
NEW TITLES

History

**1676: The End of
American Independence**
by Stephen Saunders Webb
Knopf, 1984
440 pp. \$25



One gift of the master historian, it is said, is a knack for attributing "unexpected importance to uncelebrated dates." The year 1676, one of plague, Indian insurrection, and civil strife in the American colonies, was also the year in which the colonists lost their independence, according to Webb, a Syracuse University historian. Preoccupied with its own problems (including civil war in England and rebellion in Ireland), Britain had allowed the colonies virtual autonomy beginning in the late 1630s. But the reign of colonial oligarchs foundered in '76: Virginia colonists, angered by Governor William Berkeley's failure to provide adequate defenses against the Indians, took up arms against their government in what became known as Bacon's Rebellion. In New England, similar turmoil followed King Philip's War, an uprising of Algonquin and Iroquois Indians, led by Metacomb ("King Philip") as "revenge on the puritans." Fighting during this year cost more lives, in proportion to population, than any other war in American history. The English Crown, its own troubles finally over, responded with both troops and absolutist decrees to American appeals for civil order, economic reorganization, and protection. Hitherto semi-independent colonial capitals such as Boston and Jamestown ceded authority to the headquarters of England's continental empire at Fort James, New York City. Ironically, Webb observes, the English intervention created stable geographic boundaries, a prospering economy, and political assemblies, thus paving the way for revolution 100 years later.

**ZHOU ENLAI:
A Biography**
by Dick Wilson
Viking, 1984
349 pp. \$17.95

During the battered Chinese Red Army's 1934-35 Long March, Zhou Enlai made a decision that shaped subsequent Chinese history: He acknowledged his errors of leadership—both military and political—and prepared the way for Mao Zedong,