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Features

A Grand Old Obsession 16
Ben Zaricor’s flag collection is a tribute to the people’s love affair with their nation’s banner
BY ANNE CRUMP

Visions of America 21
“Faces of the South” explores the people of a region that has seen enormous change in the recent past, yet endures
BY ELIZABETH DERAMUS

Red, White and Bijou 24
When Hollywood does history, the results sometimes can be surprisingly accurate, as well as entertaining
BY JONATHAN MALCOLM LAMPLEY

Ghosts of the Revolution 29
In 1864, six aged Revolutionary War veterans were photographed for a book. Who knows how many more such photographs may exist
BY JOAN A. HUNTER

Merchants, Soldiers, Spies, Statesmen 32
Jews in Colonial and Revolutionary America faced divided loyalties
BY GADI NEVO BEN-YEHUDA

Good Deeds 36
Genealogical gems lie buried in records of our ancestors’ land deals
BY MAUREEN TAYLOR

Lives, Loves and Scandals 40
Family history comes alive thanks to the juicy details in those dusty courthouse records
BY SHARON DEBARTOLO CARMACK

Historic Trails 42
Take a stroll through our past on these historic paths
BY JANE ROY BROWN
Spirited Comments From Readers
“Eureka!” moments

The July 4 Experiment
We celebrate—and continue—the experiment of liberty begun 227 years ago

Miscellany
A traveling Declaration; American auto-cracy; the scoop on ice cream; summer dates
BY THE AMERICAN SPIRIT STAFF

Home of a Hero
Designed by Benjamin Latrobe, the Stephen Decatur house marked a turning point in American home construction
BY JEANMARIE ANDREWS

Uprooting Tradition
An unconventional garden sips water and nourishes the environment
BY STACEY EVERS

Fish Tales
Even if you are not an angler, The Founding Fish and Cod will lure you into new perspectives on our history
BY HARVEY KING
Personal Histories

I became interested in genealogy when I was 16, but didn’t do anything about it until I was 21. My mother wanted to join the NSDAR, so I began to search.

A cousin by marriage belonged and took the old DAR magazine. She said people would give me some of their genealogy and an address, or a chapter registrar would give her address with a listing of members and their ancestors.

So, with a stack of magazines, I started my search. My mother had given me my great-great grandmother’s name and her brief story. She had known Nancy Lewis Grogan before Nancy passed away. The family called her Grandma Lewis since she was proud of the Lewis name. Her ancestor had been a fifth cousin to Meriwether Lewis.

After a few weeks, I came across a woman with a David Lewis patriot in her lineage, so I wrote her. In a few weeks, I received a handwritten five-page letter (both sides of the paper) with her genealogy. She wrote, “I have the pleasure to share that you have an ancestor which is related to mine.”

She gave me the information to start my papers and further research. Needless to say, I cried and wrote a long letter of appreciation. Next year I will be a 40-member of the NSDAR.

Anne Meadows Menefee via e-mail

This is an opportunity to tell my personal story of how meaningful it was to me to have discovered a Revolutionary War ancestor, Samuel Bradford, Pvt. Pa., and become a member of the NSDAR, Bethel Fife & Drum Chapter, Pittsburgh.

I was a Depression-era child with parents of low-economic means as were others in my city neighborhood. By the time I was 20, I had no aunts, uncles or cousins. My parents’ family, small as it was, were all deceased. There were no stories passed on in our family from generation to generation. I didn’t know who I was!

After I became involved in genealogy, I discovered ancestors on my dad’s side (my mother’s ancestors came from England around 1880) who had been in Pennsylvania since 1717. One of them was a Revolutionary War soldier in Philadelphia County.

A sense of pride in my family developed in me. The patriot, Samuel Bradford, had never been identified before, and I had to prove the entire relationship from me to him. I was so proud of this accomplishment and that of identifying other ancestors along the way. Now I know who I am.

Eileen B. Livingston
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Correction

On Page 39 of your March/April issue under “Unconventional Women,” the information on Hannah Emerson Dustin was in error. Hannah is my sixth-great-grandmother (b)1657 (d)1738. She was not pregnant when captured by the Native Americans. She had Martha, her eighth child on March 9, 1697, and was captured on March 16, 1697, Martha was seized by them and dashed against a tree because she cried. Mary Neff, another of my ancestors, attended Hannah during childbirth and was also captured. Hannah was known as the Hatchet Lady, and there is a statue of her near her home.

Darlene Fassler
Honorary State Regent, Montana

Please send us your questions and comments. We encourage e-mailing them to the editor at americanspirit@dar.org. Please limit letters to 200 words.
FROM THE PRESIDENT GENERAL

America celebrates her 227th birthday on July 4th, a holiday whose meaning has had many interpretations over the years. The first Fourth of July, so to speak, may be said to have been July 8, 1776, when the Declaration of Independence was read for the first time in Philadelphia’s Independence Square. As bands played and bells rang, the people began a ritual that was significant as the pivotal moment when this loosely connected group of colonies became a new people and a new nation.

Throughout the years, celebrations have included a mixture of parades, orations or simply a special holiday enjoyed with family and friends. Yet, underneath it all is the important ritual of celebrating our success as a people and reflecting on our progress as a nation.

As on every July 4th, our nation’s flag will fly proudly above the celebrations, and it flies on the cover of this issue of American Spirit. Over the years, our nation’s banner has changed many times, and as you will read in our article “Grand Old Obsession,” each change has bookmarked a chapter in our history. As the “Stars and Stripes” symbolizes our nation, respect for the flag and its proper handling and display is a deeply felt cause for the Daughters of the American Revolution.

How will you spend July 4th? Summer is a season for vacations and time with our families, and we have several articles we think will enrich this summer for you. “On the Trail of History” highlights 10 walks through history to put on your must-see list, while “Uprooting Tradition” explores new concepts in gardening methods that may also help reduce your water bill.

Movies are another favorite summer activity. As our article “Red, White and Biju” describes, Hollywood has managed to teach some history—although often taking factual liberties to entertain us as well. If genealogy is your favorite hobby, “Good Deeds” and “Lives, Loves and Scandal” will help you sort through court records for your ancestor’s stories.

However you spend July 4th, I hope you pause for at least a moment to remember its significance. It’s the first truly American holiday and it celebrates—not a victory—but a people’s resolve to live independent and free. Independence Day represents the triumph of a nation of many peoples who believed in the worth of the individual and the right to self-government.

July 4, 1776, marked the start of an experiment unique in the history of nations. Even today, the world continues to closely watch this extraordinary concept of government. Its progress and success ultimately rest with the American people. So, it is fitting that we recall the words of George Washington's first inaugural address: “The preservation of the sacred fire of liberty, and the destiny of the republican model of government, are justly considered as deeply, perhaps finally staked, on the experiment entrusted to the hands of the American people.”

LINDA TINKER WATKINS
PRESIDENT GENERAL, NSDAR
The Declaration of Independence Road Trip is a traveling multi-media exhibition of a rare original “Dunlap Broadside” copy of our nation’s birth certificate. Two hundred Dunlap Broadside were printed on July 4, 1776, and carried by riders throughout the Colonies to inform the people of the break with England; only 25 remain. TV mogul Norman Lear acquired a newly discovered Dunlap in 2000 and created the nonprofit, nonpartisan project to exhibit the “People’s Document.” He hopes especially to motivate young people to participate in civic activism, to exercise their rights, and above all, to vote. The tour runs through November 2004. The Home Depot and AXA Financial Inc., are major sponsors, and the U.S. Postal Service is the “Official Carrier” of the DOI Road Trip. For more information, see independenceroadtrip.org.

JULY 1, 1847: The U.S. Post Office issues its first stamps.
JULY 3, 1878: “Yankee Doodle Dandy” George M. Cohan born in Providence, R.I.
JULY 6, 1957: Althea Gibson becomes the first African American to win a singles title at Wimbledon.
JULY 19, 1869: First Women’s Right’s Convention began in Seneca Falls, N.Y.
JULY 28, 1868: The 14th Amendment to the Constitution is ratified granting former slaves the rights of citizenship.
AUGUST 3, 1492: Christopher Columbus sets out on his first voyage to the New World.
AUGUST 5, 1858: Julia Archibald Holmes becomes the first woman documented as reaching the summit of Pikes Peak.
AUGUST 18, 1774: Meriwether Lewis born near Charlottesville, Va.
AUGUST 19, 1814: British troops burn Washington, D.C.

Auto-cracy

This summer marks three significant automobile centennials. In July 1903, Dr. H. Nelson Jackson completed the first documented crossing of the United States by car. He and his driver took 65 days to go from San Francisco to New York in their 20-hp 1903 Winton Touring Car.

Meanwhile, 1903 also saw the founding in Milwaukee of Harley-Davidson Motorcycle Co., and in June, Henry Ford founded the Ford Motor Co.

This November, celebrate the 100th birthday of the invention of the windshield wiper by a woman named Mary Anderson. Inspired when she saw streetcar operators stick their heads out windows to see during a rainstorm, she patented the device in 1905.

IT’S YOUR PATRIOTIC DUTY TO EAT ICE CREAM:
In 1984, President Ronald Reagan made July National Ice Cream Month and named the third Sunday of July National Ice Cream Day.

According to the International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA), vanilla is our favorite (28 percent of all purchases); chocolate trails with 8 percent. For an Early American treat, try Thomas Jefferson’s vanilla ice cream recipe at monticello.org/jefferson/dayinlife/dining/at.html. Tradition credits a woman named Nancy Johnson with inventing the hand-cranked ice cream freezer in 1846; she didn’t patent it, but the “Johnson Patent Ice-Cream Freezer” was patented by William G. Young in 1848.

So eat up before it melts!

The Scoop on Ice Cream
Decatur House
WASHINGTON, D.C., CIRCA 1800

home of a hero

By Jeanmarie Andrews
even as a youth,

Decatur showed signs of the bravery that would make him the most celebrated American naval hero of the 19th century. He defended his mother against ruffians at age 14 and routinely dived from the tips of ships’ jib booms into the water below.

Decatur joined the fledgling United States Navy in 1798 as a midshipman. His daring decision to set the American ship Philadelphia afire rather than let it fall into enemy hands during the Barbary Wars in the Mediterranean Sea earned him a captain’s commission and a sword of honor from Congress in 1804. During the War of 1812, his ship, United States, captured the British vessel HMS Macedonian, adding to his growing accolades.

Decatur was also praised for his negotiating skills. In a later Mediterranean campaign against the corsairs of Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli, he negotiated a treaty with the Algerians and exacted compensation from the Tripolitans. While celebrating the truce, he responded to a toast with words that still resonate today: “Our country! In her intercourse with foreign nations may she always be in the right; but our country, right or wrong.”

Decatur’s exploits led to his appointment to the Navy Board of Commissioners in 1816. With money awarded to him for his naval conquests during the War of 1812, he purchased land on the northwest corner of Washington Square (later renamed Lafayette Square) across from the White House, one of the most desirable addresses in the new capital.

Eager to reflect the republican ideals of the new nation in his residence, the commodore hired architect Benjamin Henry Latrobe, whose public buildings incorporated the classical styles of Greece and Rome, to design a house “fit for entertaining.” Decatur’s wife, Susan Wheeler, knew Mr. Latrobe from her hometown of Norfolk, Va., where Mr. Latrobe first lived after immigrating to the United States (she had once hired him to tune her piano).

