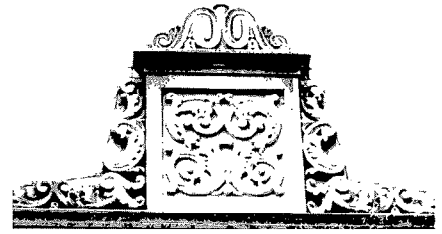


NEWS



of the History Department at Boston University

February 1998

Jill Lepore author of new book on King Philip's War

In January Professor Jill Lepore's first book, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity*, was published by Alfred A. Knopf. It has been named a selection of the History Book Club. We are pleased to reprint an excerpt from this work:

The Circle

They first cut one of his Fingers round in the Joynt, at the Trunck of his Hand, with a sharp Knife, and then brake it off, as Men used to do with a slaughtered Beast, before they uncase him; then they cut off another and another, till they had dismembered one Hand of all its Digits, the Blood sometimes spirting out in Streams a Yard from his Hand ... yet did not the Sufferer ever relent, or shew any Signs of Anguish In this Frame he continued, till his Executioners had dealt with the Toes of his Feet, as they had done with the Fingers of his Hands; all the while making him Dance round the Circle, and Sing, till he had wearied both himself and them. At last they brake the Bones of his Legs, after which he was forced to sit down, which 'tis said he silently did, till they had knocked out his Brains.

July 1676. King Philip's War is almost over. Houses have been burned, children murdered, men beheaded. Hatred has accumulated. And here, it seems, is a typical account of a typical torture—the inexorable slowness of it, the mocking. The torturers are Mohegan Indians. “Making a great Circle, they placed him in the Middle, that all their Eyes might at the same Time, be pleased with the utmost Revenge upon him.” The typical spectacle, the typical torments, we can almost see the writhing English colonist, surrounded by men he considers barbarians, suffering stoically. But our imagination, swelled by too many Saturdays spent watching Westerns, has carried us away. The man in the middle is not an Englishman. The account itself might have tipped us off: “*Tis said*” that the fingerless, toeless man sat down silently while his torturers knocked his brains out. Said by whom? The Englishman whose words we read writes in the third person; he is not that fingerless, toeless, ultimately brainless man. Nor is he a captive forced to watch a gruesome preview of the fate that awaits him, only to be rescued at the last minute. He has only heard this story, second-hand, from someone who witnessed the scene and lived to tell the tale. Who, then, is the man in the middle and where is the Englishman who watched him die?

The fingerless, toeless man is also nameless. He is called only “a young sprightly Fellow, seized by the Mohegins,” though his sprightliness will soon fade. He is no Englishman; the English despise him. He is a formidable foe. “Of all the Enemies” of the war,



THE NAME OF WAR

KING PHILIP'S WAR AND THE ORIGINS
OF AMERICAN IDENTITY

JILL LEPORE

See LEPORE, page 3



The Legacy of the Great War

Peacemaking, 1919



William R. Keylor

William Keylor examines the Paris Peace Conference

Houghton Mifflin has published Professor William Keylor's *The Legacy of the Great War: Peacemaking, 1919*, part of the series "Problems in European Civilization." The book contains a collection of primary sources dealing with the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, maps of the affected areas of the world, and essays from Prof. Keylor and other contemporary scholars engaged in re-assessing the settlement. We are pleased to reprint a section of Keylor's introduction, "The Versailles Settlement in Historical Perspective":

The peace conference that terminated the Great War counts as a unique episode in the history of international relations. Never before or since have so many prominent statesmen convened for such an extended

period of time to address such a complex set of political, economic, and security issues. The highest-ranking representatives of twenty-seven countries, accompanied by hundreds of political advisers, military aides, economic experts, translators, geographers, historians, and journalists, converged in the city of Paris two months after the armistice of November 11, 1918, to devise a peace settlement that would redraw the map of Europe and revise political and economic arrangements in much of the rest of the world.

The leaders of the four countries whose armies had defeated the Central Powers—President Woodrow Wilson of the United States, Prime

Minister David Lloyd George of Great Britain, Premier Georges Clemenceau of France, and Prime Minister Vittorio Orlando of Italy—put aside their domestic political duties and remained at the conference site for six months during the winter and spring of 1919 to codify the rules that would govern the postwar international order. The fruits of their deliberations would appear in the form of peace treaties with the five defeated powers that were signed and sealed in various suburbs of Paris: the Treaty of Versailles with Germany (June 28, 1919), the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye with Austria (September 10, 1919), the Treaty of Neuilly with Bulgaria (November 27, 1919), the Treaty of Trianon with Hungary (June 4, 1920), and the Treaty of Sèvres with Turkey (August 10, 1920).

