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Vintage Valentine from the Collection of the Danbury Museum.

Hello Friends!

It's February and we're happy to be with everyone again!

Looking for Valentine options? How about buying tickets for you and your Valentine to go to our annual Gala? The links are below and it's the gift that gives twice, as you give a lovely gift and then get to enjoy an evening out to support the Danbury Museum! On Friday, February 14, from 4-5pm, we are pleased to welcome Arthur N Gottlieb to speak on the famous photographer, Alfred Eisenstadt. Thank you to **Synergy Home Care of Danbury** for their generous sponsorship of this program. This talk is FREE and all are welcome. Enjoy the program and then head out to one of Danbury's fine eateries to close out your Valentine's Day!

Not only is this Black History Month (check out some of the museum's digitized resources [here](#)) but it is the month we celebrate Marian Anderson's birthday (132!) on February 27. The museum's signature annual gala is on February 28 at 6pm, and it is the most critical fundraiser on our calendar. We'd love to have you attend, [details on our website](#) or click the graphic below!

And speaking of Marian Anderson, the museum's upcoming exhibit will feature a number of performance gowns, dresses, and day dresses belonging to Marian Anderson. Some of these stunning gowns traveled to Philadelphia last summer, but many of them have not been on exhibit till now. The exhibit opens to the public on Saturday, March 15.

We've got a lot of great programming ahead, and we're starting to prep for the upcoming 250th Anniversary celebrations that we'll be having to commemorate the American Revolution in conjunction with so many of our friends in neighboring communities.

Starting us off, John O'Donnell shares the first installment of a two part essay on a roundtable discussion on the Revolutionary War. Expect a lot more Rev War content in the coming weeks and months--we'll be sharing and collecting it all at Danbury250.org.



The Montrésor Map of the route of Governor Tryon's expedition to Danbury, 1777.

American Revolution 250: Part 1

by John O'Donnell

If I were describing a war that included a vast theater of operations, amphibious landings, the crucial role of navies in operations, heavy use of artillery, terror tactics, pow camps, a successful military leader who became president, submarines and elaborate spy networks, I think it would be reasonable to think I was talking about World War Two. But the

Revolutionary War included all of these components. It had a huge theater of operations which included all of the colonies, amphibious landings by the Royal Navy in New York City and elsewhere, the crucial role that the French Navy played in the final phase of the war, the importance of artillery especially again at the siege of Yorktown, terror tactics and prison ships as jails for American captives which were lethal, the successful military leader who became our first president, a submarine invented by a Connecticut man, David Bushnell, which attacked the Royal Navy, and elaborate spy networks employed by both sides which included a Danbury shoemaker named Enoch Crosby on the American side. I used to consider the Revolutionary War a small war, but now I have come to realize that it is worth more research and studying if one looks at it from a different perspective.

This realization came about because of having to make room for the Revolutionary War in my historian's purview for a war which anticipated many of the subsequent wars that the United States fought. My appreciation of the complexity of the Revolutionary War came about as a result of reading some very important books which changed my estimate of the war as well seeing a program on C-Span titled "[Waging War in America 1775-1783: Operational Challenges of Five Armies during the American Revolution](#)" (a book of the same title is available as well from your favorite bookseller). This program consisted of an expert panel who made me change my mind on the Revolutionary War. The subtitle of the book is reminiscent of the book from 1982, *Six Armies in Normandy* by John Keegan which is a classic work of military history. Keegan looks at the massed armies--American, Canadian, English, French, German and Polish--at successive stages of the Normandy invasion that shows how each of the armies reflected its own nations values and traditions. The panel for "Waging War in America"... looked at five armies during the Revolutionary War--British, Loyalist, Hessian, Continental Army, and the French Army (and navy). We will briefly do the same and show how important Danbury and Connecticut were to the operations of the British and American Armies during this time frame.

The first speaker on the panel, Don Hagist, spoke about the British Army and its experiences in fighting in the colonies. He prefaced his talk by first emphasizing the importance of logistics to the British Army (and to the other four armies as well). He noted that while amateurs talk about tactics,

professionals talk about logistics. The British Army at the beginning of the conflict was a small professional force of regulars, which, to illustrate the importance of logistics, had to be transported across a gigantic ocean and then lodged and supplied in an efficient manner, while in a hostile country and be shifted around the colonies to try and gain a decisive victory and force the Americans to yield to them. They also had to figure out on the ground how to fight the colonials in very different combat environments. Their generals had to plan campaigns while trying to keep their armies together. They also had to figure out quickly how to deal with local populations. There was a sprawling area of territory to cover.

The vast areas that the British had to cover included urban centers like New York City, Boston, and Philadelphia and the Western theater with the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers which required different tactics, and the Southern theater which differed from the other places they were trying to subdue.

