Not every issue of Profile is organized around a principal theme. But in this one we have chosen to focus on one of the great traditions represented in the National Portrait Gallery—those who served in the military. There are other subjects to be found in this issue—a fond discussion by Commissioner Roger Mudd of our portrait of his good friend, Eudora Welty, for example—but for the most part we have assembled the images and stories of individuals whom we remember for their role on the battlefields of our nation’s history.

Our nation was born of a long and difficult war in the eighteenth century, was preserved during an even more terrible war on our soil in the nineteenth century, and has found itself called to battle abroad too many times in the twentieth century, and, sadly, already in the twenty-first. It has been during these times that our nation has asked its citizens to do their duty, to give up the freedom of their private lives in order to protect their society and values, and to follow the lead of individuals as diverse in temperament as George Washington, Robert E. Lee, William Tecumseh Sherman, and Chester Nimitz.

The relationship between our civilian values and our military requirements is one of the great and defining themes of American democracy. Some whom we have followed in war we have elevated to the presidency: Washington, of course, Ulysses S. Grant, and Dwight D. Eisenhower among them. But the enduring value that we have asserted is that the presidency is a civilian office, that the President is commander-in-chief not because of military experience—indeed most of our Presidents have had very little—but one might almost say in spite of it. The Gallery’s greatest treasure, its “Lansdowne” portrait of George Washington, takes much of its importance from the fact that it is the first full-length of Washington in which he appears not in uniform, victor of the Revolutionary War, but in the dress of a civilian, representing that greater authority of the newly created presidency. And we remember, too, that most of the soldiers he commanded as a general were themselves “citizen-soldiers.”

The Gallery’s collections provide a rich record of military service in our society. We have portraits of Americans who have served in every major military conflict from the French and Indian War (1754–1760) to the Persian Gulf War. The Civil War collection of some five hundred images is the largest, not only because of the significance of that tragic conflict but because protagonists on both sides were Americans. Some of the most interesting and telling military images are included in this issue. They tell stories that we need to remember.  

Marc Poskitt
Cover: A sampling of military figures from the National Portrait Gallery’s collection. See page 16 for credits.

4 Vouching for Eudora

6 George Washington
Military Paradox

8 Curator’s Choice
Robert E. Lee

9 Historian’s Choice
Chester Nimitz

10 Q&A
Senior Historian
Frederick Voss

12 Book Reviews
The Soul of Battle by Victor Davis Hanson and
Sherman: A Soldier’s Life by Lee Kennett

14 NPG on the Road

15 NPG Schedules and Information

15 In Memoriam
A celebration of two commissioners’ lives

16 Portrait Puzzlers
An anagram twist!

In the next issue
• Villains, scoundrels, and thieves in the collection
• Profile survey results
• Lansdowne tour education outreach initiatives

J. Carter Brown, a great friend to many people and to many institutions, died June 18 in Boston. He was a remarkable commissioner, ex officio, of the Gallery’s, and we shall all miss him but count ourselves grateful to have benefited from his wisdom, knowledge, and charm.

PROFILE
National Portrait Gallery
Smithsonian Institution
750 Ninth Street, NW
P.O. Box 37012 MRC 973
Washington, DC 20013-7012
Phone: (202) 275-1738
Fax: (202) 275-1887
E-mail: NPGnews@npg.si.edu
Website: www.npg.si.edu

Readers’ comments are welcome.

©2002 Smithsonian Institution
Available in alternative formats.
Printed on recycled paper.
Vouching for Eudora

Roger Mudd
Documentary Host,
The History Channel

The way a painting moves from the hands of the artist to the walls of the National Portrait Gallery can be circuitous, frustrating, and sometimes amusing.

It was in the spring of 1988 that I received a letter warning me to be prepared for a telephone call from the Gallery’s senior curator (now retired), Robert Stewart. He would be calling, my correspondent said, because he wanted someone to vouch for the accuracy of an oil portrait that was being offered to the Gallery. The artist had given Mr. Stewart my name as one who knew the subject of the painting and could attest to its likeness.

My correspondent was, in fact, the subject of the portrait—Eudora Welty.

I was delighted, of course, to be asked to be a voucher of portraits and began to imagine going to the Gallery, raising my right hand, promising to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth and then swearing that that was Eudora Welty, so help me God. I was willing, in fact, to swear to almost anything if it meant getting my dear friend Eudora into the Gallery’s collections.

It would have been a first for me. I had spent most of my adult life as a television journalist attesting to and vouching for a thousand different news stories but never for a portrait. Even after I became a commissioner of the National Portrait Gallery in 1994 and became aware of how the Gallery worked, I never heard of a commissioner being summoned as a voucher.

So, I was excited.