Although born and educated in England in both architecture and engineering, Mr. Latrobe understood Americans’ expectations for dwellings that offered convenience, comfort and privacy without sacrificing architectural integrity. He has been credited with introducing the Greek Revival style in America.

For the Decatur home, he designed a nearly square, three-story brick house with a reserved Federal facade. It boasted what was considered the finest entryway in the city—a vestibule that replicated a Senate hallway in the Capitol building, with its flattened dome and sweeping circular staircase.

Mr. Latrobe called the design a “rational plan,” with spaces divided among public, private and servants’ use. The formal entry and staircase led to impressive public rooms—a formal parlor/ballroom and a dining room on the second floor where lavish parties were held. This effectively bypassed private spaces on the first floor. The servants, who moved through a separate entrance, back staircase and second-floor food service areas, were virtually invisible.

The Decatur home was to be enjoyed their new home for only 14 months. Decatur’s long history with the Navy and his bold personality had earned him both ardent friends and bitter enemies. He had served on a naval board of inquiry that court-martialed Commodore James Barron in 1808 for failing to adequately prepare his ship for battle. Later, as commissioner, Decatur refused to reinstate Mr. Barron after a five-year suspension.

The two carried on a “battle of honor” in letters for four years. It culminated with Barron’s challenging Decatur to a duel. Never one to back down, Decatur agreed to meet his nemesis on dueling grounds in
In honor of the 200th anniversary of Benjamin Henry Latrobe’s appointment by President Thomas Jefferson as the nation’s first Surveyor of Public Buildings, the Decatur House Museum is hosting “Latrobe’s Washington.” The exhibition explores the architect’s groundbreaking designs for both public buildings, such as the United States Capitol, and private residences in an effort to create an architecture that was truly American. The exhibition is on view through October 31, 2003.

For more information, contact Decatur House, 1610 H St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20006, (202) 842-0920, www.decaturhouse.org. Tours are from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday–Saturday (until 8 p.m. Thursdays); noon to 4 p.m. Sunday; closed holidays. Free admission.
Bladensburg, Md., specifying eight paces to compensate for his older rival’s failing eyesight and vowing that he would not shoot to kill. Barron was struck in the thigh, but Decatur suffered a fatal wound to the abdomen. He was returned to his home, where he died several hours later on March 22, 1820, at age 41. The entire nation mourned his death.

After her husband’s death, Susan Decatur auctioned most of the home’s furnishings, rented it out and moved to Georgetown. For the next 15 years, it was the residence of a host of foreign and American dignitaries, including Secretaries of State Henry Clay, Edward Livingston and Martin Van Buren. Mounting debts ultimately forced Mrs. Decatur to sell the house in 1839; hotel and tavern proprietor John Gadsby operated it until his death in 1844. His widow then continued to rent the house to federal officials.

Used by the government during the Civil War, the house was eventually purchased by Gen. Edward Beale of California in 1872, who redecorated it in Victorian style. The Beale family owned the house until 1956, and then bequeathed it to the National Trust for Historic Preservation. It opened as a museum in the early 1960s. The home thus acquired the distinction of being both the first and also the last private residence on Lafayette Square. It is also one of only three remaining private houses designed by Mr. Latrobe, who has become renowned as the “Father of American Architecture.”

Today the Decatur House is in the midst of a capital campaign that will finance research and restoration of the structure’s original architectural and decorative details as well as provide an endowment fund. The overall cost of the project is approximately $4 million.

Funds have already been used to construct a climate-controlled storage facility to protect collections of furnishings, art and documents. Heating and ventilation systems have been installed, with ductwork run through chimney flues to preserve the original structure. The updates also include fire alarms, sprinklers and accommodations for access by the handicapped. Servants’ quarters on the second floor, built by the Gadsbys in the 1840s, have been converted into gallery space for the mansion’s changing exhibitions.

Architectural investigation has uncovered a first-floor kitchen in a space that had previously been interpreted as a bedroom. As part of the restoration, the walls have been taken back to their original plaster, the footprint of built-in cabinetry has been exposed, the firebox has been opened up to its original dimensions, and Victorian flooring has been removed to reveal a fireproof stone floor.

After dismantling a 20th-century elevator, researchers discovered a butler’s pantry and living quarters on the first floor and small fireplaces and food serving areas on the second floor. These spaces will likely be restored and interpreted as part of the Decatures’ household.

Following completion of the architectural research and paint analysis to determine how walls were covered, additional restoration work will include rebuilding doors, windows and other architectural features that have been altered since Decatur’s time. Other restoration includes refinishing floors, painting or papering walls, and installing fiber-optic lighting to simulate early 19th-century illumination and atmosphere.

Inventories taken when Decatur died and again when his wife auctioned the household goods will guide the refurnishing project. Several family pieces that had passed to Decatur’s nieces (he had no children) have been returned to the house, including a circa 1800–10 French desk, Federal side chairs, lap desks and presentation pieces honoring both Decatur and his father.

The ultimate goal, says Executive Director Cynthia Malinick, is to re-create the original functions of each space in the Decatur House and interpret how its occupants lived in it. “We plan to ‘put the house back’ to its earliest period, both from an architectural and residential point of view.”

Left: Latrobe’s neoclassical entry hallway at Decatur House, modeled after his designs for the Senate vestibule in the United States Capitol. Top: A view of the first-floor dining room, which would have been used privately by Decatur House residents. (By Robert McClintock for Decatur House). Bottom: A photograph of Decatur House in the 1880s, showing Victorian renovations made by the Beale family (the Decatur House collection).
An upstart garden in El Cajon, Calif., aims to alter the traditions of gardening by challenging what most Americans take for granted about watering, pesticides and one of the most venerable symbols of homeowner success: the green, manicured lawn.

While public gardens can leave an amateur feeling overwhelmed and incompetent, the Water Conservation Garden’s displays on yard design, maintenance and irrigation are geared to homeowners. “The garden’s a good educational resource, not just a path with plants all over the place,” says Garden Facility Administrator Steve Maranhao. “But if somebody just wants to look at plants, it’s a great place to do that, too. There are a lot of plants to look at—about 423 different species.”

In its bountiful Edible Garden alone, visitors can find native California plants used by American Indians and early settlers, such as the elegant Torrey pine, the rarest native pine in the United States, and the glossy lemonade berry shrub, which can grow to 5 feet in height and spread 15 feet or more. Its berries were once steeped in water to make a lemon-flavored drink. Near the Edible Garden are low-growing natives such as manzanita, buckwheat and sage.

“People who have never been here think this place is nothing but a cactus garden,” says Bruce Drake, Promotion Coordinator. “But if somebody just wants to look at plants, it’s a great place to do that, too. There are a lot of plants to look at—about 423 different species.”

The Water Conservation Garden was conceived when California was suffering a severe drought and lost nearly half of its water delivery, says Vickie Driver, Water Resources Specialist with the San Diego County Water Authority. Depending on the time of year, Californians use as much as 70 percent of their water on residential and commercial landscaping. Although most states don’t experience California’s chronic water shortages, both the eastern and western United States sustained serious droughts last summer. “Xeriscape is really good landscape practice in any climate,” Ms. Driver says.

“Xeriscaping makes sense for reasons beyond drought-tolerance. For one, even locales blessed with ample precipitation rely
“The garden’s a good educational resource, not just a path with plants all over the place.”
on irrigation in the summer. This causes peak demands on water agencies, requiring expensive boosts to capacity.

Also, water from non-xeriscaped gardens flows into streams, ground water basins, lakes and oceans. "Run-off from landscapes is contaminated with fertilizer, pesticide and herbicide. If your water comes from local rivers and ground water, this places an extra expense on the water supplier to treat the water additionally to ensure safety," Ms. Driver says. "Prevention is cheaper than cleaning up afterward."

Xeriscapes provide a natural habitat for birds, butterflies and other wildlife, which then eat pests that prey on flowers, fruits and vegetables. This preserves species and lessens or eliminates the need for pesticides and herbicides. Additionally, cities are running out of landfill space, because as much as 40 percent of the tonnage consists of "green waste" like lawn clippings and plant prunings. Finally, state landscape agencies estimate that attractive, low-maintenance landscapes increase a house’s value by as much as 15 percent.

Proof that a xeriscape can be vibrant is seen at the garden’s Retro House, where the view out one window is "a typical tract home back yard in San Diego with grass and hedges," says Mr. Drake. Another window reveals the same yard xeriscaped. "It’s more attractive and uses one-third the water of the other."

One of the garden’s most popular features is the turf selection display. On any given day, you’ll find visitors who have kicked off their shoes to walk through seven types of turf. Each 180-square-foot section of grass includes a meter registering monthly water use. In the winter, all the meters say “zero,” but in the summer, the thirstiest turf, Kentucky bluegrass, reads about 600 gallons, compared to the camel-like buffalo grass, which might have taken in 200 gallons.

Mr. Maranhao encourages homeowners to reconsider “a big green carpet” in favor of ground covers, low-water use plants, mulches and hardscapes such as tile on yard areas not used for recreation or pets. "The biggest thing is getting the message to the homeowner that if you plant all this grass, it’s going to cost you money to grow it, mow it, fertilize it and you’ll spend every weekend of the year on a mower taking care of your grass. When are you going to be able to kick back and relax?"

Last year, about 18,000 people visited the garden, up 60 percent from the year before. As with almost any garden, the best time to visit is during the peak blooming months of March through May, but San Diego’s temperate climate makes an autumn visit equally rewarding. In late September or early October, the garden will host its second-annual Fall Harvest Festival, an end-of-summer celebration with music and games.

From April to October, the garden hosts free evening concerts on the fourth Friday of each month. The music ranges from folk to jazz to classical. Each spring, the garden and Cuyamaca College jointly host a Garden Festival the third Saturday in May. In addition to a plant, book and garden art sale, there are talks by garden writers and horticulture experts, a barbecue, a farmer’s market, a classic car show and music.

The Water Conservation Garden is on the campus of Cuyamaca College at 12122 Cuyamaca College Dr. W., in El Cajon. Admission and parking are free. Open Tuesday through Sunday.
Other garden getaways

The famous San Diego Zoo also features a lush botanical garden with 6,500 plant species, including 200 types of palm, 100 kinds of aloe, one of only 153 North African cypress trees left in the world and 700 orchid species. About half the orchids are in the orchid greenhouse, open the third Friday of each month. The 100-acre zoo opens at 9 a.m. every day; closing time varies by the season. Admission is $19.50 for adults and $11.75 for children ages 3 to 11. The zoo is at 2920 Zoo Dr. in Balboa Park. (619) 234–3153 or sandiegozoo.org

The Japanese Friendship Garden at 2125 Park Blvd., boasts 200 cherry trees, Chinese fringe trees, a koi pond rimmed with iris and a waterfall, and a tea pavilion. Open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday, admission is $3 per person, $2.50 for seniors and $2 for military members with I.D. Children under 6 are free. (619) 232–2721 or niwa.org.

