FESTIVITIES MARK THE END OF AN ERA

April 19, 2007 was a day to celebrate the completion of a project that has spanned almost three decades. The occasion was the official presentation to the Supreme Court of the final volume of the Documentary History of the Supreme Court of the United States: 1789-1800. Justice David H. Souter hosted the reception, and Leon Silverman, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, presided over the ceremony. Chief Justice Roberts and Justice Scalia attended the ceremony. During the program, Dr. Maeva Marcus spoke about the project and offered thanks to the organizations and individuals who had championed it throughout its lifetime. She recognized the many contributions made by past and present members of the staff, thanking them all for bringing their unique talents and capabilities to the finished product. Mr. Silverman expressed thanks on behalf of the Society to all involved in the successful conclusion, and Justice Souter made brief remarks referring to his service as the Court's liaison to the work.

Guests at the reception included members and officers of the Court, Trustees of the Society, current and former staff members and representatives of the three principal sponsoring and supporting organizations. The Supreme Court Historical Society has been the primary sponsor of the Documentary History Project (DHP) since its inception in 1977, when the members of the Executive Committee determined to endorse the proposal presented by Dr. Marcus. In the ensuing years, the DHP has been the Society’s preeminent research effort. Dr. Marcus has led the endeavor for the entire time. The second important sponsor has been The National Historic Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC). The Society has received grant money from NHPRC for the Documentary History throughout the course of its work. In addition to providing vital funding, specialists of the NHPRC have furnished advice and constructive assistance in managing and conducting documentary editing. During these years, NHPRC has also considered the DHP to be one of its most important projects. NHPRC has provided crucial financial support and guidance without which the Project could not have been completed. Timothy Connelly, Director for Publications of NHPRC attended the reception.

The third partner has been Columbia University Press (CUP). Throughout the publishing process, the Press has exhibited a deep commitment to the effort. The completed volumes are a reflection of not only the pains-taking labor of Dr. Marcus’s staff in preparing the manuscripts, but also of the professional care and efforts of the Press to create volumes that are attractive and accessible to scholars and students of Supreme Court history. Peter Dimock represented the Press on April 19, accompanied by his colleagues, Leslie Bialler, Clare Wellnitz, Elizabeth Nuxall, Brad Hebel and Meredith Howard.

Utilizing primary sources pertaining to the Court’s founding decade, the eight volumes attempted to reconstruct more than just a record of the way the Court handled its caseload. It has explored all aspects of the operations and development of the Court, and it provides an interesting

Continued on page 4
any "special meaning in trade or commerce, different from those read." The first witness expressed the opinion that the definitions just read they construed the tomato to have fruits and vegetables for 30 years and asked if after hearing the port of New York, in an attempt to recover duties paid under the Tariff Act of 1883, the issue was whether the tomato was to be classed as provisions, whereas the tomato was not the only vegetable which are grown in kitchen gardens, and which, whether eaten cooked or raw, are, like potatoes, carrots, parsnips, turnips, beets, cauliflower, cabbage, celery, and lettuce, usually served at dinner in, with, or after the soup, fish, or meats which constitute the principal part of the repast, and not, like fruits generally, as dessert. (Emphasis added). Apparently, timing is everything, even in the classification of foods.

In an interesting note at the end of the opinion, Justice Gray alluded to the fact that the tomato was not the only questionable vegetable to have made its way to the High Court. He referred to "...a recent attempt to class beans as seeds..." In that opinion, Justice Bradley noted that he did not see why beans should be classified as seeds "any more than walnuts should be so classified. Both are seeds in the language of botany or natural history, but not in commerce nor in common parlance." Justice Bradley later commented that "...an article of food on our tables, whether baked or boiled, or forming the basis of soup... are used as a vegetable, as when ripe as when green." Perhaps the Nic suit would have fared better if beans had not already made their appearance at the time the tomato made its way to the Supreme Court, before the high Court.

And so, thanks to Kathy, I pass on this trivia for your consumption. At the same time I can't resist adding that in 1897 one Joseph Campbell started selling a condensed tomato soup, a product that set his company on the road to success, and farther endeavor the tomato to the hearts of the American public.

The humble tomato might seem an improbable subject for a Supreme Court case but it too has had its day in the High Court.

