays, 6:30 am
Brockton: WBET 146.0AM—Sundays, 8:30 am
Falmouth: WFPB 91.9FM—Sundays, 7:00 pm
Fitchburg: WEIM 128.0AM—Sundays, 11:30 pm
Framingham: WSRO 147.0AM—Sundays, 2:30 pm
Greenfield: WGAM 152.0AM—Sundays, noon
Holyoke: WCCH 103.5FM—Call station for details
Hyannis: WQRC 99.9FM—Call station for details
Marlborough: WSRO 147.0AM—Sundays, 2:30 pm
North Adams: WNAW-AM 123.0AM—Sundays, 11:30 am
North Adams: WMMB-FM 100.1FM—Sundays, 11:30 am
North Dartmouth: WSMU-FM 91.1FM—Mondays, 8:30 am
North Plymouth: WPLM-AM 139.0AM—Sundays, 7:30 am
Northampton: WHMP-AM 140.0AM—Sundays, 6:30 am
Orleans: WFPB 117.0AM—Sundays, 7:00 pm
Pittsfield: WUPE 95.9FM—Sundays, 6:30 am
Pittsfield: WUHN 111.0AM—Sundays, 6:30 am
Plymouth: WPLM 139.0AM—Sundays, 7:30 am
Plymouth: WPLM 99.5FM—Sundays, 7:30 am
Wellesley: WZLY 91.5FM—Call station for details
Worcester: WAAF 107.3FM—Sundays, 5:30 am
Worcester: WBPR 91.9FM—Sundays, 7:00 pm

Symposia

Cambridge Women in the Twentieth Century

A series of community meetings to engage residents in responding to and enhancing historical research on women's contributions to the life of the city. Artist Ellen Driscoll has been hired to design and fabricate a permanent piece of public art celebrating this theme, which will be installed in the city's new main library building. She will participate in the community dialogues. The meetings taking place in April and May will focus on women of Latin American heritage, women of Portuguese-speaking communities, and women of Haiti.

When: April and May, 2000, specific dates and times to be announced; final gathering Friday, June 15, 2001, 7:00–9:00 pm
Where: Central Square Branch of Cambridge Public Library, Cambridge for April and May meetings; Sakey Room of the Cambridge Public Library Main Branch, Cambridge for final gathering
Phone: (617) 349-4380

Third Annual World History Symposium: Personal Identities and Public Communities in World History

Hosted by the World History Center at Northeastern University, this two-day symposium for social studies teachers of grades 4–10 will provide new ideas about the teaching of social history topics as well as lesson plans and primary sources appropriate for upper elementary, middle, or secondary school classes. The two keynote addresses and twenty workshops will look comparatively at how different groups of people create their own communities in different places and in different ways; at the dynamic connection between governments and peoples' definitions and needs; and at the similarities and differences across age, class, gender, location, race, religion and time.

When: Friday, May 11–Saturday, May 12, 2001
Where: Curry Student Center, Northeastern University, Boston
Phone: (617) 373-4436 or (617) 373-4855
Website: www.whc.neu.edu
Cost: Early registration by April 23: \$55/one day, \$70/both days
On-site registration: \$60/one day, \$75/both days

Telling Our Stories

The fourth annual community forum on historical records. Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin is co-sponsoring the forum along with the Massachusetts Historical Records Advisory Board, the University of Massachusetts Amherst Library, and the Hampshire County Historical Records Preservation Advisory Board. The forum will present speakers, demonstrations and workshops on oral histories, historical research and writing, poetry, dramatic interpretation, film and video, music, song and dance. Special historical documentation workshops that relate to Massachusetts veterans, agricultural history, primary sources, library outreach projects, and access to local and state records will be offered.

When: Friday, May 11, 2001, 8:00 am–4:30 pm
Where: University of Massachusetts, Amherst
Phone: (617) 727-2816

Reading and Discussion

After Frost

A reading and discussion series created to acquaint readers with the poet most widely identified with New England and offer for consideration related poems by thirty other New Englanders who follow him in time. Participants will read poems from *After Frost: An Anthology of Poetry from New England*, edited by Henry Lyman. U.S. Poet Laureate Stanley Kunitz will introduce the series.