The Mission Basilica San Diego de Alcala, 10818 San Diego Mission Rd., is California’s oldest church. Junipero Serra founded it in 1769, and it’s still an active Catholic parish with a courtyard garden. Docent tours are by reservation only, but the visitors center is open 9 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. daily. (619) 281–8449 or visit missionssandiego.com.

After visiting the Water Conservation Garden, take the path from the Edible Garden to the Heritage of the Americas Museum. The museum features prehistoric and historic art, artifacts and a natural history of the Americas. Its botanical gardens include exotic South Seas island palms, including plumeria and bird-of-paradise flower, and endangered desert plants.

Twenty miles north of San Diego is Quail Botanical Gardens, dedicated to saving rare and endangered plants from around the world. It has the largest collection of bamboo in the United States. Open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day but Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s at 230 Quail Gardens Dr. in Encinitas, Calif. Admission is free the first Tuesday of every month, but regularly $5 for adults, $4 for seniors and $2 for children ages 5–12. (760) 436–3036 or qbgardens.com.

Where to stay:

No article about San Diego can end without mentioning the legendary Hotel Del Coronado, a sprawling red-and-white Victorian-style resort on the Coronado peninsula across the San Diego Bay from downtown. Opened in 1888, this National Historic Landmark is where Edward, Prince of Wales, met Mrs. Simpson, and where Marilyn Monroe, Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon filmed Some Like It Hot. Besides rooms in the main building, guests can rent oceanfront cabanas or a private villa. Activities include boat tours, massages in the recently renovated spa, bike rentals, surfing, sailing, volleyball and swimming. Rooms start around $180 a night. 1500 Orange Ave., Coronado, (800) HOTELDEL, or (619) 435–6611 or hoteldel.com.

Visitors looking for a historic setting should unpack in Old Town San Diego, site of the first non-military Spanish settlement in California. Best Western Hacienda Old Town, secluded in a hillside, offers 170 Spanish-style room and suites, lush grounds and courtyards, a heated pool and fitness center. Stroll the shady, open plaza laid out in the 1820s and see its many restaurants and shops. Rates run $94 and up. 4041 Harney St., (800) 888–1991 or (619) 298–4771, and bestwestern.com.

Where to eat:

At Anthony’s Fish Grotto, they serve excellent seafood in a casual environment. There are several locations, but the most scenic is 1360 N. Harbor Dr, overlooking San Diego Bay. Signature dishes at the family-owned eatery, started in 1946, include fish tacos, mesquite broiled swordfish and a salad with shrimp, crab and lobster. The family also owns the much more upscale Anthony’s Star of the Sea, next door to the Grotto on Harbor Drive. (619) 232–5103 or gofisanthonys.com.

Café Seville, at 55 Fourth Ave., wins raves for its sangria and variety of tasty tapas. If you’re feeling festive, go for the flamenco dinner show; if you’re feeling adventurous, try the salsa lessons. The café is in the historic Gaslamp Quarter, where about 60 restaurants crowd 16 blocks. Visit gaslamp.org. to reach Café Seville, call (619) 233–5979.

Casa De Bandini, 2754 Calhoun St., serves giant, frothy margaritas and Mexican favorites on its spacious patio and in three dining rooms. Enjoy mariachi music at the restaurant, deemed one of the most beautiful, festive places to eat in Old Town. The tequila lime shrimp and fajitas are great. (619) 297–8211.

Phil’s BBQ in the Mission Hills neighborhood is so delicious that during peak dining times the locals wait two hours for ribs and onion rings. Phil’s isn’t so much a restaurant as a take-out joint with a small indoor eating area, a few outdoor tables and generous portions. 4030 Goldfinch St., (619) 688–0559.
Mr. Zaricor isn’t a docent, though few would dispute his qualifications. He’s the owner of a collection of American flags that makes vexillologists’ hearts flutter. (Vexillologists are people who study flags.) His collection includes between 400 and 500 American flags in its 1,500-strong inventory of banners and related historical objects.

Ninety-one were on view this past winter in “The American Flag: Two Centuries of Concord and Conflict,” at the Presidio, the former military base turned national park overlooking San Francisco Bay. The exhibit was the brainchild of Mr. Zaricor and renowned vexillologists Howard Madaus, Chief Curator at the National Civil War Museum in Harrisburg, Pa., and Whitney Smith, Director of the Flag Research Center in Winchester, Mass.

Mr. Zaricor is not a professional vexillologist himself. He’s the President and CEO of Good Earth Corp., purveyor of nationally distributed Good Earth Teas. But he is a hobbyist flag fanatic who’s been collecting for three decades. That makes him something of an expert.

The success of his tea empire has enabled him to amass an impressive array of historical flags. And that has put him in the company of experts like Mr. Madaus and Mr. Smith, who have shared their knowledge and fueled his fire for collecting—and for sharing these treasures with the public.

The Presidio exhibition marked the first showing of such a large number of original flags (most displays feature replicas, he says). That’s partly because flags haven’t been widely recognized as collectibles, partly because they tend to be used until they are no longer serviceable.

38-Star U.S. “Parade” Flag
Date: About 1876–77. Medium: Printed on cotton. Comment: In May 1876, the United States began the official six-month centennial celebration of the Declaration of Independence. The Civil War was now a decade in the past, and the nation was in a celebratory mood. Flag makers began the celebration by anticipating Colorado’s admission as the 38th state and manufactured 38 stars well in advance of the official admission of the “Centennial State” on August 1, 1876, (making the 38-star flag not technically official until July 4, 1877). In printing this small, inexpensiva “parade” flag or celebratory flag, its manufacturer harked back to the double concentric ring pattern of stars that had been so popular among the Mid-Atlantic flag makers during the Civil War. But the maker arranged the stars in three rings: an inner ring of five around the center star, a middle ring of 10, and an outer ring of 20. Two stars were also added to the two fly corners of the canton to bring the total to 38.
Provenance: Acquired by the Zaricor Flag Collection (ZFC1385) in 1997 from C. Wesley Cowan of Cincinnati, Ohio.
wear out, and partly because preserving aging fabrics is extremely difficult.

But Mr. Zaricor and his colleagues hope the Presidio exhibition is just a hint of greater things to come.

**For the people, by the people**

Mr. Zaricor, a Memphis, Tenn., native who once had a close encounter with Elvis while selling Coca-Colas at a baseball game, traces his flag fascination back to his college days.

He became aware of flags’ symbolic power as student body president at Washington University in St. Louis during the politically volatile 1960s. One night, he found himself embroiled in a scuffle and was hauled off to jail when he came to the defense of a young man being beaten by police for “mutilating” the flag, which was depicted on a vest he was wearing.

Mr. Zaricor says he soon began collecting flags as a sort of political statement at a time when many people were burning flags to protest U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. He came to see the flag as belonging to the people, not the government.

As his collection grew and his flag studies accelerated, he discovered there was a long tradition of people incorporating the flag into clothing and even “customizing” its appearance.

Starting in the Colonial period, American settlers had the task of crafting a flag independent of any government oversight. Their initial design was similar to the flag that flies today, except a Union Jack—the British flag—occupied the corner spot which now features stars. (A replica is in Mr. Zaricor’s collection.)

After declaring independence from British rule, the Revolutionaries modified their flag design, replacing the Union Jack with a 13-star design, the first of which may or may not have been sewn by Betsy Ross, to whom legend gives credit. (In fact, no record of Ross making such a claim exists, only unsubstantiated claims made by her descendants many years later, according to Mr. Zaricor.)

And that was just the beginning of the American flag’s evolution. The star arrangement understandably changed as states—and stars—were added. The circular pattern became a star pattern, which later gave way to a series of rows, which were easier for seamstresses to manage.

The collection includes 15-, 16-, 17-, 19-, 20-, 21-, 27-, 28-, 43-, 44- and 48-star flags, and Mr. Zaricor notes that there are as many as 25 variations. Not all reflect a growing Union, which continued adding states until 1959. (The six U.S. territories—American Samoa, the District of Columbia, Guam, the Northern Marianas, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands—are protected under the American flag, but they have not been incorporated into the design.) Some flags also memorialize the elimination of stars as Northern abolitionists dropped those representing the Confederate states during the Civil War.

Flag-making boomed during the nation’s centennial celebration in 1876. And, true to the independent spirit of America, more people than ever tried their hand at crafting a national banner. Some fashioned elaborate pieces of clothing out of the stars and stripes. They also added personal touches, like writing on stars or stamping their names along the borders—gestures which governments often see as defacing an official symbol.

In Mr. Zaricor’s view, however, these modifications give individual flags uniqueness, a human touch, a story—something he and other collectors relish. They also cement the American flag’s status as a symbol belonging to the people.

Mr. Madaus, who curated the Presidio exhibition and has studied flags since the 1960s when vexillology first took hold as a social science, adds that the variety of allowable design elements reinforces the flag as a symbol of American freedom of expression.

“An American is one of the most beloved, widespread images in society,” according to Mr. Smith, who has nearly 40 years of flag expertise and 24 published books to his credit. “The public’s allegiance and attitudes toward it are instinctive. It’s a powerful force, and that doesn’t exist in most countries.”

He points to September 11 and the public’s response: embracing and displaying the American flag. For many it suggested patriotism, but it also was a symbol of unity in sorrow, community strength and steadfast endorsement of the values Americans hold dear, freedom chief among them.
“It’s an umbrella over all of us,” Mr. Smith says. “It’s what we turn to.”

**Looking for a home**

Ironically, while flags are fixtures in our daily lives, there’s no single institution where Americans can turn to learn the comprehensive history of their flag and to see its vast variety. Institutions like Baltimore’s Star-Spangled Banner Flag House ([www.flaghouse.org](http://www.flaghouse.org)) offer partial histories, but nothing so complete as that represented by Mr. Zaricor’s collection.

“This is one of the best, if not the best, American flag collections in the country,” says Mr. Madaus.

It’s come a long way from its hobbyist beginnings, when Mr. Zaricor casually stowed his finds in bags and footlockers. About 15 years ago, his acquisitions took a serious turn when he started buying entire collections—from museums, collectors and auctions—rather than purchasing individual flags. His collection’s credentials were formally established a few years later with the addition of two battle flags—which had been separated for 130 years—that belonged to Gen. George A. Custer. (Mr. Zaricor’s says of his personal coup of “capturing” Custer: “He’s a Yankee; I’m a Rebel.”)

Now the collection also includes such historically important pieces as a mourning flag that flew in Albany, N.Y., as Abraham Lincoln’s casket passed through the city; the flag that flew over Appomattox, Va., when Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered to Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, signaling the end of the Civil War; and the last 48-star flag to fly over the U.S. Capitol. The latter was given to Mr. Zaricor by the Flag House in thanks for his discovery of three pieces of the original Star-Spangled Banner—the flag Francis Scott Key memorialized in what became our national anthem—in the institution’s attic.

The Appomattox flag has more than just historical significance. It quickened Mr. Zaricor’s heartbeat for a few tense days when he drove away with the flag sitting on top of his car. Much to everyone’s relief, the man who found it responded to an ad reporting it missing, and the flag was back in Mr. Zaricor’s hands just days later.