What led up to Eudora’s “vouch-for-me” letter was the offer in March 1988 by a Mississippi artist, Mildred Nungester Wolfe, to sell to the Gallery a watercolor portrait of Eudora. Ms. Wolfe also mentioned in her letter to Robert Stewart that she had started work on an oil painting and would send a photograph and quote a price as soon as she finished it. She seemed anxious to establish her credentials with the Gallery. “Would a letter from Eudora Welty be advisable?” she asked Stewart.

“Although my name is listed in Who’s Who in American Art and in the Biographical Dictionary of Art, I am not well known outside of Mississippi.”

Stewart replied, “Yes, indeed, a letter from Miss Welty would certainly be helpful.”

Ms. Wolfe finished the oil in late March. She told me in a recent interview that she had gone to Eudora’s home in Jackson to start work on it “because I wanted her in a natural setting, not in the studio. Well, the house was cold as it could be and Eudora was bundled up in a blue coat and red scarf. So I took some photographs and made some sketches. But I didn’t paint there. I like to paint in my studio where everything is at hand. . . . It went pretty quickly because I knew just how I wanted to do it. I thought it went pretty well.”

Ms. Wolfe sent Stewart photographs of both the watercolor and the oil, telling him, in a letter dated March 31, that she thought “the [oil] portrait conveys great dignity, but there is a hint of Eudora’s humor in her face which is not too apparent in the prints.”

Arriving in the mail soon after

This portrait of Eudora Welty may be seen in the exhibition “American Women: A Selection from the National Portrait Gallery,” on view at the S. Dillon Ripley Center at the National Mall in Washington, D.C.
the prints was the letter that Ms. Wolfe had asked Eudora to send to Stewart in praise of the portrait. After expressing the hope that “it’s not presuming of me to write to you my own feeling as the subject of the portrait,” Eudora told Stewart, “it seems to me a portrait in the truest sense of the word, conveying in a quiet, disciplined, imaginative and ultimately revealing way what my character and presence are to her eye. . . . Thank you for letting me speak to the excellence of Mildred Wolfe’s portrait to my eyes and my own feeling.”

Despite Ms. Wolfe’s pride in the portrait and Eudora’s enthusiastic endorsement of it, Stewart believed the work needed some modification. He thought the bright colors and scarf “overpowered” the pale tones in Eudora’s face. He apparently conveyed his criticism to Ms. Wolfe by telephone prior to the May meeting of the Gallery’s commissioners.

Ms. Wolfe, perhaps sensing that the commissioners might reject her oil, explained the circumstances for the portrait and defended her use of the bright colors in a letter written before the portraits were sent to the Gallery. “The whole combination of primaries, the ochre chair, the red and blue delighted me,” she wrote in a three-page letter to Stewart. “Most people think Eudora is ‘homely,’ or some say ‘ugly,’” she continued. “To me her face is distinguished by her eyes (really blue) and the intelligence they reveal—even though one eye is slightly off. I like the bone structure around the eyes too. Her hands are also distinctive, very long, the thumb being about twice as long as most women’s. She is pale. . . . I feel that although her face is pale, the eyes keep it from receding, and I feel that the strong colors elsewhere fit and describe the iron strength of her character. . . . Of course, I realize the decision is up to the Committee.” Perhaps thinking that the painting would raise some questions about the likeness, she wrote almost plaintively, “I hope there is someone on the Committee who knows Eudora. Could you call Roger Mudd in? He’s her good friend.”

When Eudora got wind that Ms. Wolfe was using my name, she was obviously embarrassed. But her letter to me on May 3 contained all those qualities that her friends so adored—humility, loyalty, generosity, and, above all, gentle humor.

“The curator at the Gallery,” Eudora wrote, “telephoned [Mildred] and asked how could he tell how well the portrait resembled me—did anyone in Washington know how I looked? Mildred thought this over and wrote him back that Roger Mudd did. . . . I am—mortified to think you might get a call from the gentleman to stop what you’re doing and identify me. . . . It occurred to me that it might fend the man off, if he does succeed in reaching you, if you had this photo of the portrait. . . . so you could give him an answer on the instant. . . . If the N. [Portrait] Gallery does take it, it will, as you probably know, disappear from view and not be hung till ten years after I’m dead and gone. So really, we could get away with anything. Maybe that’s exactly what he’s thinking, the curator. Mildred is only sure he’s not a painter. Roger, a hilarious interruption to your day. You can at least tell the Gallery that the picture’s not Dukakis, Bush, Jackson, or Doctor Oliver North.”

Robert Stewart has no recollection of ever asking Ms. Wolfe for the name of someone in Washington who could vouch for the portrait. Whether Eudora actually believed Ms. Wolfe’s version of events was just trying to make the best of an awkward situation, we’ll never know. But the May 3 letter is such a gem, such a quintessential piece of Welty humor, that the truth seems of minor consequence.