When: Wednesday, March 14, 2001 through late May, 2001
Where: Worcester Senior Center and Worcester Public Library, Worcester
Phone: (508) 799-1726

American Dreams

A book discussion series that explores the varied dreams of men and women and the recurring theme of personal freedom. Questions raised by the readings will encourage participants to reflect on the values Americans live by. Books in the series include *My Antonia* by Willa Cather, *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur

Miller, *Going After Cacciato* by Tim O'Brien, and *The Age of Innocence* by Edith Wharton.

When: Alternate Wednesdays, March 14–May 9, 2001, 7:30–9:00 pm
Where: Sturgis Library, Barnstable
Phone: (508) 362-8448

The Enchantment of Brevity

A scholar-facilitated book discussion series focusing on short stories from *Fiction: A Longman Pocket Anthology* edited by R. S. Gwynne.

When: Tuesday, April 10, 2001, Tuesday, April 24, 2001, and Tuesday, May 8, 2001, 7:15 pm–9:15 pm
Where: Storrs Library, Longmeadow
Phone: (413) 565-4181

Ends of Civilization: Taking Stock on the Eve of the Millennium

A reading and discussion series developed for the millennium by the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities. Each of the five books offers a critical assessment of a major area of human inquiry, endeavor, or concern and asks: "Where do we go from here?" The status of politics and government, science, education, the environment, and social relations in America are examined by journalists, scholars, and cultural critics, and fundamental questions are raised about the nature and possibility of further progress in these critically important areas.

When: Alternate Tuesdays, March 6–May 1, 2001, 7:00–9:00 pm
Where: Brockton Public Library, Brockton
Phone: (508) 580-7894

When: Alternate Sundays, March 4–April 29, 2001, 2:00–4:00 pm
Where: Bedford Free Public Library, Bedford
Phone: (781) 275-9440

When: Alternate Tuesdays, March 6–May 1, 2001, 7:00–9:00 pm
Where: Levi Heywood Memorial Library, Gardner
Phone: (978) 632-8360

When: Alternate Wednesdays, April 4–May 30, 2001, 7:00–9:00 pm
Where: Hoston Free Public Library, N. Brookfield
Phone: (508) 867-0208

When: Alternate Thursdays, April 5–May 31, 2001, 7:00–9:00 pm
Where: Morse Institute Library, Natick
Phone: (508) 647-6520

When: Alternate Sundays, April 1–May 27, 2001, 3:00–5:00 pm
Where: Arms Library, Shelburne Falls
Phone: (413) 625-0306

When: Alternate Thursdays, May 3–June 28, 2001, 7:00–9:00 pm
Where: Beaman Memorial Public Library, W. Boylston and Worcester Public Library, Francis Perkins Branch, Worcester
Phone: (508) 835-3711

When: Alternate Thursdays, May 3–June 28, 2001, 7:00–9:00 pm
Where: Boxford Town Libraries, Boxford
Phone: (978) 352-7323

When: Alternate Thursdays, May 3–June 28, 2001, 6:00–8:00 pm
Where: Southwick Public Library, Southwick
Phone: (413) 569-1221

When: Thursday, September 20, 2001 and then alternate Tuesdays, October 2–November 11, 2001, 7:00–9:00 pm
Where: Newburyport Public Library, Newburyport
Phone: (978) 465-4428

When: Alternate Wednesdays, September 19–November 14, 2001, 7:00–9:00 pm
Where: Reading Public Library, Reading
Phone: (781) 944-0840

When: Alternate Thursdays, September 20–November 15, 2001, 7:00–9:00 pm
Where: Sandwich Public Library, Sandwich
Phone: (508) 888-0625

Recent Grants

Greater Boston Area

\$2,500 to Boston Baroque for a series of free pre-concert lectures.

\$15,000 to Boston Cyberarts, Inc. to produce *Symphony of a City*, an event involving the projection, in public sites around Boston, of film shot by people from Boston neighborhoods wearing “wearcams;” a website; and a panel discussion.

\$15,000 to Northeastern University in Boston for a teacher-training symposium on topics in world history.