Mr. Zaricor is still adding treasures to his collection. In October, he acquired 81 flags at an auction from the large and mysterious Mastai collection. For a quarter-century, the owners closely guarded their holdings, refusing to disclose or show what they had, so experts are just now analyzing the collection’s contents. Among the flags Mr. Zaricor purchased from the Mastai are eight 13-star flags, at least one of which could date as early as the Revolutionary period. There are also 11 with unique star patterns from the period 1780–1840, the largest surviving Civil War flag, and a number of Civil War flags with rare star patterns.

For flag enthusiasts, the chance to uncover a story in each flag is a big part of the appeal. Was it hand-loomed? Was the fabric imported? Where did it originate? What was it used for? Who made it and why? Many of these questions may never be answered, but some will—and the quest for answers can be as intriguing as finding them.

Just ask Kathleen Vitale, a DAR member who visited the Presidio exhibition. Mrs. Vitale’s mother was a textile preservationist who enlisted her daughter’s help in researching the origin of two Revolution-era flags found in a trunk in Oakland, Calif. Her mother kept up her investigation until her death at 92; Ms. Vitale picked up where her mother’s research left off, and is still intent on unraveling the flags’ mysteries.

The appeal of flags to history buffs, vexillologists and fiber experts may be obvious. But the American flag’s uniquely personal relevance to anyone who has stood in its shadow, or waved it as a symbol of freedom, gives it a far broader meaning.

“**If it can stand to be flown, fly it ...**

*And if you’re going to collect, put them up so people can experience them. To see them, that’s a kid’s dream.*

That’s why people like Mr. Madaus, Mr. Smith and Mr. Zaricor would like to see the creation of a permanent flag center. The country needs a place where visitors can view and learn about the flag and its role through history, where scholars can study historic pieces, and where flags newly discovered in boxes and basements across the country can be restored and preserved. (Light and humidity are flags’ chief foes.)

“The American flag is very interpretable,” says Mr. Zaricor. “The conditions at the time when it was made tell something about the people who made it,” whether it’s a Civil War-era abolitionist flag or a late-’60s nuclear disarmament flag, which substitutes a peace symbol for the stars. “The flag belongs to everybody, not just one cause or another.”

But flags— even historic ones— have practical functions, as well. “If it can stand to be flown, fly it,” Mr. Zaricor says. “And if you’re going to collect, put them up so people can experience them. To see them, that’s a kid’s dream.”

Lincoln’s casket passed through the city; the flag that flew over Appomattox, Va., when Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered to Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, signaling the end of the Civil War; and the last 48-star flag to fly over the U.S. Capitol. The latter was given to Mr. Zaricor by the Flag House in thanks for his discovery of three pieces of the original Star-Spangled Banner—the flag Francis Scott Key memorialized in what became our national anthem—in the institution’s attic.

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35-Star U.S. Flag, (associated with Gen. George H. Thomas)
Date: 1864–65. Media: Wool bunting with cotton stars; hand-sewn
Comment: This large 35-star U.S. flag is thought to have flown over the headquarters building of Maj. Gen. George H. Thomas during the 1864 siege of Nashville. Thomas was nicknamed “The Rock of Chickamauga” for his stubborn defense in that battle. On December 15 and 16 that year, Gen. Thomas’ forces soundly routed the remains of the Confederate Army of Tennessee in the hills surrounding the important railroad and supply center at Nashville, just as Gen. Grant was preparing to replace him for acting too slowly. The victory cemented Gen. Thomas’ command over the middle theater of the Union armies.

The flag bears Gen. Thomas’ name on at least one of its stars. The postwar owner of this flag claimed it had also flown at Appomattox Courthouse after Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered. However, since Gen. Thomas was still in command of the Department of the Cumberland in Nashville when the surrender took place, that claim makes it likely he signed it after the war for some reason. Other names (too faded to read clearly) are also on the stars; thus the claim of Appomattox may be valid since the star was signed by at least one former Civil War general. There is no evidence of any U.S. flag having been present at the McLean House where Lee surrendered. It seems likely, though, given the number of troops present, but no record exist other than this claim. It is possible this flag was raised at the courthouse or nearby area some hours or days after the surrender.

Provenance: Acquired by the Zaricor Flag Collection (ZFC0142) in 1996 from the Star-Spangled Banner Flag House Collection of Baltimore, Md. Donated to the Star-Spangled Banner Flag House by Civil War veteran Francis Gilbert of New Jersey.

Last 48-Star U.S. Flag To Fly Over Congress
Date: 1959. Medium: Cotton; machine-stitched
Comment: On July 3, 1959, after 47 years of unchanged service, the last of the 48-star U.S. flags was raised over the Capitol building in Washington, D.C. On the next day, the new 49-star flag became the official flag of the land. This last of the old “forty-eighthers” was presented to the Star-Spangled Banner Flag House of Baltimore, Md., by Sen. John M. Butler (R-Md.), who gave it to Maryland after it flew over the Capitol.

Provenance: Given to Ben Zaricor (ZFC0179) in 1996 from the Star-Spangled Banner Flag House Collection of Baltimore, Md., in gratitude for recovering three fragments of the original Star-Spangled Banner Flag of 1814 that had been lost for 30 years.

21-Star (“Grand Luminary”) U.S. Flag
Date: 1819–20. Medium: Cotton; hand-sewn
Comment: On December 3, 1818, Illinois was admitted into the Union as the 21st state. Hence, in accordance with the provisions of the Flag Act of 1818, on July 4, 1819, a new United States flag with 21 stars became official. The makers of this flag evidently were unable to secure wool bunting for the field and canton of the flag, so they made it entirely of cotton instead. Rather than beginning with a red stripe, they chose to commence the alternating stripes with a white stripe. (While this is hereditarily proper, it is unlikely that the makers of this flag knew or cared about the intricacies of heraldry.)

Although commencing and ending the U.S. flag with horizontal red stripes was fast becoming the tradition, nothing in the adoptive legislation specified that the red stripes took this precedence. The makers of this flag chose to arrange the stars in the form of a “grand luminary.”

This pattern, emphasizing the notion of “from many one” (the direct translation of E Pluribus Unum) had been popularized during the debate over the 1818 Flag Act by Capt. S.G. Reid, whose wife had sewn the first flag of the new design that flew over Congress. Mrs. Reid’s flag bore its 20 stars in this same “grand luminary” pattern; however, Congress chose not to incorporate the star pattern as part of its legislation. Nevertheless, the “grand luminary” design remained popular among some flag manufacturers for another 60 years.

Provenance: Acquired by the Zaricor Flag Collection (ZFC0422) in 1997 from N. Flayderman Collection.

13-Star U.S. Flag
Date: Probably mid-Federal Period (1800–05). Media: Wool bunting and cotton stars; all hand-stitched
Comment: This flag may well be the earliest U.S. flag in the Zaricor Flag Collection. The use of cotton stars suggests production after 1800; the woolen stripes have selvedge edges typical of early power looms, and the flag is hand-stitched. While it has been suggested that the flag could be even earlier than 1800, the marking “31-1/2” on the flag’s linen heading refers to a flag manufactured to a specific fly dimension—one and a half yards, i.e. 54 inches (the flag’s fly has been trimmed and resewn to a length of 48 inches). The size marking on the heading is more typical of flags manufactured as a “stock item” rather than individually handcrafted on special order. The earliest identified flag manufacturer in the United States was Rebecca Young of Philadelphia and Baltimore, who advertised in the contemporary newspapers in 1803 that she had, on hand, ready-made flags. This flag may be one of her products.

Provenance: Acquired by the Zaricor Flag Collection (ZFC0419) in 1992 from William Guthman of Westport, Conn.

43-Star U.S. Flag
Date: 1890. Medium: Cotton; machine-stitched
Comment: The 43-star flag became the official flag of the Great Plains and Rocky Mountain admissions on July 4, 1890, only a day after Idaho’s admission into the Union. Although technically the design would be legal for the next year, few were made. Only a week after Idaho’s admission, Wyoming was admitted to the Union as the 44th state. Although its star in the canton of the U.S. flag would not become official for another year, flag manufacturers and the public knew the 43-star flag would be obsolete shortly. So manufacturers quickly decided to discontinue making a flag that the public was not prepared to buy. As a result, the 43-star flag is one of the rarer commercial flags made.

Provenance: Acquired by the Zaricor Flag Collection (ZFC0596) in 2002 from the collection of Judge John T. Ball of San Jose, Calif.

“Grand Luminary’ 16-Star, 13-Stripe, U.S. Flag
Date: Mid-Federal Period (1800–10). Medium: Wool bunting with cotton stars; all hand-sewn with linen thread
Comment: Although no 16-star flag was formally adopted by the U.S. Congress, the Spirit of 1794 Flag Resolution caused numerous patrons in need of U.S. flags to order flags that included newly added states, by either adding a star or both a star and a stripe to the then-current U.S. flag. This flag conforms to that spirit. The linen thread with which the flag is sewn indicates a product predating the widespread distribution of cotton thread, and yet the stars are cut from cotton cloth, not economically available until post-1800. The 16 stars are arranged in the form of a “great star”—a design championed by Capt. S.G. Reid in 1817 as the star pattern that would best represent the national motto, E Pluribus Unum. It is possible that this is an early merchant ship’s ensign from the period 1800–05.

Provenance: Acquired by the Zaricor Flag Collection (ZFC0420) in 1997 from N. Flayderman Collection.

A FLAG GLOSSARY
Canton or union: The flag is divided into four quarters, or cantons. The blue canton in the upper left is also known as the union, because the stars symbolize the union of the states
Ensign: A flag, often specially designed and derived from a national flag, flown only on military or merchant ships.
Field/Ground: Background color of a flag or each section of a flag
Fly: The edge farthest from the staff (when a flag is flown horizontally)
Mullet: A five-pointed star

Source: www.usflag.org
Born in Opelika, Ala., in 1965 and raised in Selma, Ala., Elizabeth DeRamus became a photographer at 13 when her parents gave her a Pentax K1000 for Christmas. It changed her life. After years of shooting and entering the local fair, and actually winning a couple of ribbons, she knew she had to take photographs for a living.

DeRamus approaches her art as a courageous seeker of knowledge, truth and soul. Her openness, candor, warmth of spirit and sense of humor immediately puts subjects at ease, whether she is doing commercial or art photography.

“My desire is to show something new to those who see my images, to make a difference for a minute or a lifetime,” she says.
Sadie and Robert Tate, Hunters

Matilda Bellman (l), Childhood Nanny of Susan Greysen Emfinger, Chef

Sarah Jackson, Barber

Mary Ward Brown, Author

Selma, Ala.

Tallassee, Ala.

Birmingham, Ala.

Birmingham, Ala.
Chi Chi Cornett, Milliner of Kentucky Derby Hats

Ellen Gilchrist, Author
To paraphrase the late, great singer Sam Cooke, many Americans don’t know much about their own history. More than 200 years after the founding of the country, we spend countless millions on history classes, historical preservation and heritage-boosting holidays. But how many of our young people can name all the presidents? Survey after survey suggests that only about half of our college seniors can identify the century in which the Civil War took place, much less the exact dates of 1861–65. Even fewer can name the major Allied and Axis powers who fought World War II.

Yet, it’s not like there isn’t considerable interest in American history—bookstore shelves groan under the weight of the latest popular tomes, while major cable networks like The History Channel provide constant coverage of our nation’s past. Along those lines, there have been innumerable movies based on American history.