Nevertheless, on May 11, the Gallery’s commissioners voted to postpone final consideration until the fall meeting.

In the end, Mildred Wolfe willingly agreed to soften the colors in the portrait, which Stewart said “amazed me because most artists would spit in my face at such a suggestion.”

On November 28, 1988, the commissioners of the National Portrait Gallery voted to buy the Wolfe portrait.

No one at the Gallery ever called me, even though I was geared to come. But I’m still on standby, and I can’t think of anyone I’d rather vouch for than Eudora Welty.
George Washington presents a paradox for most American people. Although familiar in many ways—we see his face daily on our dollar bills, know he wore false teeth, and remember the cherry-tree myth—he still remains a remote, mysterious, and inscrutable figure. Many Americans have difficulty distinguishing the man from the monument—the living person from Houdon’s frozen marble bust.

Washington’s record as a military leader adds to our sense of paradox about him. As a general, he lost most battles but won the war; as a military amateur with scant training, he defeated the world’s greatest professionals; and as a slaveholding aristocrat, he commanded a democratic army.

One way of unraveling the contradiction is to analyze his activities as a soldier. “First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen” is an apt description. Washington conquered the hearts of his officers and men as surely as he conquered the British. His soldiers remained personally devoted to him through eight long years. He became the personification of the American cause, and without him it is unlikely America could have won the war.

Washington achieved such distinction by virtue of four qualities: his bravery, sense of dedication, insistence on civilian control over the military, and deep sense of loyalty. His bravery was legendary. As a young officer, he fought in the battle of Monongahela in 1755 under General Edward Braddock and wrote his mother, “I luckily escaped with[ou]t a wound, tho’ I had four bullets through my Coat, and two Horses shot under me.” He explained later, “the miraculous care of Providence . . . protected me beyond all human expectations.” Providence saved him time and again in the Revolutionary War, leading to the belief that he lived a charmed life.

His sense of dedication was demonstrated in 1756, when he addressed Virginia militiamen who were fighting for the British king in the French and Indian War: “Let us show our willing obedience to the best of kings, and by strict attachment to his royal commands demonstrate the love and loyalty we bear to his sacred person; let us by rules of unerring bravery strive to merit his royal favor.”

Twenty years later, in the Revolutionary War, he issued a similar order calling for the same dedication: “The eyes of our countrymen are upon us, and we shall have their blessings and praises if we happily are the instruments of saving them from Tyranny. . . . Let us show the whole world, that a Freeman contending for liberty on his own ground is superior to any slavish mercenary on earth.”

Washington was as sensitive in dealing with Congress as with his soldiers. To him, military strategy was secondary to the power of a united people. “We should all be considered,” he wrote, “Congress, Army, &c, as one people, embarked on one Cause, in one interest; acting on the same principles and to the same End.” To achieve this unity, he insisted the army be in “due subordination” to the “Supreme Civil Authority.”

George Athan Billias
Professor Emeritus, Clark University

George Washington: Military Paradox
becomes less of a military paradox if we recall that in winning our independence, he did so by establishing our republican heritage of civilian control at the same time.

Washington’s deep sense of loyalty, as is seen in his attitude first toward the British king and subsequently to the American cause, was one of the secrets of his success with his soldiers. To win the war it was imperative that Washington doggedly hold on and wear the British down. He did not have to defeat the enemy by fighting, but rather by keeping his patchwork forces in sufficient shape to fight some pitched battles and occasionally win one. He was able to train an army and inspire them to remain in the field by inspiring a reciprocal sense of loyalty to the cause with which he was identified. By focusing on this aspect of his personality, we catch a glimpse of Washington’s remarkable leadership ability, see part of the paradox disappear, and appreciate his astonishing achievements in besting the most formidable world power in the late eighteenth century.

On the afternoon of April 15, 1865, Confederate General Robert E. Lee (1807–1870) reached Richmond following his surrender to Union General Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House. Large crowds greeted him with cheers as he made his way into the house on East Franklin Street that he had rented since 1861. Exhausted by four long years of war, yet at the same time anxious about both his fate and the future of the republic, Lee retired to the company of his family and tried to keep visitors away. To preserve his privacy and to safeguard his family, he ordered that a sentry be posted outside his front door.

Any sense of peace that Lee now enjoyed was shockingly disturbed when news arrived that President Abraham Lincoln had died earlier that same morning, the victim of an assassin’s bullet. To make matters worse, his murderer, John Wilkes Booth, and the other conspirators remained at large. Lee was deeply shaken by these reports and feared that the nation’s reuniﬁcation might be jeopardized. As he articulated to a New York Herald reporter several days later, the assassination of the President was “one of the most deplorable acts that could have occurred. As a crime it was unimagined and beyond consideration.”