We will look at the career of William Tryon, a British general who was an important in several of the episodes we need to look at. Training of the British Army regiments is a very crucial factor, as well as the experience of the high command. We tend to think of the British Army as a monolithic and homogeneous force. But the reality was quite different. Where a regiment trained was a crucial factor in its performance in the American theater of war. Studies have shown that regiments trained tended to perform better in combat than regiments trained in England. In the first phase of the war the key generals who had had experience in the French and Indian War (Seven Years War) were preferred. These were men like Guy Carleton, William Howe, George Townshend, and William Tryon. In the second phase of the war these men were replaced by generals such as John Burgoyne, Henry Clinton, and Charles Cornwallis who had experience with combat in Europe. They faced a steep learning curve because they lacked the experience of fighting in the Americas.

The relatively small size of the British Army regulars facing an enormous theater of war meant that they had to seek help in their task. One of the solutions to this problem was to turn to colonists who were still loyal to King George III. This is the second army that we must reckon with. The British tended to overestimate both the size of the Loyalists as well as the strength of their fealty to their monarch. One of the key figures in this story

is the infamous General William Tryon. He had, as I noted above, lengthy experience serving in the colonies serving in the French and Indian War. Afterwards, he was governor of North Carolina from 1764 to 1771 as well as governor of New York from 1771 to 1777. Tryon faced many problems with the stubborn New Yorkers. In 1774 New Yorkers, emulating their counterparts in Boston, dumped their own consignment of tea into New York harbor. On December 29, 1773, the governor's mansion and all of its contents were destroyed in a suspicious fire.

In 1776, Governor Tryon reinstated the Militia Law in New York which required Loyalists to serve. Tryon was not in the city when it was captured, nor when another mysterious fire occurred in the city on September 20, 1776, and burned a good portion of the city. In spring and summer of 1776, Tryon engineered a plot to kidnap General Washington which failed miserably. Tryon also set up an offshore headquarters in New York harbor on a British merchant ship which was a further embarrassment for him.

The British, in addition to raising militias, raised what were called Provincials. The Provincial Establishment in effect created an army of American regulars for duty anywhere in America. Tryon was raised to the rank of Major-General of Provincials in 1777. In this capacity he was ordered to invade Connecticut and march on Danbury which was an important supply depot for the Continental Army. On April 21, 1777, the British forces did a successful amphibious landing at Westport and marched on Danbury. They were guided there by a Loyalist named Stephen Jarvis who was a resident of Danbury. When the force reached Danbury, it destroyed the supplies for the Continental Army and Tryon had his forces torch multiple buildings in the town. This man seemed to have fires follow him everywhere that he went. This was a tactic that he would repeatedly use in later raids on New Haven, Fairfield and Norwalk. His reputation was such that Henry Laurens, a key aide to George Washington, wrote in 1779 that Tryon's memory ought to be held in everlasting contempt.

This saw the departure of many Loyalists. Militia companies were reformed not as military companies but as administrative units to better organize and provide for the thousands of refugees fleeing to Nova Scotia and other Canadian locations. Among them were Stephen Jarvis who ultimately wound up in Toronto and had a very successful career as a civil servant in

Toronto. He had tried to revisit Danbury, but had to flee because of threats on his life (this information came from attending a great presentation on Loyalists by my colleague, Bethel Town Historian Patrick Tierney Wild, given at the Danbury Museum).

Besides the British Regulars and the Loyalists and Provincials, we need to look at the third army on the British side. These were the troops that King George III hired from the Holy Roman Empire. These troops are usually referred to as Hessians. They were actually not only from the province of Hessen-Kassel but also from Braunschweig-Wolfenbittel and three other provinces. Troops from these provinces had been hired by George III to fight for Britain in the French and Indian War (Seven Years War). The king wanted to do the same thing in the Revolutionary War, but he had not paid for these troops for that prior service. So, he went to Catherine the Great in Russia and asked for 20,000 troops to hire instead. But she told him she could not spare them as she needed them to cope with her own problems. So King George III had to go back to the Holy Roman Empire and pay what he already owed to secure the services of these men again since he desperately needed them in the colonies.

Colloquially these German troops are referred to as Hessians but as we saw above they actually come from multiple provinces. The term now used for these troops is *Subsidentrupen* which translates as subsidy or auxiliary troops. So they were not mercenaries but were paid by the King of England. The popular perception is that they were greedy, plundering mercenaries who lost at Trenton to General Washington as a result of being drunk at Christmas. Historians have treated them as slow and ineffective and who performed poorly at several battles. They were described as backward-looking troops who did not understand the flexibility of Revolutionary warfare. But modern historians have painted a better picture of them as actual innovators in tactics who were ahead of their time.