To its credit, Hollywood has done its part to popularize—or at least cash in on—our history. Given that the movie industry is a business, its primary purpose is to turn a profit, not lecture audiences on a subject many of them slept through in high school. In trying to entertain patrons, movies frequently sacrifice historical accuracy in favor of spectacular action sequences, inappropriate love stories and quite a bit of ham-handed political posturing.

Nevertheless, several movies inspired by actual events manage to educate and entertain at the same time. Each of the following films focuses on real people and events in the 18th and 19th centuries, so primarily fictional movies with historical settings (Gone With the Wind, The Patriot) are not included in this admittedly brief list. They are rated with one to five stars (five is the highest) according to entertainment and accuracy and also “overall”—the average of the other two scores.
**The Prisoner of Shark Island** (1937)

John Ford and his reputation as one of Hollywood’s best directors are superbly defended by The Prisoner of Shark Island. The picture tells the true story of Dr. Samuel Mudd (Warner Baxter), the Virginia doctor who unwittingly treated John Wilkes Booth after the injured actor fled from the scene of Lincoln’s murder. Convicted as a member of the Booth conspiracy, Mudd narrowly escaped the gallows, but he was sentenced to life in a harsh military prison in the Dry Tortugas. After heroically treating gravely ill prisoners and guards during a yellow fever epidemic, Mudd’s sentence was commuted, but to this day controversy surrounds his name—many people still believe he was in on the Lincoln assassination.

Ford and writer Nunnally Johnson make no bones about their take on the Mudd controversy—he’s an innocent man and a hero during the Yellow Fever epidemic, and guards during a yellow fever epidemic, Mudd’s sentence was commuted, but to this day controversy surrounds his name—many people still believe he was in on the Lincoln assassination.

**Tennessee Johnson** (1942)

This biography of Andrew Johnson (Van Heflin), the first president to face impeachment (masterminded by political rival Thaddeus Stevens, portrayed deliciously by Lionel Barrymore) is well-intentioned but extremely scatterbrained in terms of structure. Heflin is sincere as Johnson, the illiterate tailor’s apprentice whose wife (Ruth Hussey) teaches him to read and write. He helps him launch a political career that brings him to the White House upon Lincoln’s assassination. However, the hardworking cast is constantly undermined by a script that bears only coincidental agreement with the facts.

For starters, Tennessee Johnson has its North Carolina-born protagonist show up in his adopted state years later than in reality; his early political advancement is barely mentioned. The film then skips 30 years to the Civil War, when Johnson was the only Southern senator not to leave the Union with his state. This scene is quite effective, with special kudos to Morris Ankrum’s somber cameo appearance as Jefferson Davis, but the film loses virtually all credibility when it portrays Johnson—in uniform—leading Union troops in a defense of Nashville that never really happened. Things improve again when Johnson’s impeachment trial begins—it’s one of the better courtroom sequences ever committed to film. For all its faults, Tennessee Johnson succeeds in making the impeachment crisis of 1868 accessible to millions of non-historians.

**The Baron of Arizona** (1950)

**Most film fans remember** silky-voiced Vincent Price as the star of innumerable horror films, but before his long tenure as the “Merchant of Menace,” Price was a romantic lead as well as a dependable character actor. In The Baron of Arizona, Price essay rare non-horror starring role; he plays James Addison Reavis, the clever, shifty Confederate deserter whose use of forged Spanish land grants almost gained him control of the Arizona Territory.

Legendary cinema maverick Samuel Fuller provides Price with a meaty role. He allows the suave actor to seduce a trio of gullible ladies with the same line (“I have known many women, but with you—I’m afraid!”), to stare down an angry mob of pioneers whose land he very nearly swipes, and to sequester himself in a monastery for years in order to carefully copy the necessary paperwork to run his con game.

Price (a native of Missouri like Reavis) is always fun to watch, but the film plays fast and loose with the facts. It makes Reavis a much more likable fellow. Events that took place near the end of the 19th century are pushed back about 20 years. After his release from prison, the picture allows Reavis an apocryphal happy ending, reuniting him with the devoted Mexican child bride (Ellen Drew) whom the con man tried to pass off as the heir to Spanish royalty. It is still a treat when Hollywood shines a light on obscure corners of American history, though, and The Baron of Arizona is intriguing enough to warrant excusing its overly romantic excesses.

**The Far Horizons** (1955)

**Inspired by** Della Gould Emmons’ novel, Sacajawea of the Shoshones, the movie tells the story of the Lewis and Clark expedition, largely from the perspective of the explorers’ Indian guide, Sacajawea (Donna Reed). A well-bred acolyte of President Thomas Jefferson, Meriwether Lewis (Fred MacMurray) teams up with his earthier romantic rival William Clark (Charlton Heston) to explore the newly purchased Louisiana territory. Their adventures include fighting hostile Indians and navigating treacherous waters, but ultimately the explorers make their way to the Pacific Ocean.

The Far Horizons demonstrates all the strengths of typical Hollywood historical films—an interesting cast, a fine musical
score (by Hans J. Salter) and gorgeous photography (here in particularly glorious Technicolor).

Alas, the movie also demonstrates all the weaknesses of typical Hollywood costume dramas—the dialogue is overly sentimental, and the script plays very fast and loose with the facts. A romance between Sacajawea and Clark totally disregards established history, as does the call she pays on Jefferson at the White House. The film’s portrayal of Indian life is both inaccurate and uncomfortable for modern audiences. Even so, The Far Horizons is just about the only movie version of the Lewis and Clark expedition. As the bicentennial of the expedition approaches, it’s worth checking out.

For his directorial debut, John Wayne chose the oft-filmed story of the Alamo, the most famous engagement of the Texas War for Independence. Apparently “Duke” Wayne saw the heroic last stand of 180-odd Texan rebels against thousands of Mexican soldiers as a testament to those patriotic American values that he symbolized to millions of movie fans everywhere. Inspired by the epic sweep of Gone With the Wind, he spent millions on painstaking re-creations of period costumes, weapons and a full-scale replica of the Alamo in rural Brackettville, Texas. So strong was producer/director/star Wayne’s commitment to the project that he put up much of the budget out of his own funds, then spent years working off the debts it accrued.

Although considered a critical and financial flop at the time of its release, The Alamo has many admirers. Wayne stars as Davy Crockett, the semi-legendary Tennessee adventurer-cum-congressman who leads a handful of his Volunteer State neighbors to fight for the Alamo and Texan independence. The performance is quite effective—it takes a legend to play a legend, and unlike Fess Parker and other cinematic Crocketts, 52-year-old Wayne was close in age to his subject (Crockett was not quite 50 when the events of the film took place). The entire cast—which includes Richard Widmark, Laurence Harvey, Richard Boone, Frankie Avalon, Patrick Wayne, Linda Cristal, Ken Curtis, Chill Wills—is game, with many Western movie veterans rounding out the supporting cast. Dimitri Tiomkin’s score is magnificent.

On the downside, Wayne pads out the picture’s lengthy running time by adding unnecessary ahistorical action sequences, such as a cattle-rustling mission that seems to have wandered in from another Wayne horse opera altogether. He also fudges the details of Crockett’s death, having the frontier hero die while trying to detonate the Alamo’s gunpowder supply (which is actually how Robert Evans, another defender, perished). The occasional platitudes voiced by Crockett and other characters might strike some as overly sentimental, but The Alamo is reasonably faithful to the facts and compulsively watchable regardless of its shortcomings.

One of the strangest facts about American history movies is how few films there are about the seminal event in our past—the American Revolution. A handful of wholly fictional pictures come to mind—Johnny Tremain, The Patriot—but even these productions focus on fictional characters. Discounting made-for-television movies, the last significant Revolution-era picture based on a true story and characters is a musical made more than 30 years ago—Peter H. Hunt’s 1776.

Adapted by Peter Stone from his and Sherman Edwards’ Broadway hit, 1776 chronicles the interpersonal conflicts between the Founding Fathers as they struggle to decide whether to declare independence from Great Britain. The radical members of the Continental Congress, including John Adams (William Daniels) and Thomas Jefferson (Ken Howard), want to break away from England, but conservative representatives led by John Dickinson (Donald Madden) insist on trying to reconcile with the Mother Country. 1776 is remarkably faithful to the historical facts, capturing the personalities of the participants accurately (although Howard Da Silva’s performance as Benjamin Franklin is a bit over the top). One of the major plot twists is totally fictional, however; Jefferson’s frustration over trying to write the Declaration of Independence is alleviated after his wife (Blythe Danner) comes to Philadelphia to comfort him. In fact, Martha Jefferson was far too ill to travel in the summer of ’76 and would be dead scarcely six years after the Declaration was publicly announced.

For the most part, 1776 works as a history lesson and as entertainment—assuming one enjoys musicals in the first place. In spite of its Broadway success, 1776 failed to connect with audiences as a movie; perhaps this box office failure explains why so few Revolution-era films have followed in its wake.

Walker is a cult movie in search of an audience. It is based on the exploits of William Walker (1824–60), the Tennessee-born doctor/lawyer/journalist who followed failure in three
 careers by invading Nicaragua with his own private army and installing himself briefly as that nation’s president.

Walker is a conventional historical drama suffused with somewhat heavy-handed political satire. Perennial Oscar nominee Ed Harris stars as Walker, the “Gray-Eyed Man of Destiny,” who nearly carved his own personal empire out of Latin America. His performance perfectly captures the odd balance of puritanical zealotry and democratic idealism that inspired financiers like Cornelius Vanderbilt (Peter Boyle) to discreetly underwrite the perennially impoverished soldier of fortune’s filibustering schemes. A great score by rock legend Joe Strummer ingeniously mixes elements of Latin, jazz and country styles. Director Alex Cox mounts several impressive sequences, notably the sacking of the Nicaraguan city of Granada, executed in grim slow-motion.

In spite of its many fine technical achievements, Walker failed miserably at the box office, and critical evaluations have been similarly unkind (Leonard Maltin rates the film as a “Bomb” in his incomparable Movie & Video Guide). Cox and screenwriter Rudy Wurlitzer underscore valid similarities between unfertered 19th-century imperialism and the unfortunate Iran-Contra scandal of the Reagan era, but they make fun of U.S. foreign policy by filling their film with intentionally anachronistic elements.

The film starts off as a basically straightforward chronicle of William Walker’s exploits, but suddenly Walker shows up on the covers of Time and Newsweek, and his men smoke Marlboros and swig Coca-Cola; the film’s climax involves the unlikely appearance of an Apache helicopter. One’s enjoyment of the picture depends entirely on one’s ability to embrace the picture as a thought-provoking but silly comedy—if you can deal with the computer on Vanderbilt’s desk, Walker may be the political satire for you.

Glory is a problematic Civil War movie, to say the least. On the one hand, it is a marvelous entertainment, written and directed with skill, and from a technical aspect it is magnificent (the film won Oscars for Denzel Washington’s supporting performance as a slave turned soldier and Freddie Francis’ incomparable cinematography). On the other hand, the film maddeningly insists on fictionalizing history, sometimes when the facts themselves are more interesting. Glory tells the story of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment, a Union army unit composed entirely of black soldiers and white officers whose brave assault on Confederate Fort Wagner proved to the world that African Americans could and would fight and die for their freedom.