Although Lee might have wanted to retire quietly, the convergence of these events drew him further into the national spotlight, a position that he had grown to accept ever since his decision at the outset of the Civil War to side with the Confederacy. A former superintendent of the United States Military Academy at West Point and a distinguished soldier during the Mexican War, Lee was so well regarded as a military leader that when hostilities between North and South seemed imminent in April 1861, Lincoln chose him to be the Union’s ﬁeld commander. While Lee opposed secession and disliked the institution of slavery, the Virginia native ultimately rejected Lincoln’s offer and resigned his commission upon learning that his home state had seceded from the Union. As Lee himself was well aware, his loyalty to the Commonwealth of Virginia had indeed shaped the course of the previous four years.

Despite his fatigue and anguish, Lee made himself available to Mathew Brady the day after his return to Richmond. America’s preeminent portrait photographer, with studios in New York City and Washington, D.C., Brady had committed vast resources to creating a photographic record of the war and its Union leaders. Like Lee, Brady had just arrived in Richmond. Although his aim was to photograph the Confederate capital, much of which had been badly burned during the Confederate retreat, Brady seized the opportunity to approach Lee about sitting for his portrait. Both men must certainly have understood the larger signiﬁcance of the moment. As Brady later recalled, “It was supposed that after his defeat it would be preposterous to ask him to sit, but I thought that to be the time for the historical picture. He allowed me to come to his house and photograph him on his back porch in several situations. Of course I had known him since the Mexican War when he was upon Gen. Scott’s staff, and my request was not as from an intruder.”

Dressed in his Confederate general’s uniform and holding his slouch hat, Lee allowed Brady to complete six portraits of him. This was the last occasion that he posed in his military uniform. The National Portrait Gallery’s evocative photograph of Robert E. Lee marks an extraordinary moment in the history of this important military leader and the nation at large.

Historian’s Choice  Chester Nimitz

Oil on canvas by Dean Cornwell (1892–1960), 1944; gift of the family of Chester W. Nimitz Jr.

David C. Ward
Deputy Editor, Peale Family Papers

Dean Cornwell’s portrait of Admiral Chester Nimitz (1885–1966) shows him facing West—with what is almost certainly the wreckage of Pearl Harbor in the background—grim-faced yet with his hands shoved casually into the pockets of his uniform jacket. It’s against regulations for any military man to have his hands in his pockets while on duty. But a four-star admiral can do what he wants, and Cornwell captures the determined calm with which Nimitz prosecuted the naval war against Japan; the pose has something in it of the insouciant confidence of a western gunfighter. Nimitz was named commander of the Pacific Fleet soon after December 7, 1941, and Cornwell’s picture memorializes the start of the campaign in which Nimitz led the navy out of catastrophe to crushing success.

Nimitz is perhaps less well known than the other great American commanders of World War II. Some of this is caused by Nimitz having been modest and reticent to a fault; he refused to write his autobiography and only grudgingly cooperated with biographers. He did not allow internal controversies to go outside the service, and he never used the press to puff himself up. Moreover, the scope of the war in the Pacific meant that Nimitz was anchored to his command center at Pearl Harbor. Nimitz only saw the aftermath of battles, never the battles themselves, even though he was the one who set the strategy of naval operations. His concept of command was never to meddle but to allow his commanders full latitude to act according to their own judgment once strategy had been determined. Nimitz’s equanimity during battles was a sign of his confidence as he calmly listened to real-time radio traffic from Saipan or Leyte Gulf. But this detachment, and his disdain for public relations, meant that Nimitz was given less credit than he deserved for victories.

Nimitz’s story is an extraordinary one, spanning the history of the modern American navy. He was born in Texas and left the state in 1905 to attend the Naval Academy. Nimitz’s career as an officer was exemplary, as he early demonstrated an understated confidence, particularly an ability to lead men, that took him up the often-slow promotion ladder of the peacetime navy. Given less than desirable postings, such as service in the submarine corps, Nimitz made himself an expert in diesel engines, thereby modernizing and preparing the submarine fleet for the war. He also helped invent ship-to-ship refueling, an innovation that permitted the American fleet to stay at sea longer and strike from longer distances than any other navy. Nimitz also was quick to spot the hidden advantage caused by the defeat at Pearl Harbor. The success of the Japanese raid indicated the power of the naval air forces, while the destruction of the battle-ship fleet at Pearl Harbor meant the navy had no choice but to rely on carrier battle groups. Nimitz recognized these developments almost instantly, and he was always able to control the fractious relationship between the navy’s sailors and flyers.