Initially, tomatoes were thought to be poisonous, but by the time the tomato made its way to the Supreme Court, it was not considered dangerous. In a case styled as Nis v. Hedden, 149 U.S. 304 (1893), the issue was whether the tomato was a fruit or a vegetable. An action had been brought by the Nis brothers against Edward L. Hedden, collector of the port of New York, in an attempt to recover duties paid under protest. Under the Tariff Act of March 3, 1883, duty was imposed on the importation of "vegetables in their natural state, or in salt or brine, not specially enumerated or provided for in this act...." The Nis brothers argued that the tomato was a fruit, and pointed out that no duty was imposed upon "[f]ruits, green, ripe, or dried, not specially enumerated or provided for in this act...." At trial, counsel for the plaintiffs read definitions of the words "fruit" and "vegetables" from several dictionaries. They then called upon two witnesses who had been selling fruits and vegetables for 30 years and asked if after hearing the definitions just read they construed the tomato to have any "special meaning in trade or commerce, different from those read." The first witness expressed the opinion that within the trade, the term fruit was applied only to plants or parts of plants containing seeds. He further noted that the dictionary definition of vegetables specifically enumerated cabbage, cauliflower, turnips, potatoes, peas, beans, "and the like," and argued that tomatoes fell within the "and the like:" portion of the definition. The second witness concurred.

Not to be outdone, counsel for the defendants also relied on the dictionary, reading aloud the definitions of pea, eggplant, cucumber, squash and pepper. In rebuttal, counsel for the plaintiffs read the definitions of potato, parsnip, parsley, cauliflower, cabbage, carrot, and bean. No evidence was offered by either party at the trial. The lower court ruled in favor of the defendant, thus holding that the tomato was for the purposes of trade, a vegetable. This holding was affirmed unanimously. Justice Gray, wrote for the Court that, "[t]he single question in this case is whether tomatoes, considered as provisions, are to be classed as 'vegetables' or as 'fruit,' within the meaning of the Tariff Act of 1883." He too referred to dictionary definitions, but reasoned that while "[b]otanically speaking, tomatoes are the fruit of a vine, just as are cucumbers, squashes, beans, and peas," all these are vegetables which are grown in kitchen gardens, and which, whether eaten cooked or raw, are, like potatoes, carrots, parsnips, turnips, beets, cauliflower, cabbage, celery, and lettuce, usually served at dinner in, with, or after the soup, fish, or meats which constitute the principal part of the repast, and not, like fruits generally, as dessert. (Emphasis added). Apparently, timing is everything, even in the classification of foods.

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The last three staff members working with Dr. Marcus on the Documentary History were (left to right) Stephen Tuii, Robert Frankei and Natalie Wexler. They also shed light upon the Justice who served on the Court and their relationships with one another.

The creation of the volumes was itself a journey of discovery and evolution. In her first assessment of the potential scope of the project, Dr. Marcus assumed that records for the period would be scant and would result in no more than three volumes, estimating completion in a five-year period. The reason for this initial characterization is that during the War of 1812 major records of the Supreme Court were destroyed when the British burned the Capitol Building. Ultimately, after combing through newspaper accounts, far-flung collections of public and private papers, personal journals and other sources, the staff assembled over 20,000 documents pertaining to the period's twelve years of the Court's history. Unexpectedly, the research process also uncovered a sizeable amount of material relating to the Eleventh Amendment. Unwilling to abandon the fruits of that discovery, the original plan for volumes was amended to allow for a separate volume treating only the Eleventh Amendment. It was published as Volume 5 in the series.

While Dr. Marcus served as the chief editor for its duration, she was assisted in the work by a number of staff members over the years. Stephen Tull joined Dr. Marcus early on and remained to the end making him the longest serving member of the staff after Dr. Marcus. Other staff members made valuable contributions to the work during their tenure with the Project. These dedicated scholars include Elliott Ashkenazi, Sarah E. Blank, James Buchanan, William B. R. Daines, Robert Frankel, Mark G. Hirsch, Christine Jordan, Tony Joseph, Robert Karachuk, Sandra Van Burklo, Emily Van Tassel, Natalie Wexler, the late James Perry and the late James Brough, Director of the National Portrait Gallery, provided invaluable assistance as illustrations editor for the volumes.

Financial support was another important element in the completion of the Project. In addition to receiving funding from NHPRC, other important financial support was received from several private foundations over the years. These donors were the William and McMillon Foundations, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Whiting Foundation, the Ford Foundation and the Humanist Trust. The Supreme Court of the United States itself provided office space and assistance for a period during the early years of the work.