Broadly speaking, Glory is accurate, but alas, director Edward Zwick and screenwriter Kevin Jarre insist on populating their inspiring true story with fictional constructs. Of the major characters, only the Union commander, Robert Gould Shaw (Matthew Broderick), actually existed. None of the black soldiers, including the noble sergeant-major (Morgan Freeman), ever lived. The actual sergeant-major was a son of Frederick Douglass (who does pop up briefly, played by Raymond St. Jacques in a powerful cameo appearance). The film also suggests the 54th Massachusetts was the first regiment composed of African Americans. In fact, black troops were already fighting Rebels before the unit formed, albeit in the less prominent Western Theater. Despite these troubling variances from the record, Glory has done much to illuminate a neglected area of history and thus deserves considerable respect for encouraging mainstream Americans to learn more about the Civil War.

The most famous battle of the Civil War is the subject of the best film ever made about U.S. history. Based on Michael Shaara’s novel, The Killer Angels, the film spends ample time establishing the background of the war, then meticulously reconstructs the terrible battle in which 55,000 men were killed, wounded or captured. The film’s technical achievements are astounding. The filmmakers were allowed to film on the actual battleground, and more than 5,000 Civil War re-enactors filled the ranks.

But what really makes Gettysburg work is the human interest that was carefully maintained even in the midst of spectacular battle sequences. Jeff Daniels gives the performance of his career as Union Col. Joshua L. Chamberlain, the gaunt professor-cum-officer whose 20th Maine Regiment’s staunch defense of Little Round Top saves the day for the Yankees. Martin Sheen and Tom Berenger are fine as Confederate generals Lee and Longstreet, but Richard Jordan most memorably portrays a Rebel; his heartfelt performance as
doomed Gen. Armistead would be his last, as the actor died shortly after shooting wrapped. There are minor historical gaffes—for example, the otherwise game Patrick Gorman is decades older than Rebel Gen. John Bell Hood, whom he plays in both Gettysburg and Gods and Generals. But because Gettysburg otherwise does so well in satisfying the demands of both history and drama, these mistakes are easily forgiven.

The long-awaited follow-up to Jeff Maxwell’s masterful 1993 epic Gettysburg didn’t sit well with either critics or audiences this spring. As of this writing, the picture has been castigated by most reviewers and has earned less than a fifth of its production costs (reported at $90 million). Based on the novel by Jeff Shaara (son of Michael Shaara, who died after writing The Killer Angels), Gods and Generals is a prequel to Gettysburg, tracing the first two years of the Civil War in Virginia. Maxwell divides his attention between Union Col. Joshua Chamberlain (Daniels, reprising his Gettysburg role) and Confederate Gen. “Stonewall” Jackson (Stephen Lang), with sidelong glances at the war’s effect on Chamberlain’s wife (Mira Sorvino) and Jackson’s black servant (Frankie Faison) to punctuate the bloody battlefield sequences.

Gods and Generals suffers dramatically by trying to be everything to everybody. Maxwell’s attempt to portray both the home front and the battlefield is ill advised. The domestic drama is overly sentimental, and the addition of these scenes necessitates the omission of too many key points of military history (the battles of Second Bull Run and Antietam are not even mentioned, for example). In many ways the picture is a confusing, overstuffed mess, virtually incomprehensible to non-history buffs. Despite its structural flaws, Gods and Generals is remarkably faithful to the history that it does cover, thanks largely to the contributions of thousands of re-enactors and the terrific cast, particularly Lang’s electrifying turn as Jackson (the film would be much better had it simply been recut and retitled The Stonewall Jackson Story). Even more refreshing is the lack of overt political correctness—the Southern perspective is treated fairly (not applauded as some critics claimed), and the religious faith of Jackson and others is portrayed without the sniggering disrespect that infects many other contemporary depictions of Christianity. Gods and Generals deserves the respectful attention of everyone interested in the Civil War and the American experience in general.

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many Americans are recalling our other military conflicts. Today's war comes with 24-hour news coverage. Television, radio, the Web and newspapers bring us the sights, sounds and stories of war. We know the names and faces of the men and women serving our country.

This was not always the case. The Patriots of the American Revolution went into battle long before the advent of photography. Aside from portraits of the relatively affluent, most of their faces were unknowable to future generations. Most, but not all. In 1864, the Rev. Elias Brewster Hillard, a Congregational minister from Connecticut, set out to immortalize the lives of the handful of surviving Patriots in his book, *The Last Men of the Revolution* (1864, reprinted by Barre Publishers, 1968).

Mr. Hillard graduated from Yale College in 1848 and finished Andover Theological Seminary in 1853. He was the son of Moses Hillard, a sea captain of Preston, Conn., who, according to Elias Hillard's grandson, gave
Elias his wandering spirit and strength of convictions. Always the intrepid traveler, Mr. Hillard journeyed to Maryland, Maine and rural New York to visit these centenarians.

Amazing as it might seem, as of 1862—some 79 years after the eight-year war ended—there were still 12 men collecting pensions for their Revolutionary War service. With the majority of them more than a century old, it was imperative that Mr. Hillard undertake his project with haste.

By 1864, when Mr. Hillard began his project, half of the pensioners had died. Still, he was able to record the remembrances of the remaining six in person—Lemuel Cook, Samuel Downing, William Hutchins, Adam Link, Alexander Milliner and the Rev. Daniel Waldo, who was so frail he died a month after Mr. Hillard interviewed him. The seventh biography in the volume, James Barham, was drawn from his pension application and was included because Mr. Hillard was not able to determine whether he was living or dead. It wasn’t until 1966 that the Missouri Daughters of the American Revolution were able to verify his death date as 1857.

Mr. Hillard interviewed each of the six veterans he could locate, recorded their oral histories, photographed them and commissioned engravings of their dwellings to accompany the text. By 1864, photography was 25 years old but was still a novelty. Perhaps the publishers of The Last Men of the Revolution sought to capitalize on the burgeoning public interest in photography by printing this book. Regardless of their motivation for its publication, this volume was part of a growing number of books that combined photography with information.

Mr. Hillard himself was very conscious of the importance of photography to the book and to history. In fact, he cited photography as the primary reason for the book. Anticipating our visual society, Mr. Hillard was already aware of the power of a single picture. “What would not the modern student of history give for the privilege of looking on the faces of the men who fought for Grecian liberty at Marathon,” he wrote, “or stood with Leonidas at Thermopylae.” Or in keeping with the Revolutionary era, he wrote, “How precious a collection to every true American, did it exist, would be the portraits of the seven men who fell on the morning of the nineteenth of April, 1775 on Lexington Green.” While the names of those seven were recorded, they died long before the invention of photography in 1839.

Today, we know the names and the faces of our military men and women, but when Mr. Hillard wrote his introduction, that was not the case. Countless men and women of the mid-19th century never sat for a portrait—painted or photographic. Mr. Hillard realized the importance of connecting historical narrative with pictures. “As we look upon their faces, as we learn the story of their lives, it will live again before us.” He understood that the photographs accompanying the biographies provided a pictorial reminder that these stories were real, not fiction.

Gazing upon the images of the six men, you see the first Americans—men who fought against the British, some of whom heard George Washington speak. Mr. Hillard understood they were “the last generation that will be connected by living link with the great period in which our national independence was achieved.” He believed that his generation was the last to actually see these survivors or hear their voices, but his publication made it possible for individuals 150 years later to feel the reverberations of the Revolution through his interviews and pictures. Their memories bring it to life.

One pensioner, Lemuel Cook, recounted how Washington “ordered that there should be no laughing at the British; it was bad enough to have to surrender without being insulted.” The stories of these men’s lives compel us to think of the history of this country and the passage of time. Each biography is a combination of oral history and documented facts from pension documents, town records and local histories. The combination of historical facts and memories offers insights into the world in which these men lived—both before the American Revolution and afterward. Their participation in the Revolution changed them in many cases from boys into men, and led them to choose a path not determined by birth, but by selection. There is no doubt that these biographies are glimpses into life more than 200 years ago.

The Last Men of the Revolution

Samuel Downing (1764–1867) was 102 years old when interviewed in 1864. He recalled that as a small child his parents left him unattended in his birthplace of Newbury, Mass., for a short time during which he was approached by a traveler who offered to teach him a trade. That was the last time he saw his family. He lived with his “Aunt and Uncle” until he ran away to enlist at the age of 16 in 1780. He reminisced about Generals Washington, Arnold and Burgoyne. Mr. Downing remembered Arnold as “kind to his soldiers.” Mr. Hillard related that, “When peace was declared he [Downing] remembers his unit burning 13 candles in every hut, one for each State.” After the war, he married, had 13 children and eventually settled in New York State.

Daniel Waldo (1763–1864) enlisted in 1778 at about age 16 for what was initially only a month’s service. He decided to re-enlist, which led to his becoming a prisoner of war of the British in 1779. He was held at one of the “sugar house” prisons in New York City until February 1780. These prisons were named for their original function as sugar refineries. Upon release, he returned to his native Windham, Conn., entering Yale College to become a minister in 1788. He eventually married and had five children, moving to New York State in 1835.

Lemuel Cook (1759–1866), another veteran who settled in New York, holds the distinction of being the oldest living member of this elite group of Revolutionary War soldiers. A veteran of the Battle of Brandywine, he was also present at Gen. Cornwallis’ surrender. Trying to enlist when he was 16, he
was told that because of his size he had to sign up for the duration of the war. He was discharged in 1784. Mr. Cook’s colorful memories included his first encounter with French soldiers: “They were a dreadful proud nation.” Like the other veterans, he married, had children and re-settled in New York State.

Alexander Milliner (1760–1865) was enlisted by his stepfather and appeared on the rolls under his stepfather’s name of Maroney. He was told he was too young to be a soldier, so instead he became a drummer boy for the duration of the war. Mr. Milliner served at several major battles. He recounted a humorous story about Washington interrupting a group of boys playing a game by saying he would show them how to really play it—and did. He had recollections of both Gen. and Mrs. Washington, especially how she regarded the troops as her children. Mr. Milliner’s mother accompanied the troops as a washerwoman to be near her child. Discharged in New York State after serving six- and a-half years, he claimed to have enlisted in the Navy in 1814 for five- and a-half years, but Mr. Hillard was unable to verify his naval service. Alexander Milliner didn’t marry until he was 39 years old, and at the time of his interview, seven of his nine children were still living, as well as three generations of their descendants.

William Hutchins/Hutchings (1764–1864) enlisted when he was only 15 for the coastal defense of Maine, at that time still part of Massachusetts. According to Mr. Hutchings, he became a British prisoner at the battle of Castine, Maine, but they let him go because of his age. He remained in Maine until the end of the war, married a local girl and fathered 15 children. Mr. Hillard found him healthy in mind and body.

Adam Link (1761–1864) was another 16-year-old who joined the war effort. He wanted frontier service and recalled during his interview that, “Whatever else they may say of me, no man ever could call me a coward.” At 60, this remarkable man decided to walk from Pennsylvania to Ohio to start a new life. A true survivor, Mr. Link lived a sparse existence without luxuries. While he built a farm at age 70, he lived in a shelter constructed from a fallen tree.