For political and service reasons, Nimitz had to share command in the Pacific with the army’s Douglas MacArthur. To propitiate the army, a two-pronged strategy was developed whereby the army would proceed north from the Philippines against Japan while the navy punched its way across the central Pacific, taking out the islands held by the Japanese and encircling the home islands for a final assault. Since MacArthur never really got moving, the war’s progress was dependent on Nimitz’s steady and resolute command of his far-flung forces. If, in retrospect, victory in the Pacific looks like a foregone conclusion—especially after Midway—it is only because Nimitz’s command abilities made it impossible for there to be any alternative.

A Puzzle Solved

An interview with National Portrait Gallery Senior Historian Frederick Voss by Publications Officer Dru Dowdy about Voss’s career at the Gallery.

Dru Dowdy: How long have you been at the National Portrait Gallery?

Frederick Voss: I arrived in 1971, starting out with the title of research historian, and have been doing roughly the same thing ever since, applied in different ways. I do research for exhibitions, contribute to catalogues—sometimes authoring the whole catalogue—and write labels for the permanent collection. Since the mid-1990s, I’ve also been the Gallery’s senior historian and have presided over the historian’s office.

Dowdy: Why does the Gallery have a historian’s office?

Voss: The National Portrait Gallery is, obviously, a museum of portraiture, but we are also very much a museum of biography and American history. So it was felt from early on that the Gallery needed a separate historian’s office that would interpret the lives of the people who are presented in the collection and relate their lives to the portraits.

Dowdy: And the historians and curators make recommendations to the Gallery’s commission for subjects who will go into the collection?

Voss: Yes, the historian’s office has the primary responsibility for saying who should or should not be in the collection—assessing the achievements of portrait subjects and deciding whether or not those achievements merit the subjects’ inclusion in the collection. Sometimes it’s easy and sometimes it’s difficult.

Actually, the hardest problems, I think, are modern-day subjects. There are a lot of people in the news today who are household names to anybody who is reasonably well informed. But the big question when figures like that come up for acquisition is how much will their achievements be recognized or appreciated fifty or one hundred years from now? Will they still seem weighty and significant or will they look fairly trivial? Of course, I should also add that it’s the Gallery’s commissioners who ultimately vote a subject into the collection.

Dowdy: In addition to being senior historian, you’re also curator of the Gallery’s collection of Time magazine cover art. When did that happen?

Voss: In 1978, Time decided that the Gallery would be the perfect repository for the original newsmaker cover portraits that had been accumulating in its headquarters over the years. And several years after the initial gift was made—about 1984, I think—the Gallery realized that this collection of artworks needed a curator, and I was it. I must say tracking the stories behind the making of many of the covers has been one of the more interesting parts of my job.

Dowdy: You’ve done several exhibitions based on the Time collection?

Voss: Yes; I’ve done them on various themes, among them exhibitions on Time covers of World War II, on women, and on Time’s Man of the Year, which was one of my first major undertakings from that
Interview

Voss: The biggest challenge is to combine image and biography in an interesting way. By that I mean using the portrait as a biographical document or a springboard for biography and using biography, in turn, to draw the viewer into the portrait to savor it in a way that he or she had perhaps never thought of. It’s a challenge that is unique to a portrait gallery, I suppose. And I’ve found it one of the most interesting aspects of my work.

Dowdy: You’re also one of our most prolific writers. How many books have you done for the Gallery—or have you counted?

Voss: I don’t know! Certainly I’ve produced or been part of the production of at least a dozen of the Portrait Gallery’s publications.

Dowdy: What has been your favorite book?

Voss: That’s very difficult—a single favorite is always hard to isolate. I tend to like one or another of them for different reasons. But I would say that the book that I most enjoyed working on was Picturing Hemingway: A Writer in His Time, which accompanied an exhibition in 1999 that marked the centennial of his birth. In that book, I thought I got just the right interplay of portraits and biography.

Dowdy: What projects are you working on now?

Voss: While the Gallery is closed, we have launched a number of traveling exhibitions. In spring 2003, we’ll be launching a traveling exhibition called “Women of Our Time,” which draws from images in the Gallery’s photographic collections. I’ve been working on the publication and brochure for that—it’s another show that I have enjoyed working on immensely.

Dowdy: And now the big revelation: you are the mystery man behind one of Profile readers’ favorite features, Portrait Puzzlers!

Voss: Yes, I have to admit it; I am behind the portrait puzzle! In fact, I was the one who suggested it. And now some of my most important work in each quarter of the year is to come up with a new Portrait Puzzler. It’s a new way to use the Gallery’s collections. And I’m also trying to come up with more interesting variants on the Puzzler, such as this month’s, which adds anagrams to the mix.