\$2,500 to The Old Manse in Concord to support research on the impact of the Old Manse and the landscape around North Bridge on Emerson, Hawthorne, and Thoreau, with findings to be used in the development of new living history tours and a pamphlet.

\$2,500 to the Harmony Grove Research Center for the African Diaspora, Inc. in Framingham for a Women’s History Month program featuring actors performing as Sojourner Truth, Sarah Parker Remond, Ellen Craft, and Victoria Woodhull.

\$15,000 to the Lexington Oral History Project and filmmaker Bestor Cram to complete production of *Unfinished Symphony: Taking Responsibility in a Democratic Society*, an hour-long documentary film that examines the role of dissent in society through the lens of a single event during the Vietnam War: the 1971 Memorial Day demonstration in Lexington, led by antiwar veterans, and the response of the town to the protesters’ attempt to use the historic town green.

\$300 to the Massachusetts State Senate in Boston for a performance of *Angel of the Battlefield*, a tribute to Clara Barton, in Nurses’ Hall in the Massachusetts State House, as part of the annual observance of Clara Barton Week.



Ms. Willis-Whyte performing “Angel of the Battlefield: The Story of Clara Harlowe Barton” Photo by Jack Leonard

\$935 to Goodnow Library in Sudbury for a reading and discussion program entitled *The Civil War: A Second Look (Biographies)*.

\$2,000 to Primary Source in Watertown for a day-long conference for elementary and secondary school teachers about the oral traditions of Tibet and Nigeria.

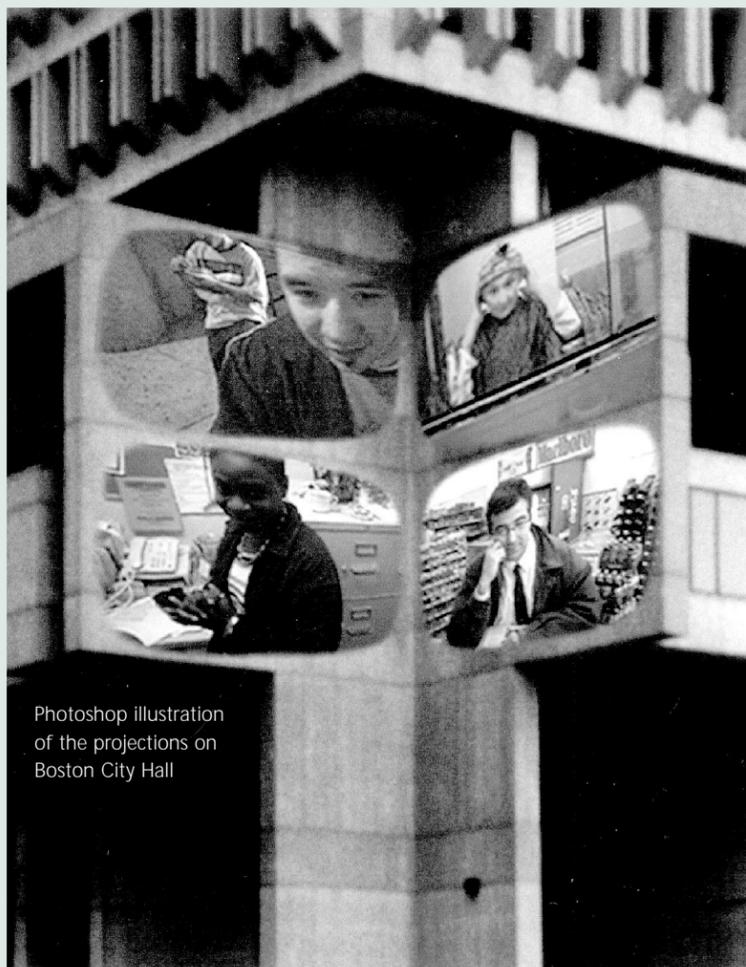
\$25,000 to Filmmakers Collaborative in Waltham and filmmaker Laurie Kahn-Levitt for production of *Tupperware: Earl and Brownie’s Plastic Empire*, an hour-long documentary film that will use the story of the creation and marketing of Tupperware to examine post-World War II consumerism, gender roles, and class structure in the United States.