Some of the controversies that preoccupied the participants in that conference have long since vanished from

public consciousness. The acrimonious contest between victorious France and defeated Germany for predominance on the continent has evolved into a cooperative economic and security partnership that serves as the linchpin of an emerging supranational European entity. The Anglo-French rivalry over the spoils of the defunct Ottoman Empire in the Middle East, and Japan's old assertion of its imperial prerogatives in the former German possessions in the Far East, have become nothing more than antiquarian reminders of a bygone era when colonialism still thrived in the world. The struggle between Italy and the newly created state of Yugoslavia over contested territory along the Adriatic coast faded into insignificance long ago. Geographical terms that in 1919 were laden with such potent symbolic significance that the very mention of them could provoke outbursts of emotion—the Rhineland, the Ruhr, Shantung, Fiume—elicit only indifference or unfamiliarity in our own time.

Yet many of the decisions rendered in Paris in 1919 decisively shaped the history of international relations for the remainder of the twentieth century. The revival of ethnic and religious strife in Eastern Europe and the Balkans after the collapse of communism recalled the blood feuds that raged in those regions during the peace conference of 1919. A number of episodes that seemed insignificant at the time turned out to be harbingers of future trends that would dominate the headlines of the world press for years to come: the ardent, incompatible aspirations of Zionism and Arab nationalism in the Middle East; the plaintive pleas of the Chinese delegation for the liberation of their country from foreign domination; the petition submitted to President Wilson by the young Vietnamese nationalist later known by the pseudonym Ho Chi Minh championing the cause of self-determination for his people; the respectful request from the black American advocate W. E. B. Du Bois that the concerns of the African people be addressed by the architects of the postwar world order; the futile bid by the Japanese delegation to insert the principle of racial equality into the con-

stitution of the League of Nations. These and other attempts by second- or third-rank powers and by the disenfranchised spokesmen for what later would be called the Third World to influence the handful of great powers that forged the postwar international order did not succeed. But the things that did not get done at the conference are as worthy of study as the things that did, because of the clues that they yield about the emerging forces that would reshape the world in the future. ♦



Professor **Jill Lepore** received a grant from the American Philosophical Society to fund research for her new project, "Native Tongues." The History of American Civilization Department at Harvard University has selected her as one of the nation's top ten "Young Americanists" (PhD recipients since 1995 in American history, American literature, or American Studies), and she delivered a talk at the Young Americanists Conference at Harvard in January, "Talking Leaves and Wigwam Words: The Problem of Indian Speech in Early America."

In November Professor **James Johnson** spoke at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City on "Painters, Cafés, and Concert Halls in Degas's Paris." In January he delivered a lecture-recital at Oregon State University entitled "National Dances from Chopin to Prokofiev" and gave a paper, "Style in History," at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association in Seattle.

The department has received news of **Gabor Boritt**, a professor at Gettysburg College and an alumnus of Boston University: *Why the Civil War Came* (Oxford, 1992), of which he is editor and co-author, was issued in a revised paperback in 1997 and also that year appeared in a gold-tooled leather-bound edition of Civil War classics from Easton Press. In addition, he edited *The Gettysburg Nobody Knows* (Oxford, 1997), which was a main selection of the History Book Club for Christmas 1997, and presented a seminar on his current research on Gettysburg at the American History Seminar at Cambridge University in England. ♦

LEPORE (cont. from page 1)

"this Villain did most deserve to become an Object of Justice and Severity." He is, at first, boastful, too, and brags of shooting nineteen Englishmen dead and then, "unwilling to lose a fair Shot," killing a Mohegan to make an even twenty. "With which, having made up his Number, he told them he was fully satisfied." The Mohegans, after all, are allies of the English, and he who would kill one would as easily kill the other. The man in the middle of the circle could, perhaps, be a Frenchman, enemy to both. But instead he is a "cruel Monster" who has fought to oust the settlers from New England. The picture becomes clearer. The man in the middle, it turns out, is an Indian, a Narragansett.

But if both the sufferer and his tormentors are Indians, where, in this scene, are the English? They are watching, and paying close attention. Aided by the Mohegans, the English have just captured over three hundred enemy Indians and now they must "gratify" their allies, who ask that this Narragansett man "be delivered into their Hands, that they might put him to Death" and thereby "sacrifice him to their cruel Genius of Revenge." The English quickly consent, "lest by a Denial they might disoblige their Indian Friends," and also, they admit, because they are curious for "an ocular Demonstration of the Salvage, barbarous Cruelty of these Heathen." The English, then, have made this torture possible, and now they form part of the "great Circle" of onlookers to the event.