A summary of the contents of the volumes hints at the breadth of the effort. The first volume of the series was published in two parts. The first half present documents establishing the structure of the Court, and also recounts the official record of the Court's activity during the first decade. The second part of Volume 1 contains commentaries on appointments to and proceedings of the Court.

The second volume focuses on the circuit duties of the Justices between the years 1790-1794, and the workings of the Court's experimental practice of sending Justices around the country to serve as judges at sessions of the various federal circuit courts. It includes first-hand accounts of the perils and challenges of this aspect of the Court's work, and also reveals the Justices had about the "propriety—and perhaps constitutionality—of assigning the same individuals to act as superior and inferior court judges."

Volume 3 discusses the Justices' Circuit Court duties from 1795-1800. The fourth volume explores the statutory development of the federal judiciary from 1789-1800, from the First through the Sixth Congresses, outlining all the major and minor legislation relevant to the establishment of the American judicial system in the period. A review of that legislation reveals that Congress was grappling with the entire notion of a separate judiciary. Issues that became the subject of judicial review, the method of juror selection, and the assignment of duties to judges that were not strictly judicial in character.

Volume 5 considers suits against states, or those cases brought against a state by a citizen of another state or foreign nation during the 1790s. It includes a discussion of the landmark case of Chisolm v. Georgia, and six lesser-known cases of a similar nature. These cases prompted the general discussion of state sovereignty, an issue that would remain a divisive one for many years. Volume 6 covers the cases heard by the Court from 1790-1795 and treats the beginnings of federal admiralty and equity jurisprudence, habeas corpus, judicial review, foreign affairs, and the relationship of the national judiciary to the state court system. Of special interest in the volume is an appendix of documents pertaining to the question of whether the Supreme Court could issue advisory opinions at the request of the executive branch.

Volume 7 treated suits coming before the Court in the years 1796 and 1797. These included such landmark constitutional cases as Ware v. Hylton and Hylton v. United States. Advocates before the Court during the period included Alexander Hamilton and John Marshall. It was also the time in which the Court laid the foundation for its authority to exercise judicial review, and for the first time, the Supreme Court overturned the ruling of a state's highest court.

The final volume, number 8, covers the cases heard by the Court in the years 1798-1800. Cases from this period included disputes concerning land ownership, trade violations and bankruptcy laws. Theses issues provided the Court with the opportunity to lay down procedural guidelines and to exercise the power of judicial review. Other cases concerned alien and sedition issues, and issues that affected the position of the United States in the world. During these years, "the Court made clear it did not exist to serve any other branch and would not shrink from reviewing acts of Congress and state legislatures." The volumes have been characterized by reviewers as "truly outstanding . . . indispensable to those interested in the early foundations of the American republic and the American judicial system." A reviewer in the Journal of American History observed that volume 4 "is a treasure trove of new, previously unavailable material whose presentation makes the editorial project a model for all others of its kind." Dr. Marcus and her staff members have completed an outstanding series of books and the Society is proud to have played a major role in the production of these volumes that will serve as the basis of scholarly research for many generations to come.

Dr. Marcus and the Chief Justice look on during Justice Souter's remarks. Natalie Wexler is in the background.
The Supreme Court's history has a close connection to the house now designated the DACOR Bacon House.

The intertwining of the histories of the Supreme Court of the United States and landmark DACOR Bacon House began in the early 19th century. This historic link has been continuous throughout the ensuing 175 years just as a sense of early 19th century time and place has been constant at 1801 F Street, NW, where DACOR Bacon House stands in the shadow of the White House.

The Diplomatic and Consular Officers, Retired (DACOR), a private foundation, owns and operates the house under the formal name DACOR Bacon House Foundation. The house itself was built ca. 1825 by Tench Ringgold, the U.S. Marshal for the District of Columbia. In keeping with the custom of the era, Ringgold offered board and lodging to visiting government officials among whom, in 1832 and 1833, were Chief Justice John Marshall, and Associate Justice Joseph Story. Congressional Directories of the period show that Marshall and several members of his Court had boarded, and he often voiced pride in holding his weekly Saturday morning conferences in the same room of the house where Marshall's Court had deliberated in 1832 and 1833. It was at these weekly conferences that Marshall and his colleagues gathered to deliberate in the historic home. Thus, to this day, sipping Madeira. Occasionally, according to the tale, Marshall would order the wine anyway, saying, "All the better."

