twenty-five cents to see the "wonderful horse," and twenty-five cents more for the waxworks. (To put Davidson's expenditures into perspective, in that same month he also subscribed ten dollars for the victims of a fire in Fredericksburg, Virginia.)[17] Lawrence Levine, in *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America,* argues that the upper classes in American society, seeking to protect themselves from the hordes of immigrants arriving in the late nineteenth century, developed their own form of culture with distinct rules and systems of behavior.[18] Critics have challenged Levine's argument on a number of grounds, and its validity cannot be proven simply from the evidence provided by one period of American history. Nevertheless, the clues left from the early national period lend some support to Levine's overall thesis. This article draws on sources that document most clearly the culture of the elite: those who wrote diaries, left account books, and read newspapers. And yet the pastimes that they reveal—in the form of traveling exhibitions like that of the wonderful lady or the Sajou Brown or the talking pig—suggest that the elite of the early national period did participate in and enjoy cultural activities that in a later day would no longer appeal to the upper classes.

Icons of Union

The activities of the Thorntons, Davidson, and their compatriots also speak directly to a second theme particularly relevant to the early national period: the development of a sense of nationhood through the use of symbols that exemplified the Union. In some cases, the symbolism represented an adaptation of traditional practice. The toasts that Virginia governor Alexander Spotswood and his Knights of the Golden Horseshoe drank when they first crossed the Blue Ridge Mountains in the early 1720s—to the royal family and other symbols of the empire—became toasts to the heroes and virtues of independence when Montgomery County residents celebrated independence in April 1783. At an "elegant dinner" and ball held at the courthouse, the guests drank thirteen toasts, one for each state in the Union. They feted the United States in Congress, General Washington and the northern army, General Greene and the soldiers of the southern army, the French royal family and the alliance with France, three French officers who fought with the American forces, the French and American ministers at Paris, Governor Paca and the state of Maryland, those who gave their lives "in defense of liberty," the hope that literature, philosophy, and all the arts and sciences would meet with assistance and encouragement from the Maryland legislature, and, finally, the "truly virtuous and patriotic ladies of America, who rejected luxuries and even conveniences of life, for the salvation of their country."[19] Thus old cultural forms—such as toasts—were being adapted to new purposes.

A similar process occurred with ceremonies for the Fourth of July. The holiday was celebrated in 1795, for example, by a gathering of over one hundred

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