Ernest Hamlin Baker’s 1944 Time cover of World War II General Jonathan Wainwright; purchased with funds from Rosemary L. Frankeberger

Boris Chaliapin’s 1950 Time cover of television personality Arthur Godfrey; gift of Mrs. Boris Chaliapin

Book Reviews:

The Soul of Battle by Victor Davis Hanson (New York: The Free Press, 1999)


Sidney Hart

Editor, Peale Family Papers

William Tecumseh Sherman (1820–1891) remains a controversial figure. Contemporaries either celebrated or despised the man. For southerners, Sherman did not merely say that “war is hell”; his “March to the Sea” through Georgia and drive through the Carolinas made war hell. For abolitionists, his refusal to enlist freedmen in his army highlighted his racism and southern sympathies. Defenders responded that Sherman’s total war led to restoration of the Union and the abolition of slavery in the United States. They pointed to the number of slaves Sherman freed, his kind behavior toward the freedmen, and most important, his order giving forty thousand former slaves thousands of acres of land in Georgia and South Carolina. Historians acting as psychologists have debated whether Sherman’s breakdown in December 1861 was “a mild anxiety state” or “some form of manic depression.” Some minimize the abilities of a man who (like Grant) failed at everything he tried before returning to the army at age forty at the onset of the Civil War; others view him as an incisive student of military history, a superb leader of men, and Grant’s most brilliant and courageous subordinate.

These two books approach Sherman from different perspectives. Victor Davis Hanson, in The Soul of Battle, examines the political culture of war through an analysis of three generals: Epaminondas, the Theban who defeated Sparta in 370–369 B.C.; Sherman; and George S. Patton. For Hanson, Sherman’s significance lies in the character of his “Western” army. Hanson takes his theme from the triumphant military parade in Washington, D.C., on May 24, 1865. Two great armies were on review: Grant’s Army of the Potomac, in their dress-blue parade uniforms, and Sherman’s sixty-five thousand troops, many of whom were eager to demonstrate their esprit de corps by appearing in the ragged uniforms they had worn on their march. They brought with them their goats, cows, and mules that carried such spoils of war as gamecocks, poultry, and hams. According to the New York Times, they were “the peasantry of the west, the best material on earth for armies.” Marching with them were the families of the slaves freed by Sherman’s army, and leading each division were “corps of black pioneers, armed with picks and spades.” Sherman’s troops, in Hanson’s view, were the quintessential democratic army, spirited yet disciplined, an ideological force of terrible efficiency that methodically ripped through the heartland of the South, destroying the slave state physically, and by doing so, destroying its will to fight. Sherman and his army were a democratic instrument for right, formed to destroy a wrong—the evil of chattel slavery. In making this argument, Hanson takes the character of Sherman’s army and the march as the measure of the man.

Lee Kennett, in Sherman: A Soldier’s Life, takes a more nuanced view of the man and soldier, and argues that in many respects Sherman was a “conservative,” a term he uses in a negative and presentist sense. The pattern was set when nine-year-old Tecumseh’s father (who had named his son after a Shawnee chief) suddenly died. William Tecumseh, as he was to be baptized by his second family, was placed with the family of Thomas Ewing, a successful lawyer and a United States senator from Ohio. Ewing, a Whig, was undoubtedly important in forming Sherman’s “conservative” views: a friend of “law and order,” opposed to the growing political power of the masses, alarmed by the democratic challenge to elite rule. Sherman viewed himself
as one of the “principled men of substance,” a “member of a privileged class,” and, concludes Kennett, was “something of a snob.” Kennett also brands Sherman as a racist for believing that he was a member of a superior race and that blacks were inferior to whites. He accepted slavery and included racist terms in his vocabulary.

The problem with Kennett’s branding is that Sherman’s racial attitudes and vocabulary were not unusual in nineteenth-century America, North or South. During Sherman’s lifetime, only a small number of Americans were not racists as we would understand that term today. Kennett does inadvertently touch on a crucial matter when he includes among Sherman’s Whig views the belief that American democracy and constitutionalism were the outcome of the “near perfect” work of the Founding Fathers. But Kennett interprets this entirely in the context of Sherman’s opposition to Jacksonian democracy, and thus misses the larger meaning—the belief by Lincoln and others that American democracy, while imperfect and evolving, still held the greatest hope for all people and was “the last best hope of mankind.” In misreading this fundamental tenet of nineteenth-century American political culture, Kennett overlooks the fact that Sherman was a democrat. Sherman lived in many different places before the Civil War, both in areas where freedom and mobility were limited and in areas that exemplified the country’s open and democratic society. While in the South he was repelled by the snobbery and exclusiveness of Charleston society. Although like most antebellum Americans, he was not shocked by slavery, he did not like this closed-caste southern society with its ersatz aristocracy; what he admired in the region were the hard-working Low Country planters.