Southeastern Massachusetts, the Cape and Islands

\$25,000 to the Center for Independent Documentary in Norfolk and filmmaker Nancy Kelly for production of a documentary film examining the efforts of North Adams to establish a local economy based on the arts and cultural tourism.



A white-gloved operator assembling the elements of a magnetic shift register, 1940’s. Courtesy of the North Adams Historical Society.



Photoshop illustration of the projections on Boston City Hall

\$2,485 to the Wellfleet Public Library for *Hanging Out: The Informal Gathering Place and its Role in Community Life*, a public forum and a related reading and discussion series exploring how public gathering spaces contribute to the quality of life and how local public policy decisions can affect such places and the communities they serve.

Northeastern Massachusetts

\$2,500 to the Ipswich Historical Society to engage an authority on 17th century New England material culture to assess the Society’s pre-1725 holdings, in preparation for development of a new interpretive plan for the 1655 John Whipple House.

\$2,500 to the Wenham Museum for a lecture on New England home life from 1750 to 1850, to be presented in conjunction with an exhibit on the evolution of domestic architecture.

Central Massachusetts

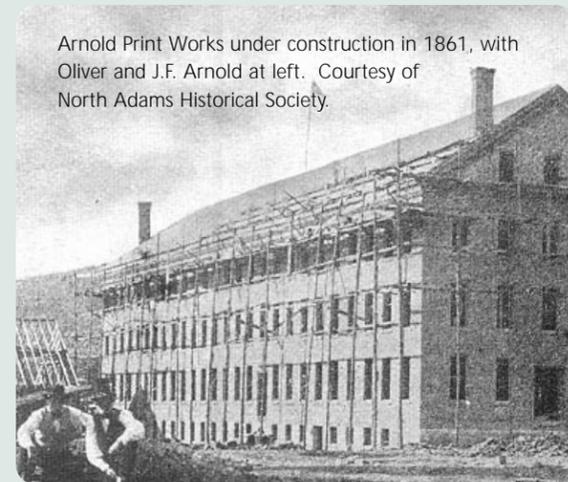
\$2,500 to the Worcester Natural History Society for a series of four lectures entitled *After Thoreau: New England Landscape Change and the History of Urban Ecosystems, 1850-2000*.

\$1,900 to the Worcester Center for Crafts to support publication of a catalogue for an exhibition of contemporary works of art incorporating archetypal feminine imagery from nonwestern and prehistoric European cultures.

Western Massachusetts

\$2,500 to the Asian Dance and Music Program, University of Massachusetts in Amherst for two illustrated and interactive lecture-workshops on Arabic and Chinese calligraphy.

\$2,500 to the North Adams Historical Society for design and construction of a permanent exhibition on the city’s economic history, to be housed in a converted industrial building in Western Heritage State Park.



Arnold Print Works under construction in 1861, with Oliver and J.F. Arnold at left. Courtesy of North Adams Historical Society.