These six men survived the Revolution and helped build the new nation. When The Last Men appeared in print, a newly unknown doctor wrote a letter remarking on the strength of these men, who were each more than 100 years old. He attributed long life to “a rural population, that lives with sufficient necessaries and few luxuries of life, contented and laborious in the open air.” These elements were certainly part of the daily lives of these first Patriots.

In honor of their age and contributions, each man had their pensions increased by $100 annually. This was more than double the original amount they subsisted on previously. As you consider the lives of your Revolutionary ancestors, keep in mind the words Mr. Hillard used to describe these Patriots: “History lives only in the persons who created it.” 🌼
The Spanish Inquisition offered Jews the choice of conversion to Christianity or torture and death. The commencement of the Inquisition in 1492 sparked an exodus of Jews from Ferdinand and Isabella’s lands just as the New World was being opened up for exploration, so it is little wonder that many Jews found themselves in the early colonies.

Migration can be explained through the interaction of two variables: push factors and pull factors. Push factors are those conditions that encourage emigration, such as the Spanish Inquisition, while pull factors are those conditions that encourage immigration to a specific country. As a constantly wandering people, the Jews are as familiar with these forces as any community can be.

Exploration, however, was not cheap. Even after a Crown had set up a colony, it was often left to private companies to make the colonies financially viable. Because the Church forbade its members to charge interest, Jews were often indispensable for banking and investing, both necessary for the development of overseas colonies. The Dutch West India Company, responsible for the Colony of New Amsterdam, claimed numerous Jews as stockholders.

Economic opportunity and religious freedom, two powerful pull factors, drew Jews to the New World. Even there, they met resistance when they tried to assert the same rights as their Christian compatriots. In January 1654, the Dutch Colony in Recife, Brazil, was recaptured by the Portuguese, and the rules of the Inquisition were reestablished. Soon thereafter, a ship carrying 23 Jews left Brazil and, after some nine months of travail, entered New Amsterdam.
The governor of New Amsterdam, Peter Stuyvesant, and the City Fathers sought to discourage immigration and, when that failed, to curtail the liberties of the Jews. A month before the Jews of Racife were to land in New Amsterdam, Jacob Bar-Simon entered the Colony on a passport from the West India Company and tried to prepare for his coreligionists' arrival.

Holding such a passport, Mr. Bar-Simon could not be denied, but Gov. Stuyvesant wrote to the West India Company, asking permission to refuse to harbor the larger contingent of Jews, writing that he “deemed it useful to require them in a friendly way to depart.” The Dutch West India Company disagreed, due in some part to its Jewish stockholders.

The Company replied to Gov. Stuyvesant that “Jews were allowed to travel to, to live in and to trade to and in the new Colony ... so long as they do not become a burden to the Company or the community.” Eventually, additional rights were granted, such as the right to open shops and own land.

One right that the City Fathers were hard-pressed to give up, but that 120 years later Gen. Washington would bequeath freely, was the right to serve in the militia. Barred from military service, Asser Levy, like all Jews in New Amsterdam, was charged a special tax to pay for his replacement in the town's militia. Mr. Levy petitioned to be able to serve himself, rather than pay for someone to stand for him.

Mr. Bar-Simon and Mr. Levy keenly understood that they were not acting for themselves alone, nor even for the Jewish communities each time they petitioned for greater freedom. Gov. Stuyvesant, explaining why the Jews of New Amsterdam should be denied equality, wrote, “Giving them liberty, we cannot refuse the Lutherans and Papists.” By the time the English took over the Colony, the Jews enjoyed nearly equal status with the rest of the population.

By contrast, the Jews of Central and Eastern Europe, known as Ashkenazim, were poor. Often fleeing outbursts of persecution known as pogroms, the Ashkenazim arrived in the New World without the skills, connections or wealth of the Sephardim.

In Europe, Sephardim and Ashkenazim rarely had cause to intermingle. During the Colonial period, however, this was not the case. The circumstances surrounding the formation of Savannah, Ga.’s, Jewish community are illustrative.

In 1732, the Jews of London raised funds and secured passage for 42 of the poorest members of their community. All but eight were Spanish or Portuguese. The Sephardim controlled the destiny of the community for some time—even after abandoning Savannah briefly in 1742, when the Spanish threatened to take the Colony and burn the apostates at the stake. However, through immigration and higher birth rates, the Ashkenazim eventually outnumbered them and assumed control of the community.

In the North, the situation was much the same. New York's Shearith Israel congregation maintained its records in Portuguese, and from 1702 to 1816, the chazzanim who chanted the services were Sephardic. In 1728, some 29 individuals donated money to the congregation; the 12 Sephardim gave more than the remaining 17. By 1747, however, the roles had changed. Not only were more Ashkenazim donating money, but they also donated greater amounts of money than the Sephardic Jews.

One of the factors that kept the groups together, despite their differences, was the impetus for Jews to marry only other Jews. Though in Europe there was little intermarriage between Sephardim and Ashkenazim, it was necessary in the New World because of the smaller populations of Jews. Still, it was not always an easy union. The Sephardic parents would refer to their in-laws as “Tudescos,” meaning German— lumping together Jews from many countries, not only German-speaking individuals.

Another difference between Sephardim and Ashkenazim would become evident only at the outbreak of the American Revolution. While the Sephardim were nearly universally patriotic, the Ashkenazim were divided, as one might expect of any immigrant community.
The reasons are not hard to guess. Few Sephardim had any loyalty to England; indeed, many traded with England’s enemies. The Jewish merchants, many of whom were Sephardim, resented the Crown’s practice of seizing boats and impressing their crews into service.

At least as cogent as the economic arguments for independence from England were the philosophical reasons: Sephardim distrusted kings and queens and preferred the nascent representative governments forming in the Colonies. Indeed, many of the Sephardic refugees of Savannah’s Mickveh Israel formed the “Jews’ Company” of South Carolina, commanded by Capt. Richard Lushington, to safeguard their nation’s birth.

The Ashkenazim, which included Jews from England itself, were conflicted. As in the larger community, there were many who considered themselves as English as Gen. Cornwallis. Like their Sephardic counterparts, Ashkenazim did business with the home countries (for some of them, that meant England), which was threatened by the Revolution. There were also families who had members in both camps.

The Franks family of Philadelphia and New York was famous (or infamous) on both sides of the Revolutionary War. On the Loyalist side was David Franks of New York, who was twice arrested for spying by the Patriots during the war. Though he signed the Non-Importation Agreement of 1765, agreeing not to buy goods from Great Britain until the Stamp Act was repealed, Mr. Franks’ allegiance was obviously to the Crown. Before his arrest, he acted as the “agent to the contract for victualling the troops of the King of Great Britain.” Mr. Franks was thus responsible for providing captured British soldiers with meals. He also acted as an intermediary for the exchange of prisoners.

After the war, Mr. Franks found his fortune of some 20,000 pounds sterling reduced to the 40 pounds in his pockets as he came to England to live with his son, Moses. Mr. Franks petitioned the Crown to reimburse him for losses but was given only a tenth of what he requested. However, the commissioners recommended that Mr. Franks be given an allowance of 100 pounds per year in recognition of “the loyalty and zeal…of this gentleman.”

In a twist of fate, the famous Loyalist bore the same name as his nephew, the equally famous Patriot, David Salisbury Franks, of Philadelphia. The younger Mr. Franks acted as the aide-de-camp of the traitorous Benedict Arnold. Unlike Arnold, Mr. Franks’ allegiances were wholeheartedly to the side of liberty.

In 1775, Mr. Franks was living in Quebec, where he had once spent time in jail for defending another’s right to compare King George III to the Pope and call him a fool. When the Continental Army “liberated” Quebec, Mr. Franks joined the revolutionaries. After Arnold’s treason became known, Mr. Franks suffered guilt by association. Although a thorough investigation exonerated him of all wrongdoing, Mr. Franks was still distrusted by many of his compatriots, even after Gen. George Washington personally had him assigned to his command.

Knowing that nothing less would clear his name, Mr. Franks asked for a formal court-martial, which vindicated his innocence. A promotion in rank soon followed, after which Mr. Franks was entrusted to carry highly secret documents to Benjamin Franklin in Paris and John Jay in Madrid. After the war, Mr. Franks became a statesman, being appointed American Vice-Consul at Marseilles, and in 1786, he was part of the team that negotiated a trade treaty between the nascent United States and Morocco.

Not all Jews carried weapons. Haym Solomon, a Polish-born Jew who spoke 10 languages, served in a unique capacity during the American Revolution—he bankrolled Washington’s army.

When the war started, Mr. Solomon was living in New York. Like many Jews in the big port cities, he was a professional import-export broker, and he amassed his fortune through trading in goods between the Old World and the New. After the Revolution began, Mr. Solomon stayed in New York, where the British quickly jailed him for his association with the Sons of Liberty and economic contributions to the Revolutionary cause.

Recognizing Mr. Solomon’s usefulness as an interpreter, the British impressed him into service translating for the Hessians and other non-English units. In time, he was released from service to the Crown and returned to business, but he continued to aid the Patriots financially. When they marshaled enough evidence against Mr. Solomon, the British did not jail him. They tortured him and sentenced him to be hanged for treason.

Mr. Solomon, never a warrior, did not break out of prison. Instead, he bribed the guard with a few gold coins hidden in his clothing for just such an occasion. He fled to Philadelphia where he reestablished himself as an import-export broker and continued to aid the Revolutionary cause.

Even after the war was over, Mr. Solomon gave grants to the members of the new republic’s government. James Madison, while serving as President Washington’s attorney general, wrote to a friend, “I have for some time been a pensioner on the favor of Haym Solomon, a Jew broker … but I never resort to it without great mortification, as he obstinately rejects all recompense.”

After the war ended, Jews helped the individual states live up to their avowed goals of liberty and justice for all. Leaders of Philadelphia’s Mickveh Israel, including Haym Solomon, challenged the section of the state constitution requiring members of the state assembly to take an oath reading, “I do acknowledge the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be given by divine inspiration.”
None of the group claimed political aspirations, but they rightly pointed out that any Jew would be barred from serving in political office if he were to have to swear such an oath. Further, they argued, this oath violated the separation of church and state and would encourage people—Jews and non-Jews alike—to seek residence in New York or another state where the separation was preserved. Pennsylvania’s new constitution of 1790 made no mention of the oath. The Zeitgeist of tolerance and liberty that the Jews of the budding United States helped foment acted as another pull factor that enticed not only Jews, but also migrants from all over Europe, to the open embrace of America.

The Zeitgeist of tolerance and liberty that the Jews of the budding United States helped foment acted as another pull factor that enticed not only Jews, but also migrants from all over Europe, to the open embrace of America.

The Yeshiva University Museum at the Center for Jewish History in New York City is currently showing the exhibit, “A Portion of the People: 300 Years of Southern Jewish Life,” which runs through July 20, 2003. A key part of the exhibition sheds light on the late Mrs. Margaret Loeb Kempner’s Southern mishpachah, or extended family, whose philanthropy, community service and patriotism stretch back to the days of Peter Stuyvesant.