In 1843 the Whites returned to Louisiana where their fifth child, Edward Douglas White was born in 1845. The son for some unknown reason spelled his middle name differently from his father, adding an extra "s" at the end of Douglas. As he was not known as Edward Douglas White, Jr., the spelling may have been his attempt to differentiate himself from his father. Following a successful career in Louisiana politics, including service as a Justice on the Louisiana Supreme Court, White was elected to the United States Senate in 1890 to the United States Supreme Court. Four years into his six-year term, he was nominated by President Grover Cleveland to fill the court vacancy created by the death of Associate Justice Samuel Blatchford. White served as an Associate Justice until 1910.

At DACOR Bacon House the 60-year period from 1835 to 1895 is known as the Sprigg-Carroll era. Chief Justice Marshall, at the urging of Secretary of State Henry Clay, appointed William Thomas Carroll to be Clerk of the Supreme Court in 1827. A member of America's richest, largest and most prominent dynasty, he served as clerk until his death in 1862. Mrs. Carroll, the daughter of Samuel Sprigg, Maryland's 19th governor, continued to live in the house until her death in 1889.

Following Mrs. Carroll's death, the house was purchased by Mary Ellen (Coolbaugh) Fuller, the wife of Melville Weston Fuller, the sitting Chief Justice of the United States. In 1888 President Grover Cleveland nominated Fuller to fill the vacancy created by the death of Chief Justice Morrison R. Waite. Wealthy and socially prominent, the Fullers arranged social seasons that included entertaining President and Mrs. Cleveland, hosting an annual dinner for the Supreme Court Justices, and offering welcoming dinners for newly-seated Associate Justices, of whom there were 14 during his 22 years on the bench. Fuller was delighted to live in the house where John Marshall and several members of his Court had boarded, and he often voiced pride in holding his weekly Saturday morning conferences in the same room of the house where Marshall's Court had deliberated in 1832 and 1833. It was at these weekly conferences that Fuller may have initiated the custom, followed to this day, of having the nine Justices shake hands before beginning their deliberations.

To fill the vacancy created by Fuller's death in 1910, President Taft nominated sitting Associate Justice Edward D. White, Jr. to be Chief Justice. White had derived great pleasure in attending Fuller's weekly conferences in the same room where Marshall's Court had deliberated in 1832 and 1833. It was at these weekly conferences that White may have initiated the custom, followed to this day, of having the nine Justices shake hands before beginning their deliberations.

The Robert and Virginia Bacon era, which extended from 1910 to 1934, resulted in a primary social connection to the Supreme Court. Congresswoman Robert Low Bacon's wife, Virginia Murray Bacon, was one of Washington's "Three B's." Together with Mildred Bliss and Marie Beale, she was a patron of the arts and was much admired for her generosity and hospitality. President, Supreme Court Justices, Cabinet members, and Congressional, social and cultural leaders were often guests in the Bacon's home.

Since 1985 DACOR has endeavored both to preserve the past and to foster the present historic link between the Supreme Court and DACOR Bacon House. Attached to the front of the House is a bronze plaque attesting to Marshall's long-time residence, and the District of Columbia's Inventory of Historic Sites identifies the Federal-style mansion as the "John Marshall House." Four of the house's 24 rooms are named in honor of John Marshall, Melville Fuller, William Carroll, and Tench Ringgold, and there are exhibited in various rooms portrait engravings, silhouettes, and commemorative medals and coins honoring these distinguished early American figures.

Enjoying pride of place in DACOR's library is a 1901 photoengraving of John Marshall, made from the 1808 original by Charles B.J.E. St. Memin. As in the original portrait, Marshall, in left profile, is shown on pink paper within an oval black mat mounted in a knotty pine frame. It is one of nine copies made for President Theodore Roosevelt, who gave them as Christmas presents to the then-sitting Supreme Court Justices. One recipient was Chief Justice Melville Fuller, another was Associate Justice Edward D. White, Jr. The copy that hangs at DACOR was given to Associate Justice Horace Grey. Following his death in 1910, his copy was acquired at auction by a New England lawyer whose son, a Dacorite, almost a century later, donated it to DACOR.