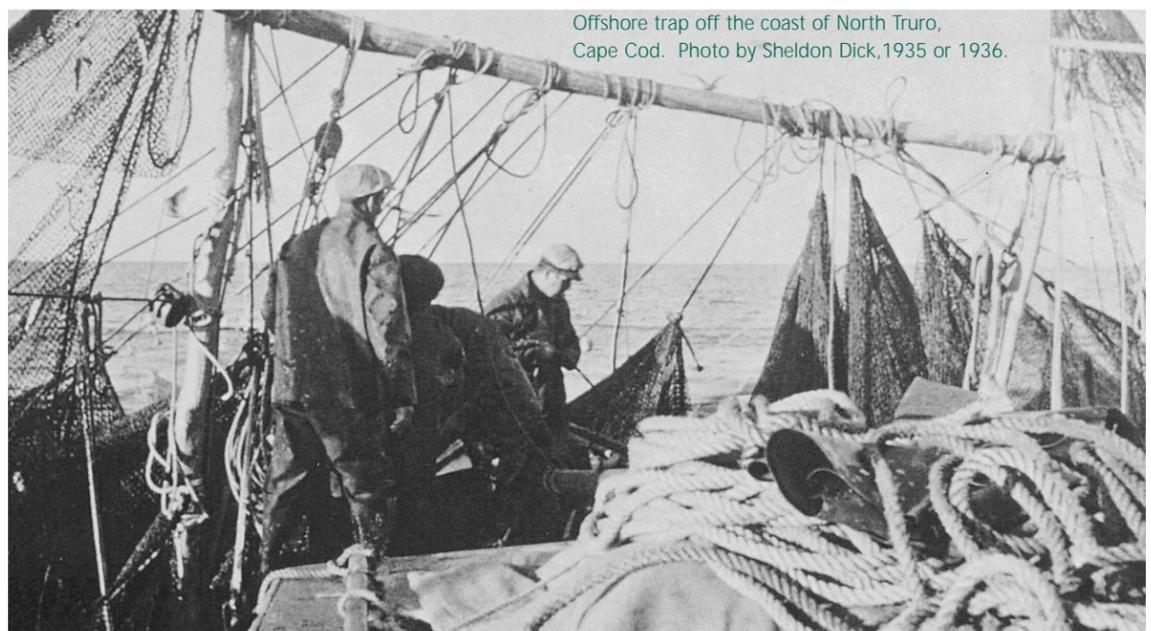


\$5,000 to the Center for Independent Documentary in Norfolk and filmmaker Harlan Reiniger for the costs of editing for national broadcast the half-hour film *Nantucket: Rock of Changes*, on Nantucket’s nineteenth century African-American community and its fight to integrate the island’s schools. Photo courtesy of the Nantucket Historical Association

\$10,000 to the Center for Independent Documentary in Norfolk and filmmaker Julie Mallozzi to develop a script and trailer for *Monkey Dance*, an hour-long video documentary on three Cambodian-American teenagers, all members of Lowell’s Angkor Dance Troupe, and their ways of addressing issues of cultural relations, ethnic identity, and family ties.

\$2,500 to the Labor Education Center, University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth for performances in two workplaces, a high school, a college, and a public venue by scholar-actor Charles Pace as the nineteenth-century anti-slavery activist, writer, journalist, and diplomat Frederick Douglass.

\$15,000 to Provincetown Community Compact, Inc. to finish production of *Still Standing: Trapfishing in America*, a half-hour documentary on this traditional, environmentally friendly form of fishing.



Offshore trap off the coast of North Truro, Cape Cod. Photo by Sheldon Dick, 1935 or 1936.



The old kitchen in the main building of the Northampton State Hospital. Courtesy of Historic Northampton.

\$2,500 to Historic Northampton for installation of a month-long exhibition on Northampton State Hospital, including photographs, text panels, artifacts, audiotaped excerpts from interviews with former employees, and a selection of artworks based on images of the hospital.

\$2,500 to Hampshire College in Amherst for a collaborative effort involving an ethnographer, a cultural geographer, college students, Holyoke residents, and the city's planning office in an investigation of the role of arts activities in community revitalization.

\$857 to the Friends of Storrs Library in Longmeadow for *The Enchantment of Brevity*, a reading and discussion series on short stories.

\$300 to the Wilbraham Public Library for *From Russia With Love*, a reading and discussion series on classics of Russian literature.

Outside Massachusetts

\$15,000 to The New Press in New York City and filmmaker Ron Lamothe of Leverett for production of an hour-long film examining how the Springfield-born writer and artist Theodor Seuss Geisel (Dr. Seuss) conveyed political messages in his books for children and his wartime editorial cartoons.



Neil Gustafson portrays patriot printer and publisher Isaiah Thomas, founder of the American Antiquarian Society. Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society.

Grants awarded to support the improvement of K-12 humanities education in Massachusetts:

\$2,500 to the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester to underwrite performances in Boston and Springfield schools of a one-man show about colonial printer, bookseller, and AAS founder Isaiah Thomas.

\$15,000 to the World History Center, Northeastern University in Boston for planning, publicity, and follow-up to a teacher training symposium organized by the Center in collaboration with 19 outreach centers.

\$1,400 to Mount Alvernia High School in Newton to bring historical role-player Kate Carney to the school to participate in a semester-long historical research and performance project and to develop a curriculum for use in other schools.