Truly the English are in a difficult position. Being the man in the middle, however horrifying, makes more sense to them, to their sense of themselves, than forming the circle. If they are to think of themselves as different from "these Heathen" whom they condemn for their "barbarous Cruelty," how can they consent to it? How can they stand shoulder to shoulder with Indians and watch as a man is tortured to death, knowing, as they do, that watching is the chief sport of it? Although they insist that the Narragansett man is tortured simply to humor the Mohegans,

his suffering seems sublimely satisfying to the English as well. They never look away; this is the "ocular Demonstration" they've been waiting for. In many ways, theirs is a safe pleasure. Their enemy is killed, yet they do not have to kill him. They are allowed to witness torture, yet they need not inflict it. Nor are they themselves physically threatened—it is not their legs that are being broken.

Still, there is danger here. "It is a signe of a barbarous and cruell man," according to an influential English Puritan theologian, "if any one bee given to warre simply desiring it and delighting in it." Or, as Thomas Aquinas had written, "brutality or savagery applies to those who in inflicting punishment have not in view a default of the person punished, but merely the pleasure they derive from a man's torture." To the extent that the English soldiers enjoy witnessing this scene of torture they are relishing "savage" pleasures and thereby jeopardizing their identity as "civilized" men. And protecting that identity—as Christians, and, most fundamentally, as Englishmen—is why they are fighting the war in the first place. From the time of their first arrival, in the 1620s and 1630s, the settlers had worried about losing their Englishness. However much they wanted to escape England and its corruptions, they still clung to their English ways—ways of walking, talking, dressing, thinking, eating, and drinking. Being away from England meant religious freedom, but it also meant cultural isolation. Even while in Holland they had complained that it was "grievous to live from under the protection of the State of *England*," likely "to lose our language, and our name of English." If living among the Dutch in a European city threatened English identity, how much more threatening was living among the Indians in the New World. Strange languages, strange people, strange land. Building a "city on a hill" in the American wilderness provided a powerful religious rationale, but on certain days, in many ways, it must have fallen short of making perfect sense. When the corn

See LEPORE, page 4

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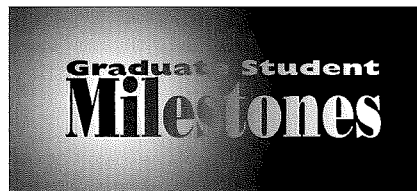
LEPORE (cont. from page 3)

didn't grow, when the weather turned wild, when the wolves howled, when the Indians laughed at God, these are the times when the colonists might have wondered, What are we doing here? Discouraged and afraid, thousands of colonists simply left—as many as one in six sailed home to England in the 1630s and 1640s, eager to return to a world they knew and understood.

But those who stayed eventually learned to grow corn, predict the weather, shoot wolves, and ignore Indian blasphemies. And then they might have wondered, Who have we become?

Middle East Search

A total of 85 applications were received for the department's position in Middle Eastern history. The search committee has requested more information from some applicants and is planning campus visits for the finalists. Check with the department office for details.



Three students received the MA degree in January:

Ruth Gallagher
Jeffrey Sanders
Trendell Thompson

In January, Scott Hovey passed the foreign language examinations in French.

Two students had research papers accepted as part of their degree requirements:

Scott Hovey, "The Appearance of Dr. Muck Might Lead to Grave Disorder": Karl Muck, the National Anthem, and Popular Patriotism During the First World War"

Benjamin Varat, "From the Ashes of Berlin to the Renewal in Rome: The Formation of a United Europe 1945-1957"

On January 23 Benjamin Varat passed his qualifying oral examination. Examiners in the major field of modern European history were Professors William Keylor, David Mayers, and Dietrich Orlow; examiner in the minor field of early modern European history was Professor John Gagliardo.

Madia Thomson's dissertation prospectus has been approved: "Desert Crossings: A Cultural History of Trans-Saharan Trade and Migration in Southern Morocco, 1600-1830." Her first reader will be Professor Diana Wylie, and the second, Professor James McCann.

Grad Student Info

Learning the Ropes

A series of workshops for graduate students

Feb. 13: Orals Preparation

Feb. 27: Research Skills

Mar. 27: The Dissertation Prospectus

Apr. 17: The Academic Job Market

Fridays at 2 p.m., 226 Bay State Road, Room 110

Sponsored by the American and New England Studies Program

Financial Aid

Departmental financial aid applications will be sent to all current graduate students early in February and will be due in March. The announcement is distributed early so that students may resolve any issues on their records (especially grades of Incomplete) before aid decisions for 1998-99 are made.