For the past two decades the President of the Supreme Court Historical Society, or his designee, has been a member of DACOR Bacon House Foundation's Board of Trustees. Most recently, in 2003, Chief Justice William Rehnquist was the guest of honor and spoke at a reception that celebrated the 175-year-long link between the Supreme Court and DACOR Bacon House.

*William D. Calderhead is the Curator of DACOR Bacon House.
Editors’ Note: The following essay—originally published in the Summer 2006 issue of The American Scholar—was written by Natalie Wexler, a former associate editor of The Documentary History of the United States, 1789-1800. While working on the Documentary History project, Ms. Wexler became intrigued by the private lives of two of the early Justices, James Iredell and James Wilson, and their respective wives, both named Hannah. Earlier this year, Ms. Wexler published a novel based on the intertwined lives of these four historical figures, incorporating excerpts from actual letters to, from, and about them. The book, titled A More Obdurate Wife: Love and Misery in the Early Supreme Court, has been awarded a bronze medal in the historical fiction category of the 2007 Independent Publisher Book Awards.

In this essay, Ms. Wexler details the facts behind the novel and describes the combination of imagination and educated guesswork that went into the creation of her story.

On Sunday, June 9, 1793, James Wilson—an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States who, at 51, was generally regarded as one of the nation’s brightest and most brilliant men—attended church “at Doctor Thatcher’s meeting” in Boston. He spent riding circuit—sometimes at the rate of one or more counties a day—frequently remarking on the charm of other ladies he had seen during those 10 days in Newport, Rhode Island, the next stop on the judicial circuit. He was riding—he had asked Hannah to marry him. “Long for an Answer,” the judge wrote to Hannah, the 19-year-old auburn-haired beauty from a well-connected Boston family. By the time Wilson had left town 10 days later and arrived in court in Newport, the local gossips had a field day: they immediately began telegraphing by the “very handsome chariot and sight love—unable to contain his amorous pain, he breathed from actual letters to, from, and about them. The book, titled A More Obdurate Wife: Love and Misery in the Early Supreme Court, has been awarded a bronze medal in the historical fiction category of the 2007 Independent Publisher Book Awards.

The conclusion that Hannah had been persuaded not by Cupid but by Mammon—or by that other time-honored aphrodisiac, power—was not unreasonable: after all, what else could she have been thinking after having known Wilson for a mere 10 days? Stiff and stodgy, with a round face and glasses that were frequently slipping down his nose, the middle-aged Justice was not the kind of man likely to inspire love at first sight. And yet, three years later, when Wilson’s shaky finances began to show up, Hannah confounded those who had thought her judgment was beyond reproach. The conclusion that Hannah had been persuaded not by Cupid but by Mammon—or by that other time-honored aphrodisiac, power—was not unreasonable: after all, what else could she have been thinking after knowing Wilson for a mere 10 days? Stiff and stodgy, with a round face and glasses that were frequently slipping down his nose, the middle-aged Justice was not the kind of man likely to inspire love at first sight. And yet, three years later, when Wilson’s shaky finances began to show up, Hannah confounded those who had thought her judgment was beyond reproach.

Young John Quincy Adams (above) wrote that Wilson had been smitten “with a first sight love” for Hannah.

As an editor of documents relating to the early history of the Supreme Court, I’m not really supposed to think about matters like this. My mission—and that of my colleagues who have worked on the eight volumes of The Documentary History of the United States, 1789-1800—is to trace the origins of the institution, painstakingly re-creating its inner workings during the first 10 years of its existence and elucidating the details of cases that are mostly long forgotten. And yet, it is a love story—so much so that it is a story of human life and love in the eighteenth century, a story that tells us something about the institution itself.

It is a love story, but—as Hannah put it in an earlier letter, written just after their marriage—“what I’ve made of them. They’ve become ghostly emanations, hovering in some limbo between truth and fiction. It’s as though I’m exploring a wreck that’s three or four visits in the year, what a dreadful situation that would be for a fine lady, but to me there could be nothing more delightful.”