- I have a friend who should know about the Foundation. Please add her/his name to your mailing list.
- Please send me Grant Guidelines (for Major and Mini-Grants).
- Please send me information about the following:
- Reading & Discussion Programs
 - Scholar in Residence Program
 - Research Inventory Program
- I am a humanities scholar and would like to participate in Foundation-supported public humanities programs. Please contact me.

Name

Title

Organization

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City

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E-mail

Mail this form to: Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities, One Woodbridge Street, South Hadley, MA 01075-1100 or fax to: (413) 534-6918

Grant Categories

New guidelines and applications for the following grant programs are available by returning the response form above, telephoning the Foundation, or downloading materials from our website.

South Hadley: (413) 536-1385 / Metro Boston: (617) 923-1678 / www.mfh.org

You must be a nonprofit organization, or have a nonprofit fiscal sponsor, to qualify for support.

Mini-Grants

These grants are awarded for up to \$2,500. Application deadlines are the first of every month except August. Draft proposals are due two weeks before deadline. Notification is within three weeks.

Major Grants

These grants are awarded for amounts over \$2,500 and up to \$15,000 outright (up to \$25,000 challenge). Grants for professional training and curriculum development for K-12 educators are awarded for amounts up to \$25,000. Application deadlines are April 1 and October 1; draft deadlines are four weeks in advance of the application deadline. There is a third grant round for major proposals designed to support the improvement of K-12 humanities education in Massachusetts. For this round, proposals are due January 15; draft deadline is four weeks in advance.

Reading & Discussion Programs

These grants are awarded for up to \$1,000 for first-time applicants. A catalogue of program themes and a directory of experienced discussion leaders are available from the Foundation.

Scholar in Residence Program

This collaborative program with the Bay State Historical League enables scholars to conduct original research that advances the interpretation and presentation of history in historical societies, museums, historical commissions, and libraries. Grants provide stipends of \$2,000 to scholars and up to \$500 to host organizations to defray administrative costs. Application deadlines in 2001 are April 16 and November 15. Call BSHL at (781) 899-3920 for application forms.

Research Inventory Grants

Small historical organizations may apply for a Research Inventory Grant (maximum of \$1000) to support the costs of conducting inventory projects designed with specific research questions in mind. There are five deadlines per year (January 1, March 1, May 1, July 1, and September 1). This is a collaborative program administered by the Bay State Historical League. Call BSHL at (781) 899-3920 for application forms.

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Join us for our third annual traveling seminar

RUSSIA: Tradition & Transition

Moscow and Saint Petersburg · June 17-26, 2001

Against the background of Russia's rich cultural traditions, our seminar will explore how Russia is preparing itself for a democratic future after centuries of totalitarian rule. We will visit the symbols of Russia's dramatic past — including the Kremlin, Red Square, the Orthodox Monastery at Zagorsk, the Hermitage, and the ancient city of Novgorod — and meet with public officials and cultural workers currently engaged in the transition of politics, economics, education and the arts in Moscow and Saint Petersburg.

Our seminar leader will be Dr. Lisbeth Tarlow, Associate Director of the Davis Center for Russian Studies at Harvard University. Lis is fluent in Russian and has traveled frequently to Russia.

We will stay at the legendary Hotel Metropol in Moscow, just a step away from Red Square. Former guests include John F. Kennedy and Leo Tolstoy among others. The famous Metropol Restaurant with its ornate glass ceiling was featured in the



movie *Dr. Zhivago*. In Saint Petersburg, our hotel will be the elegant Astoria, located in the heart of the city at Saint Isaac's Square.

The fee of \$3,799 (plus tax and registration fee) includes roundtrip airfare from Boston on Lufthansa, ground transportation, domestic flight from Moscow to Saint Petersburg, hotels and breakfasts, entry to museums and historic sites, ballet or opera performances at the famous Bolshoi Theater in Moscow and the Mariinsky Theater in Saint Petersburg, and a special farewell dinner and folklore performance at the spectacular Spiridonov Mansion.

Our traveling seminar is limited to 24 participants. For more information, a detailed itinerary, reading list, or to register on-line, go to www.etrav.com/mfh.asp. Or call David Tebaldi in the Foundation office at (413) 536-1385.

The registration deadline is April 15, 2001.

Coming up next:
Travel to Peru in February, 2002