

# Freedoms Foundation At Valley Forge A Teacher's Impressions

BY N. GORDON THOMAS

**T**he bitter winter of 1777-1778 was without doubt the lowest point for the rebel cause in the entire American Revolutionary War. In reality, however, the United States of America was born in those hills just 18 miles northwest of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Valley Forge proved to be the turning point in the birth of a nation. Washington and his troops, suffering through that dismal winter, won the sympathy of the people, and ultimately won the heart of the nation. He fully deserves the title "First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen."

Today it is only fitting that a large conference center should be established as a memorial at Valley Forge. Called Freedoms Foundation, this complex includes residence buildings, an educational center with dining facilities and conference rooms, an administrative building that houses three libraries, an interdenominational chapel, and a beautifully landscaped "Independence Garden."

Founded in 1949, Freedoms Foundation is nonprofit, nonpolitical, and nonsectarian. Its purposes are "to create and build an understanding of the Constitution and Bill of Rights, to preserve and perpetuate the principles and ideas of the United States of America, to advance the cause of human dignity, freedom and the free enterprise system; to develop responsible citizens and make Americans proud of America."

Through cooperation with institutions such as Pennsylvania State and Drexel universities, Freedoms Foundation can award both graduate and

them even though I submitted my application a bit late.

On August 20 I arrived at Valley Forge to attend the "Philadelphia/Delaware Valley" workshop on the American Revolution. Here are some excerpts from my diary about those five interesting days:

#### **Sunday, August 20**

Arrived at 2:00 and settled into my private dormitory room. A get-acquainted cocktail hour was scheduled for 4:00, which I skipped. We had an excellent dinner in the cafeteria at 6:00 and an orientation lecture at 7:00 by Rita Balbus, director and tour guide for the workshop. She explained that she teaches history in a painless fashion, dealing with personalities more than with straight historical narrative.

#### **Monday, August 21**

We traveled to Washington's Crossing State Park, where Washington crossed the Delaware River to attack the Hessian garrison at Trenton. After a tour of the Hessian barracks at Trenton, we went on in the afternoon to Princeton Battlefield. Later we toured the campus of Princeton University and Nassau Hall. In the evening, we heard an outstanding lecture by Randall Miller, professor of history at St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia, entitled "The Social and Political Meaning of American Revolutionary Warfare."

#### **Tuesday, August 22**

Today's adventure took us to the Brandywine Battlefield. Then to Ephrata Cloister, founded by Conrad Beissel in 1732. These seventh-day sabbathkeepers nursed more than 500 soldiers wounded at the Battle of Brandywine. Ephrata is in the heart of Pennsylvania Dutch country (Amish and Mennonite)—a beautiful tour on a beautiful day. In the evening an unusual event: "A Visit From a Continental Soldier" by Paul Sanborn, who dressed and acted the part of a light infantryman in the Continental Army. Very informative as well as interesting.

#### **Wednesday, August 23**

The entire morning was spent touring Valley Forge National Historical Park and its museum. It covers a large area, and was made into a national park in 1976. In the afternoon we had a guided lecture tour of Freedoms Foundation itself, located within the boundaries of the park. The evening lecture was "Rebels in Petticoats" by Rita Balbus, showing the important part played by women in the Revolution.

#### **Thursday, August 24**

We traveled to the Paoli Massacre Site, where the British, taking no prisoners, bayoneted American soldiers under General Anthony Wayne. We also visited the fully restored Peter Wentz Farm, which Washington used as his headquarters for some time. In the afternoon, on to Germantown and the Clivedon Mansion, the scene

*Continued on page 47*

undergraduate credit for various workshops and seminars. Elementary and high school teachers should be aware of the number and quality of the programs available each summer and the fact that full scholarships are provided.

In the summer of 1989 the following topics were presented: Graduate seminars on the American judiciary;

the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and responsible citizenship; free enterprise, privatization, and socialism today; workshops on the American Revolution, the Civil War, and Spanish-American Heritage (the California missions).

I decided to apply for three of these courses that fit my schedule for the summer, and was admitted to two of

could prove extremely beneficial. If done properly, it could increase the competency of the system, of individual institutions, of academic departments, and of instructors and students. Since there are a number of legitimate ways to implement such a program, assessment would probably not prove excessively complex.

The possibilities for success are high; the risks are relatively low. Therefore it would be worthwhile for Adventist colleges to implement assessment programs for their students. □

*Dr. Dale Johnson was Chairman of the Department of Education and Psychology at Walla Walla College, College Place, Washington, when he wrote this article. He is currently Superintendent of Education for the Washington Conference of SDA, Bothell, Washington.*

#### REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup> William W. Turnbull, "Are They Learning Anything in College?" *Change* (November-December 1985), p. 23.
- <sup>2</sup> K. Patricia Cross, "Making Students Successful: The Search for Solutions Continues," *Change* (November-December 1985), p. 48.
- <sup>3</sup> James Sledd, "A Basic Incompetence in Defining Basic Competencies," *English Journal* (November 1986), p. 26.
- <sup>4</sup> Charles J. McClain, "Assessment Produces Degrees With Integrity," *Educational Record* (Winter 1987), p. 49.
- <sup>5</sup> "Testing Students May Raise Legal Issues for Reformers," *Phi Delta Kappan* (February 1987), p. 481.
- <sup>6</sup> Jeri J. Goldman, "Political and Legal Issues in Minimum Competency Testing," *Educational Forum* (Winter 1984), p. 207.
- <sup>7</sup> Merle Steven McClurg, "Are Competency Testing Programs Fair? Legal?" *Phi Delta Kappan*, 59 (February 1978), p. 397.
- <sup>8</sup> Donald Marion Lewis, "Certifying Functional Literacy: Competency Process and Equal Educational Opportunity," *Journal of Law and Education* (April 1979), p. 159.
- <sup>9</sup> Goldman, p. 210.
- <sup>10</sup> McClain, p. 51.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>12</sup> Myron Blee and John Nickens, "Is Statewide Exit Testing for Community College Students a Sound Idea?" *Community, Technical, and Junior College Journal* (October-November 1985), p. 52.
- <sup>13</sup> Peter Ewell, "Assessment, What's It All About?" *Change* (November-December 1985), p. 35.
- <sup>14</sup> Frank Newman, "States Join the Debate," *Ibid.*, p. 7.

## LEGAL UPDATE

*Continued from page 35*

the nature of the work.

8. Beware of sidelining an employee, that is, removing him from his current position and placing him in a less desirable job in order to avoid termination. If the employee resigns from the unwanted position, he or she may charge the organization with "con-

structive discharge," which may open the way to a legal action alleging wrongful discharge.

9. Review your employee handbook. Ask a labor attorney to examine the handbook before it is distributed, and to review any changes that are planned. Handbooks often cover the following areas:

### Probationary Periods (or other appropriate terminology)

Definition  
Length  
Extensions

### Grievance Procedures

Steps to be followed  
Alternatives (if any)

### Employee Access to Personnel File(s)

State law  
Time frames

### Progressive Levels of Discipline

Evaluations  
Offenses meriting various levels  
Verbal warnings  
Written warnings  
Probation  
Time frames

### Termination

Procedures<sup>1</sup>  
Settlement  
Release statement

### Compensation/Benefits/Retirement

Philosophy  
Employee/employer participation

*Consistency and fairness* are the key words to remember when designing an employee-relations policy. As long as these concepts are put into action, and lines of communication are kept open, the threat of wrongful discharge litigation may be significantly reduced.<sup>5</sup>

Awareness of potential risks relative to the topics covered in this column and the two previous columns—sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and wrongful termination—is essential in order to reduce possible liability. Preventive measures as well as guidelines for handling an accusation/complaint must be in place *before* such situations arise in order to safeguard against unjust and unlawful acts.

However, in considering these issues, each person, whether employee or employer, administrator or policy maker, must keep in mind his responsibility to conduct both personal business, as well as the Lord's business, in a Christlike manner. If this policy is reflected through "every action, thought, and deed"<sup>6</sup> it will offer the greatest protection and the greatest rewards. □

*Ruth E. Parish is Director of Personnel*

*for the General Conference of SDA Risk Management Services, Silver Spring, Maryland.*

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> Since each geographic locality has specific laws governing employment, organizations should contact an attorney knowledgeable about the local statutes for advice and clarification of these issues.

<sup>2</sup> The term *employment-at-will* means that the employer has the right to terminate an employee at any time, for any reason, or for no reason. Also the employee has a right to terminate his or her employment at any time, for any reason, or for no reason.

<sup>3</sup> In the United States, Bona Fide Occupational Qualifications (BFOQ's) are permitted for sex, religion, and national origin under Title VII, Section 703(a), Civil Rights Act, 1964.

<sup>4</sup> See North American Division Working Policy, *Risk Management Services Guidelines—Wrongful Termination*, September 1987.

<sup>5</sup> Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Assn., 1913), p. 308.

## NEWS NOTES

*Continued from page 43*

of action between Washington's troops and the British who occupied it.

### Friday, August 25

This day we had a conventional historic tour of colonial Philadelphia, including Independence Hall, the Liberty Bell Pavilion, Carpenter's Hall, and Christ's Church. All in all, a quite informative and exciting week.

School administrators should be aware that Freedoms Foundation presents programs in the school system throughout the United States. Through cooperation with the American Legion, this foundation sponsors many excellent programs, seminars, and workshops.

The American Legion of California sent more than 40 teachers to the Delaware Valley Workshop. The St. Helena Post paid for my books and the \$500 tuition charge. Freedoms Foundation also has a national awards program open for applicants in both education and citizenship categories.

Topics for 1990 programs include "The American Revolution" (Boston to Philadelphia; Charlotte, North Carolina to Philadelphia; and Philadelphia/Delaware Valley); "The Civil Way" (the eastern campaigns); and "Hispanic American Heritage" (the California missions). Five one-week workshops will be held between June 24 and August 24.

For more information, write to Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge, Valley Forge, PA 19481. □

*Dr. N. Gordon Thomas is Professor of History and Chairman of the History Department at Pacific Union College, Angwin, California.*