Compared to the polite and tepid circulations that constituted the general style of 18th century correspondence, this love story was a splash of ice water, brimming with raw emotion and frustration. Where had this cri de coeur come from, and what was the perspective from which it was written? Hannah Freedell was an intensely, perhaps pathologically shy woman, who—despite being unusually well educated for the time—was almost as helpful as a child among strangers. It was as much in her element among other strangers as she was with close friends—had she left her in order to fulfill her judicial duty of riding around the country holding circuit courts. Her parting injunction was that Hannah must pay all the social debts I owe, now that I have not you to go to. As an editor of documents relating to the early history of the Supreme Court, I’m not really supposed to think about matters like this. My mission—and that of my colleagues who have worked on the eight volumes of The Documentary History of the United States, 1789-1800—is to trace the origins of the institution, painstakingly re-creating its inner workings during the first 10 years of its existence and elucidating the details of cases that are mostly long forgotten. And yet, it is a love story—so much so that it is a story of human life and love in the eighteenth century, a story that tells us something about the institution itself.

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Hannah Iredeil was shy by nature and was very uncomfortable with the social demands required of her in Philadelphia as the wife of a Justice. After a brief time she returned home to Edenton, NC where she was more comfortable.

Boston “there were at least 6 Beauties of the small number present—and several more that were nearly such”; and told his wife that he had “refused a seat in a coach with a very penniless James Iredeil had apprenticed himself shortly after he addressed her by her first name—Hannah would certainly have to wonder if her feelings were something other than strictly platonic. As far as we know, things went fairly smoothly for the Iredeils over the next few years—although Mrs. Wilson would have had a chance to recover from that blow, a general financial crisis that was sweeping the country began to shake the foundations of Wilson’s apparent wealth.

**The Case for Love**—continued from page 9

shyness, which seems to have puzzled—and no doubt frustrated—the naturally outgoing James Iredeil. In that same letter to his father, Iredeil had written that his behavior was “very sparing” of her conversation “among all but her intimate friends, and even with them too timid to be properly communicative.” Her reticence, and Iredeil’s dissatisfaction with it, clearly persisted. Alluding to a lady he had met in Charleston in 1792, Iredeil advised his wife: “The only fault imputed to her is the very same to which you are liable, her too great fondness for retirement, and an exclusive attachment to domestic life.” As a creature of her times, who accepted the idea that her position in the marriage was subordinate, she had been educated to expect—and even employed—this pattern of behavior. Although she addressed her husband in her letters as “Mr. Iredeil,” while he addressed her by her first name—Hannah would certainly have received criticism from her husband more graciously than she would many modern women. Not only that, she would have tried her hardest to be the woman she believed her husband wanted her to be, a “fashionable” lady who chattered gaily at balls and tea parties, no matter how much it went against the grain. As a naturally shy person myself, I can well imagine the pain she must have felt, struggling—and failing—to muster the courage to transfer herself in this way.

It would be misleading to portray the Iredeils’ marriage as tempestuous and unhappy; their letters are replete with expressions of affection and concern for one another’s welfare, and they both took obvious joy in the three children they eventually had together—children born after 11 years of marriage, and the death of three previous pregnancies of only two days. But even people who love each other can be mismatched. In the Iredeils’ case, there were temperamental differences that were exacerbated by circumstances. If they had stayed in familiar, cozy Edenton—rather than moving to the national capital that had borrowed the trappings of English court society, with mandatory attendance at levees and reciprocal social calls—and if James Iredeil had not been on the road so much, perhaps things would have gone more smoothly.

Then again, perhaps not. In 1779—after six years of marriage, and long before their move away from Edenton in 1790—James Iredeil did something that caused him to write a series of letters abjectly begging Hannah for forgiveness, pledging to “atone for every thing wrong that is past,” and declaring that he was “as deep a Penitent as Man can be.” It required no wild leap of speculation to conclude that some kind of marital infidelity was involved—a transgression that Hannah eventually forgave, but presumably could never entirely forget. Add to all this the fact that James Iredeil had greatly enhanced his career prospects by marrying Hannah. Despite the sister of Samuel Johnston, a prominent North Carolina lawyer and politician of considerable wealth (little of which seems to have passed to her), to whom the ambitious and portly James had apprenticed himself after his arrival from England at the age of 17. Wouldn’t any wife in this position have suffered from some insecurity concerning her husband’s affections? And wouldn’t she have worried that her susceptible husband might be seduced by some of the “fashionable Ladies”—endowed with the conventional skills and beauty that she had so noticeably lacked—that might have encountered his travels or in the ballrooms of the nation’s capital?