These troops numbered around 37,000 men which formed about one third of the entire British force. Their combat innovation was using a tactic called the Flanquer Skirmishing System. These were men who operated ahead of the main body of the regiment, which remained closed up, arm in arm. The skirmishers deployed were either volunteers or members of one platoon chosen to operate ahead of the main body in order to clear the way. This style of attacks did result in major victories for the British at the

Battle of Long Island, the Battle of White Plains and the Battle of Fort Washington. These tactics also presage that would be employed in Napoleonic warfare. It is interesting to note while the troops from Braunschweig-Wolfenbuttel were campaigning in Pennsylvania many deserted because they had relatives living in the area. Also, at the end of hostilities in 1783 many of these troops elected to stay in America and Canada and begin new lives. *To be Continued...*

Editor's note: We'll be adding John's Revolutionary War-related essays to the Danbury250.org page!

John O'Donnell first became a history devotee while in elementary school. He was raised in Brooklyn and frequently went to Prospect Park which has a Revolutionary War monument. He was hooked!



Topiary

by Patrick Wells

The hardest part of doing is starting. At least that's true for me. I haven't seriously written an essay of any length in almost ten years which may not be a great deal of time in the grand scheme of things but for me it is long enough to feel some nerves and shame about it. So please forgive any rustiness, rambling stories, or excessive use of the oxford comma.

Although personally I love the way authors of old genealogical manuscripts wander about their family history and segue through only vaguely relevant pseudo-mythological references about their own herculean efforts at deciphering dusty ledgers and worn gravestone markers serving only to act as a preface to the preface to their several hundred page tome, I on the other hand will keep my introduction brief. Like Ariadne to your Theseus I will guide you through the labyrinthian web of the genealogies that comprise the founding families of Danbury and... oh no they've rubbed off on me.

Hello dear reader. I'm Patrick Wells, I'm the researcher at the Danbury Museum. Recently over the past two months or so I've been embarked on a quest to combine as many Danbury family trees as I can to make one colossal Yggdrasil. And so far, I like to think I've been pretty successful. I started with the classics; the iconic names you think of when you think of Danbury of yore. But don't worry if I don't mention your surname, that just means I haven't done it yet. I fully intend, despite how crazy it sounds, to cram as many names as I can onto my megafloa.

Humor is my coping mechanism for the encroaching insanity.

I can't tell you the full scope of the project yet because I want to devote another article to that later this year (tune in again in April) but currently there's two thousand people all connected via the tree which is a lot to me because I'm an only child.

The subject(s) of today's essay however is a tale of interconnectedness within this already intricately interwoven structure. What do Charles Ives, Captain John Rider, and John H. Fanton have in common? No, this isn't the set up to a joke. Besides being individually related to the Danbury Museum, they are actually all related to each other.

Danbury's own famed composer, Charles E. Ives was born in 1874 to George E. Ives and Mary Parmalee. George E. Ives was born to George W. Ives and Sarah Hotchkiss Wilcox. Fun fact, Sarah Wilcox and Mary Parmalee are related, both being descended from two Parmalee brothers (John and Stephen, born 1659 and 1669 respectively). George W. Ives is the son of Isaac Ives and Sarah Amelia White (the "W." in George W. Ives stands for "White"). But Isaac, for the briefest of moments, was married previously! Isaac's first wife was Jerusha Benedict, who is an absolutely

fascinating person for my project. She's a real linchpin, so if you want to argue that a former ex-wife isn't "related enough" I hear you and partially agree but it's way more fun if we all play along, I promise.

Jerusha is our gateway to the prolific Benedict family. Yes those Benedicts, who sent two sons to found Danbury and then followed up with a third a few years later. Jerusha's dad was Zadoc Benedict, the near-mythical hat maker of Danbury, who descends from that third brother, Lieutenant Daniel Benedict (b. 1651). Jerusha herself would tragically die at only 23 years old and Isaac would remarry. But it leaves one to wonder what could have been, how different our "Dasher" Ives may have been. Questions to answer in another post perhaps. We've only just begun to weave this tale, we should finish it before starting another.

Zadoc's older brother, Jerusha's uncle, Captain Noble Benedict gets us one step further along to Captain John Rider but indulge me in another brief delay. Noble Benedict (b. 1735) is quite a unique name. As is common enough with his contemporaries, I initially thought it was a name his parents gave him to aspire to a certain quality. And perhaps he was noble, but that initial thought was wrong. Instead he takes his name from the Nobles of New Milford, in fact his mother Mabel was Sarah Noble's sister, another mythical figure that every child of New Milford should know.

Getting back on track, Captain Noble Benedict's wife was Eunice Gregory (b. 1738). Another founding family name. Eunice is the great granddaughter of Danbury's founder Judah Gregory, as is her sister Beulah (b. 1745). Beulah married Caleb Starr (b. 1739). Caleb's sister Rachel married Stephen Jarvis (b. 1729). Stephen and Rachel's daughter is Mary Jarvis (b. 1760) who marries Captain John Rider (also b. 1760) of the Museum's Rider House fame.

