

Building an American Democracy

By Lynne Nuibe

First Steps

They came to seek a place to live as one
And found broad forests dreaming in the sun.
Meadows sown by nature's hand,
Streams laid silver on the land,
Their journey ended and their trials begun.

They raised their cabins, sowed the fields and then
They read the tracts and sermons writ by Penn.
All have equal rights and chance,
Each one gets to join the dance,
Go live your lives as ordinary men.

And so the years passed, fruitful and serene
Until the old world looked upon the scene.
In place of English fealty
It saw faint gleams of liberty,
And vowed to douse the spark and kill the dream.

But children born and raised in freedom's light
Determined that the prize was worth the fight.
And so with heavy heart and breath,
With "Give me liberty or death,"
They stood together and declared their right.

We hold these truths to be self-evident,
That each man is endowed by providence
With rights that cannot be denied
And freedom that is thus implied.
Free us now, or let the strife commence.

And so the men and women who had come
To find a place to live in peace as one
Watched as their children went to war,
Lost their homes and farms and more,
But in the end, they knew what they had won.

This land they built is based on liberty,
Equality, responsibility.
And so we must be vigilant,
We must not shun the dissident.
Debate and conflict hone democracy.