Into this maelstrom of marital tension and lingering jealousy and suspicion (or rather the maelstrom that I have conjured up) stepped the young, attractive, and “fashionable” Hannah Wilson. Her portrait—painted around 1805, when she was 30 or so—depicts her in a vaguely Oriental headdress, from which peek out artfully arranged curls, and an Empire-style, high-waisted dress that shows off her bosom. Although she looks fairly somber in her portrait, she was probably a bit of a coquette as well: the few letters she wrote that have survived reveal a playful, flirtatious disposition, even though most of them were written when she was very much down on her luck. And she must have done something to bewitch James Wilson so thoroughly over the course of those days in Boston in 1793.

In fact, Mrs. Wilson (I will now resort to last names in an effort to keep this confusingly named cast of characters straight) didn’t actually step directly into the maelstrom where I have placed the Iredeils. By the time she reached Philadelphia—now the national capital—in late 1793, the Iredeils had at last decamped to return to their home in Edenton, no doubt to Mrs. Iredeil’s great relief. The two women did not cross paths until December 1794, and then only briefly, as James Iredeil traveled to a southern circuit together that fall, accepted Mr. Iredeil’s invitation to visit Edenton and may have spent Christmas and New Year’s there. But Mrs. Wilson would almost certainly have encountered Mr. Iredeil before that, in August 1794, when he traveled to Philadelphia for a sitting of the Supreme Court.

Justices Wilson and Iredeil considered themselves friends; when Iredeil was in Philadelphia to attend court he visited the Wilsons frequently—although the two men were as different as were their wives. Iredeil (despite occasional remarks in his letters to his wife that she strike us as cruel, or at least inconvenient) was a generous, empathetic person whose letters also reveal his very strong sense of humor, his curiosity about the world, and his willingness to freely express his emotions. Wilson’s letters—with the exception of the one day he wrote in 1793 to his future wife, pledging to “atone for every thing wrong that is past,” and promising a new and happy start—were almost always dour, wordy, and often stern. (“I never expect to hear in a letter from you how you or your Family are.” His friend once wrote to him, “I don’t think you have ever written a more natural letter.” Of course, people sometimes come across differently in person than they do in their letters—and, as a documentary editor, I may be biased in favor of Iredeil, because he left behind such a wealth of material. But the fact is, their contemporaries made similar assessments, and many of the contemporaries of the two men: Iredeil appears to have charmed virtually everyone he met, whereas Wilson managed to antagonize all sorts of people. We can’t know for certain how the first meeting went between Mrs. Wilson and Mr. Iredeil, but presumably—like everyone else—she was charmed. And it’s reasonable to assume that he was, too.

As far as we know, things went fairly smoothly for the Wilsons over the next few years—although Mrs. Wilson would have had a chance to recover from that blow, a general financial crisis that was sweeping the country began to shake the foundations of Wilson’s apparent wealth.

**The second half of this article will appear in the next issue of The Quarterly.**

1. M. Obadiah Wexler by Natalie Wexler can be purchased through the Society’s Gift Shop by calling or through the gift shop link on the website: supremecourthistory.org
Currency—continued from page 3

Ultimately when the questions about the constitutionality of paper money in peacetime first reached the Court in 1870, it was Chief Justice Salmon Chase who wrote the majority opinion condemning the practice initiated a decade before by Secretary Salmon Chase! As students of the Court well remember, the case was revisited a year later and Chase's initial judgment was reversed by a narrow 5-4 vote.

When the first paper certificates were issued in 1862, Secretary Chase not so modestly pictured himself on the one-dollar bill. Some wags speculated that Chase, already gearing up for a challenge to Lincoln in 1864, valued the free publicity associated with his statesmanlike visage on the most widely used bill.

Chase is also pictured on two interest-bearing bills in ten dollar and fifty dollar denominations. These bills are more like savings bonds than currency, and are very rare as collectables.

Chase's picture is also found on the $10,000 bill—the largest denomination bill ever issued by the government. It was never meant for general circulation, but in an era before electronic transfers of funds, was used in transactions between banks. They are no longer printed. A small number of these bills picturing Chase are signed by Vinson—two Chief Justices on one bill!

The final Supreme Court Justice with a paper money association is John Marshall. Beginning in 1918, a $500 bill was printed with his picture engraved on it. The total number of the Marshall bills was small, and they are now coveted by collectors.

The coversheet of a piece of piano music titled, Secretary Chase March & Quick Step, reflects public reaction to Secretary Chase's vanity in putting his image on paper currency. The small print shows it was also known as "No. 8 Greenback Quick Step."