Sherman was not hostile to all regions of the South, and even during the first few years of the war, he favored a peace that would inflict the least harm on the region. By the fall of 1864, however, he came to believe, after three bloody years of war, that only an invasion of the southern heartland—much of which had been left untouched—would discredit the southern leadership, bring peace, and restore the Union. Historians remain divided on his march. Was it good because it helped defeat the slave states, abolish slavery, end the war sooner and thus reduce casualties, even at the cost of the destruction of property? Or, in its introduction of “total war,” was it a violation of the rules of civilized warfare? Kennett’s account is ambivalent, and at times critical, as he follows Sherman’s shifting attitude from that of limited war to total war. He emphasizes the property destruction in the march and questions if it was deliberate on Sherman’s part or the result of a lack of discipline among the troops. In the end, Kennett concurs with Sherman’s aide that it was all intentional, that Sherman deliberately wanted to make the war so terrible that southerners would capitulate, that “the only way to end this unhappy and dreadful conflict...is to make it terrible beyond endurance.” But even in this acknowledgment, Kennett does not perceive an ideological dimension to the march.

Perhaps, as Hanson writes, we can best understand Sherman not through his biographers, but through the eyes of his most bitter enemies, the slave holders. It was Sherman they hated, even more than Grant or Lincoln, and with good reason. The sheer audacity of the march is testimony to the ideology behind it. In the early morning of November 15, 1864, Sherman departed a burning Atlanta, marching unopposed into the Georgia countryside. Lincoln had grave doubts and Grant had given his approval with great misgivings. He was violating almost every principle of war strategy and tactics: Sherman was leaving behind all his lines of communication, and more important, his lines of supply. His army would be living off the land and totally on their own. His soldiers, however, did not have doubts. Of those whose enlistments had run out, nearly 50 percent voted to march with him, the highest reenlistment in the North. As Sherman later wrote, the troops marched out of Atlanta, “steadily and rapidly, with a cheery look and swinging pace, that made light of the thousand miles that lay between us and Richmond.” What he next recorded should send chills down the spines of all but the most hardened revisionist historians of the march: “Some band, by accident, struck up the anthem of ‘John Brown’s soul goes marching on’; the men caught up the strain, and never before or since have I heard the chorus of ‘Glory, glory, hallelujah!’ done with more spirit, or in better harmony of time and place.” In judging Sherman we are left with two points to ponder: his “March to the Sea,” as much as any battlefield victory by Grant, destroyed the slaveholding South’s will to make war; and in accomplishing that, he freed more slaves than any other northern general.
LOCAL
Washington, D.C.
S. Dillon Ripley Center, International Gallery Smithsonian Institution
“American Women: A Selection from the National Portrait Gallery” opened June 7 in the S. Dillon Ripley Center, located underground on the Mall between the Smithsonian Castle Building and the Freer Gallery of Art. This exhibition of sixty-five images includes a seventeenth-century portrait of Pocahontas, bronze busts of environmentalist Rachel Carson and civil rights activist Rosa Parks, a poster of Dorothy Dandridge in her role as Carmen Jones, and photographs of pilot Amelia Earhart and singer Odetta. Sponsored by AOL Time Warner and Ortho-McNeil Pharmaceutical, Inc. Docent tours are available. On view through December 1, 2002.

NATIONAL
Lansdowne Tour
Las Vegas, Nevada
Las Vegas Art Museum*
Through the generosity of the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation, NPG was able to purchase the original “Lansdowne” portrait of George Washington by Gilbert Stuart, which had been on loan to the museum for more than thirty years. The foundation is also the sponsor of an eight-venue tour of the painting—“George Washington: A National Treasure”—now at the Las Vegas Art Museum. The exhibition, which opened on June 28, features the 206-year-old painting and also includes touchscreen interactives and a video. The exhibition has its own website at www.georgewashington.si.edu. On view through October 27, 2002.

Baltimore, Maryland
B&O Railroad Museum*
As part of a nationwide celebration marking 175 years of railroading in America, NPG has joined with the B&O Railroad Museum to present “Portraits of American Railroading from the National Portrait Gallery.” Featuring likenesses of significant figures in American railroading, the exhibition includes portraits of early steam-engine inventor Peter Cooper and sleeping-car originator George Pullman. On view through July 2003.

Arlington, Texas
Legends of the Game Museum
Portraits of baseball immortals such as Vida Blue, Reggie Jackson, and Nolan Ryan are on view in “Sports and the Nation,” an exhibition organized by the Origins of the Southwest Museum.* On view through January 2003.