But the fun doesn't stop there. To connect Charles Ives to John Fanton we have to back up to Jerusha Benedict. From Jerusha we have to take a large leap to her second cousin Achsah through the following: From Jerusha to her dad Zadoc; from Zadoc to his dad Matthew; from Matthew to his son Nathan; from Nathan to his son Timothy; and finally from Timothy to Achsah. If that all sounds rather reminiscent of the biblical genealogies, don't worry it does for me too. Achsah Benedict (b. 1793) marries Ira Gregory (b. 1784); the Benedicts and the Gregorys married into each other very frequently. Ira Gregory is also descended from our Judah

Gregory, mentioned previously.

From Ira, we get to his brother George Washington Gregory, the most patriotic of names. And with George, we have another fun little detour. I, of course, can't say I know any of these people. But I know family drama when I see it and George Washington Gregory is a funny guy.

George is twice related to Bradley B. Fanton as a brother in law. George's wife Cynthia is Bradley's little sister AND George's little sister Lucy is Bradley's wife. So one could only guess what happened to cause George to misspell his double brother in law's name when he named his son Bradley Fenton Gregory. What's a little tweak of the nose between two very interrelated families?

Anyway, back to business. Cynthia was born to Sherwood Fanton (b. 1775). Sherwood had a brother, Hull Fanton (b. 1772), who had a son John Collier Fanton (b. 1810) who had a son John Hull Fanton (b. 1837). This John Hull Fanton is the Fanton of the Scott-Fanton Museum which is in a way the Danbury Museum's parent. John H. Fanton married Laura B. Scott who is the Scott of the same Scott-Fanton Museum. Both are interesting individuals in their own right, personally I find Laura Scott's family fascinating, but I will have to leave discussion on them off for another time.

That's all for this time, I hope you find it as neat as I do. There are so many more stories to tell about the connections on our great Danbury Tree.



June Goodman



June Goodman & Marian Anderson

by Michele Lee Amundsen

As we prepare to install our upcoming Marian Anderson exhibit, we'd be remiss in not acknowledging the role of Marian's good friend, June Goodman, in getting these incredible artifacts to the Danbury Museum.

Goodman was a real force in Danbury. She was active in the Committee of 1000 in the 1960s and in the 1970s, as a member of the Danbury Concert Association, she was instrumental in persuading Leonard Bernstein and

Michael Tilson Thomas to conduct the historic Charles Ives celebration concert held at the Danbury Fairgrounds in 1974.

In 1989, Goodman established the Marian Anderson Award Fund, honoring the famous contralto who called Danbury home for nearly 50 years. The obituary for June Goodman, which ran the the December 28, 1997 News-Times said, "(she thought) Anderson was a very spiritual person who had a deep love of the United States and was a proud Black woman."

William Goodman, June's husband, owned Shepherd's Moving & Storage and when Marian Anderson died in 1993, some of her gowns and dresses were stored at Shepherd's under the Goodman's care. In the early 2000s, after both Anderson and Goodman had died, the Danbury Museum was in the process of moving Anderson's studio to our 43 Main Street campus for renovation.

Timing is everything. One day, (and Brigid tells this story so much better than I can!) Mr. Goodman called and asked if the museum was interested in the boxes of Marian's gowns and dresses for our collection. An immediate yes, Brigid went to claim all the costumes and a hat that had belonged to Marian Anderson.

When we took a selection of these gowns to Philadelphia last summer, we had a little bit of June Goodman with us in the form of an article that was part of the exhibit.

So as we announce the opening of our very special Marian Anderson exhibit, we are so pleased to honor the good works and legacy of June Goodman alongside that of another beloved Danburian, Marian Anderson.

Danbury Museum & Historical Society

Announces a Presentation by:

Arthur N. Gottlieb, LCSW, CSA



Alfred Eisenstadt

Professional photographer Alfred Eisenstadt gained prominence working for Life Magazine. Eisenstadt's photographs were featured on no less than 90 of that famous magazine's covers. Perhaps his most well-known photograph is the now controversial candid snapshot taken expressing the sense of euphoria during the WW II Victory over Japan celebration in New York's Times Square.

**Friday February 14, 2025
4:00 pm to 5:00 pm**

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The 2025 Danbury Museum Gala

Friday, February 28, 2025
6-10 pm
The Amber Room Colonnade

The Friends of the Danbury Museum are incredibly pleased to welcome **DON WILDMAN**, star of *American History Hit* podcast and host and narrator of *Mysteries at the Museum*, as our special guest presenter!

Our 2025 gala will feature a wonderful program by Don Wildman, the delicious food you know and love from the Amber Room, and of course, some fabulous raffle baskets.

Join us for this very special night of History, Mystery, & Magic to benefit the Danbury Museum.

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