Richmond, Virginia
The Virginia Historical Society

ONLINE
On May 14, 2002, NPG launched “Picturing Business in America: Hedcuts in The Wall Street Journal.” Drawn from the Wall Street Journal's generous gift to NPG of more than sixty distinctive hedcuts (spelled without an “a”), or portrait drawings, the exhibition features images of eighteen contemporary entrepreneurs, including Martha Stewart, Bill Gates, and Craig Venter. In addition to chronicling the contributions of these and other leaders to American business and culture, it describes the history and technique behind the Journal’s familiar “dot-drawings.” Visit www.npg.si.edu/exh/journal/index.htm.
NPG Schedules and Information

Portrait of a Nation Tour Itinerary

For information on available bookings, contact the Department of Exhibitions and Collections Management at (202) 275-1777; fax: (202) 275-1897.

Portraits of the Presidents
North Carolina Museum of History, Raleigh
June 21–September 15, 2002

Additional venues include: Virginia Historical Society, Richmond; Jimmy Carter Presidential Library & Museum, Atlanta, Georgia

A Brush with History
New Orleans Museum of Art, Louisiana
June 1–August 11, 2002


Eye Contact: Modern American Portrait Drawings
Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas
May 25–August 25, 2002

Additional venues include: Elmhurst Art Museum, Illinois; Naples Museum of Art, Florida

Women of Our Time
Beginning its tour in March 2003, the exhibition itinerary is still forming.

Venues include: Mobile Museum of Art, Alabama

Additional venues available.

Useful Contacts

The Gallery's mailing address is P.O. Box 37012, MRC 973, Washington, DC 20013–7012.
The main telephone number is (202) 275-1738.

Catalog of American Portraits
Phone: (202) 275-1840
Web: www.npg.si.edu and click on Search
E-mail: NPGWeb@si.edu

Library
Phone: (202) 275-1912
Web: www.siris.si.edu (for the library's catalog)
E-mail: lynaghp@sil.si.edu

Office of External Affairs
Phone: (202) 275-1764
E-mail: maddenp@npg.si.edu

Office of Education
For information about school and community programs, teacher resources, internships, and upcoming events:
Phone: (202) 275-1811
Web: www.npg.si.edu and click on Education
E-mail: NPGEducation@si.edu

Office of Rights and Reproductions
Phone: (202) 275-1791
Web: www.npg.si.edu/inf/r&r/index-intro.htm
E-mail: NPGRightsOffice@si.edu

Office of Publications
To order an NPG publication, contact the National Museum of American History's Shop.
Phone: (202) 357-1527
E-mail: NPGPublications@si.edu
(for information only)

In Memoriam

The National Portrait Gallery has recently lost two valued commissioners, evolutionary biologist Stephen Jay Gould, who died on May 20, and literary scholar R.W.B. Lewis, who died on June 13. Gould spent his teaching career at Harvard, and Lewis was for many years a professor of American studies and literature at Yale. The authors of groundbreaking books in their fields, both commanded wide respect among fellow academics. While Gould’s Ontogeny and Phylogeny is often credited with helping to create a new area of study in biology, Lewis’s The American Adam has long been recognized as a seminal study of this country’s literary traditions. But both men also had remarkable gifts for sharing their erudition with the general public—Gould largely as the writer of a widely loved column for Natural History magazine and Lewis as the author of a Pulitzer Prize–winning biography of Edith Wharton. Finally, both scholars had a clear understanding of the Gallery’s dual mission as a museum of history and portraiture, and they brought to their tasks as commissioners a convivial humor and wisdom that fellow commissioners and Gallery staff deeply appreciated and will sorely miss.
Art Sizzle Purport (An Anagram Twist)

1. Pioneer in Progressive social reform: Sad Jade Man
2. Companion to an avant-garde art patron and writer: Societal Balk
3. Revolutionizer of transportation: Girth Will Rove
4. Industrialist and most cheerful giver: Dear Cringe Anew

3. Orville Wright (1871–1948), pencil and Chinese white on paper by Oscar E. Cesare, 1938; gift of Valentine Cesare.
4. Andrew Carnegie (1835–1919), oil on canvas by unidentified artist, not dated; gift of Margaret Carnegie Miller.

Cover images (left to right, top to bottom):

Omar Bradley by Ernest Hamlin Baker, 1944
Leonard Wood by John Singer Sargent, 1903
Oveta Culp Hobby by Ernest Hamlin Baker, 1944; gift of Oveta Culp Hobby
William Westmoreland by Boris Chaliapin, 1965; gift of Time magazine
Philip Henry Sheridan by Thomas Buchanan Read, 1871; gift of Ulysses S. Grant III, 1939
William Ayers Campbell (detail) by Betsy Graves Reyneau, 1944; gift of the Harmon Foundation
Henry Knox by Charles Peale Polk, after Charles Willson Peale, after 1783
John J. Pershing by Sir William Orpen, circa 1919; gift of the International Business Machines Corporation
Stonewall Jackson (detail) by Anton Hohenstein, circa 1863

Smithsonian
National Portrait Gallery
Washington DC 20013-7012
Official Business
Penalty for Private Use $300

Return Service Requested