The Daughters of the American Revolution counted Mrs. Kempner, who was born in St. Louis in 1899, in their ranks. Her mother, Adeline Moses Loeb, was the direct descendant of a Revolutionary War veteran. The extended family also included Isaiah and Rebecca Phillips Moses who owned the Oaks in South Carolina—one of the great Southern plantations.

Margaret Loeb’s family had been deeply involved in the civic life of their community from the start. Adeline’s grandfather, Alfred Huger (pronounced /hyoo jay/) Moses, was the founder of Sheffield, Ala., and her great-uncle, Mordechai Moses, was the mayor of Montgomery, Ala., from 1877–81.

Mordechai Moses’ Judaism did not go unnoticed when he ran for office. When his opponent in 1879 called attention to his religion as a reason not to vote for him, the Montgomery Advertiser ran an editorial titled, “He Is a Jew.” In the piece, the editor wrote that since Jesus and Jesus’ mother shared the same religion as Mordechai Moses, people shouldn’t have any problem re-electing their mayor.

Before her death on December 31, 2001, Margaret Loeb Kempner and her husband, Allan, donated a great deal of money to enhance the Special Collections Room of the Butler Library at Columbia University.

In memory of their parents, Carl and Adeline Moses Loeb, Margaret and her three brothers—John, Carl Jr. and Henry—provided the funding for the Loeb Student Center at NYU, which is now called the Kimmel Center for Student Life. Margaret’s brother, John, donated more to his alma mater, Harvard University, than any other living donor. Henry was a generous contributor to the New School, while Carl Jr., interested in crime prevention for the average citizen, was a founder of the National Crime Prevention Council that invented the crime dog “McGruff.”

Owing to their patriotism, members of the Loeb family have fought for America in every war since the Revolution. In World War II, Henry Loeb—overage, married with two children and not eligible for the draft—volunteered for military service. He started as a private, became a first lieutenant managing an artillery battery and landed at Utah Beach on D-Day.

The Loeb family also has participated in the business of statecraft. Margaret’s nephew, John Langeloth Loeb Jr., was appointed U.S. Ambassador to Denmark. In recognition of his lifetime of community service, Ambassador Loeb received the Distinguished Patriot Award from the Sons of the American Revolution.

The nationally traveling exhibition was organized and circulated by the McKissick Museum at the University of South Carolina in association with the Jewish Heritage Collection, College of Charleston Library. A companion book, A Portion of the People: Three Hundred Years of Southern Jewish Life, is available for those unable to attend the exhibit. For more information, visit www.jgh.org.

Ambassador John Loeb and Historian Ken Libo were invaluable resources for this essay.
REGISTRY OF DEEDS

OFFICE HOURS

8:45 A.M. TO 4:30 P.M.

EXCEPT SATURDAYS AND HOLIDAYS

SATURDAYS OPEN ALL DAY
…all the land lying in Gill, devised to me and my brothers and sisters by my Honored Grandfather William Holton, late of Northfield, ... to Timothy Holton, Dorastus Holton, Nancy Holton, Asenath Holton, Sarah Holton, Sophia Holton, Calvin Holton and Charlany Holton, children and heirs of Nathan Holton, deceased."

On the first day of March 1814, Dorastus Holton, a cordwainer who lived and worked in Gill, N.H., (now in Franklin County, Mass.), and Lemuel Holton, a farmer from neighboring Northfield, met, perhaps at Lemuel’s farmhouse or Dorastus’ shoemaking shop. Seated at a table with a bottle of ink, a selection of quills and a piece of paper, they proceeded to write a deed. Dorastus was selling 30 acres of Gill farmland to his Uncle Lemuel. In the process of proving his legal claim to this property, Dorastus listed his siblings, named his father and identified his grandfather—three generations of a family in one document.

Intent on the mechanics of transferring a piece of property from one to the other, Dorastus and Lemuel carefully described the four boundaries, placed a value on the property, named the previous owners and listed the present owners—all details they considered necessary to ensure the transaction’s legality. We can be reasonably confident that as Dorastus and Lemuel signed the deed and put away the ink and pen, neither man was thinking about the genealogical value of the document they had just created.

But what extraordinary genealogical information it is. Nathan Holton, the deceased father of Dorastus and his siblings, had been a soldier in the Revolutionary War. In 1794, this veteran of four enlistments was judged insane—incompetent to manage his own affairs. This may or may not be the reason that Northfield and Gill town records contain scant information about Nathan’s family. This deed was the only source found to name the children of Nathan Holton, likely in birth order, and to connect them to their father and to their grandfather.

Deeds Valuable for Genealogists
In the United States, the responsibility for guaranteeing the legal title of a piece of property lies with the buyer and the seller. Today we rely upon professional title searchers and lawyers, but in the days of our ancestors it was a do-it-yourself operation. They wrote out the boundary information, named previous owners or original grantors, described dwellings, fences and crops, and dated the document. They sought out a family member, a neighbor or a local official to witness their signatures. One of them, usually the buyer, carried the deed to the local town hall or county courthouse where it was recorded into the deed books. And, like today’s buyers and sellers, each kept a copy of the deed.

Beginning genealogists and family historians often overlook deeds, not realizing that a document designed to transfer property may be a rich source of clues or provide...
solid evidence for solving genealogical puzzles. Deeds are a valuable source for the genealogist because of the sheer numbers that were created.

Land was cheap and available during Colonial times, allowing most white males who lived to maturity to own land. Each time they bought or sold property, a deed was created—a deed with dates, names and places.

From the time of permanent settlement in America to the beginning of the Civil War, an adult male or female could create a dozen or more deeds in his or her lifetime. The size of the property being bought and sold made no difference. A deed written to sell half an acre contained the same language as a deed written for 200 acres. And either one could include important genealogical information.

Deeds are also important to the genealogist or family historian because they date to the earliest permanent settlements in America. In many towns, early vital records are sparse or nonexistent. But deeds created soon after settlement have survived and are often the only records available for identifying family relationships. Their very existence in a time period where there are few other records available makes them valuable far beyond what their purpose might suggest.

Donald Lines Jacobus, considered the founder of the modern American school of critical genealogists, wrote of Colonial Connecticut, “the most important town records, genealogically, are the land records.”1 When researching in the South, a region with far fewer vital records than New England, deeds are even more crucial to genealogical success.

Although any deed might contain valuable genealogical data, generally the older the deed, the more genealogical data it is apt to contain.

**Wealth of Data in Deeds**

Deeds place our ancestors in a specific place at a specific time. Deeds describe family relationships. Deeds can be the only source to name a male ancestor’s wife. As we look closer at how to use deeds to find our elusive ancestors, we do need to know the difference between the grantor and the grantee. The grantor is selling the land; the grantee is buying the land. The names of the grantor, the grantee and their residences, and the names of the witnesses and their residences, are commonly found in every deed. This allows us to place our ancestor in a specific place at a specific time.

Not only do deeds help us locate ancestors, they also allow us to trace the movements of an ancestor from town to town—and many of our ancestors did move around!

For example, after Amos Parsons finished his tour of duty in the Revolutionary War, he married and settled in Ward (now Auburn), Mass. But, by 1800, Amos Parsons was living in Greenfield, Mass. To know when he moved, we would search for his first deed in Hampshire County as a grantee. That deed would tell us that Amos Parsons, husbandman, of Ward, bought “a certain piece of land lying in Greenfield,” on September 24, 1791, from Elijah Dix, physician, of Worcester, Mass.

We can be reasonably certain that at this time, or shortly thereafter, Amos moved his family to Greenfield. Similarly, on June 29, 1811, Hezekiah Mattoon of Northfield, Hampshire, Mass., grantor, sold land in Northfield to Amos Richardson, grantee, of Packerfield, Cheshire, N.H. To follow the trail of Amos Richardson we would look next in Northfield.

Deeds may contain statements of family relationships that allow us to connect one generation to another. In the example at the start of this article, family relationships were detailed in the property description, but statements of relationships also appear with the grantor/grantee information.

Samuel Holton, grantor, of Northampton, sold land to the grantee, named as “my well beloved wife, Abigail Holton.” John Lyman of Northampton, grantor, sold land to “my son John Lyman.” Grantor William Holton named as grantees “my two daughters, Abigail Cary the wife of Seth Cary of Greenfield, and Bethiah Parmenter, the wife of Josiah Parmenter of Northfield.” Not

Whether old or new, most courthouses have digital records as well as traditional paper. Older records, such as in the center photo, may be stored on-site or in special areas for preservation. Indexes help locate documents, but it’s tempting to leaf through the books, wandering through an area’s history.
only do we learn the names of two of William’s daughters, but also whom they married and where each couple resided.

Azubah Holton of Northfield, grantor, sold 32 acres to “Ezra Lodericke Holton, Abel Shattuck Holton and Lorenzo Holton, grantees, all sons of Abel Holton of Gill.” This deed firmly connected the three sons to their father, and of all the records located for these men—vital records, census records or other deeds—this was the only source that spelled out Ezra’s and Abel’s middle names. In every other record, only their middle name initial was used.

Perhaps that was Azubah’s doing. As the elderly aunt of these three men, Azubah was selling them property deeded to her by her father, and she was making absolutely certain there would be no doubt as to their identities.

The death of a head of household and the ensuing probate to settle the estate often resulted in a flurry of deeds. These deeds usually described family relationships—such as the one generated when Benjamin Barton died: “Mortimer Potter and Alvira his wife of Greenfield and Charles L. Holton and Rebecca his wife of Northfield, said Alvira and Rebecca being children of Benjamin Barton late of Gill, deceased and heirs in his estate.”

Security for Family Members

Occasionally deeds were drawn up to provide shelter and care for an elderly couple. The father deeded his home and farm to a family member, frequently a son, with the understanding that the parents would live out their lives in the farmhouse and be cared for in their declining years.

Andrew Parsons and his son, Samuel, worked out just such an arrangement. Andrew sold his farm to Samuel, and in exchange Samuel was “to let and occupy to him, the said Andrew Parsons during his natural life,” and if “Esther Parsons, the wife of the said Andrew Parsons,” should outlive Andrew, she would be able to use the same part of the house as long as she remained a widow. Furthermore, Samuel “binds” himself to provide for her “in sickness and health.” Perhaps that clause was added because Esther was Samuel’s stepmother.

When the name of an ancestor’s wife presents a challenge, a search through their deeds may reap a reward, for sometimes a deed will be the only source to name a wife, although usually only the first name. In some deeds we find the wife named as a joint grantor—“Benjamin Barton and Sarah Barton, wife of said Benjamin Barton.” When Ebenezer Trumble of Oxford sold one acre to Isaac Barton of Oxford, both Ebenezer and his wife, Eunice Trumble, signed the deed. However, finding the wife’s surname on a deed unless she used it as a middle name is quite rare. But for those women about whom we know absolutely nothing at all, finding even the first name can be a breakthrough.

In a dower state, a man’s widow automatically inherited one-third of his property. Thus, it was in the best interest of the grantee to make certain the wife of the grantor relinquished her right of dower. Otherwise, after the death of her husband, the widow
Locating Deeds

Deeds were taken to either the county courthouse or the town hall to be recorded, which meant that each deed was handwritten into deed books. In many facilities, indexes to the deed books have been prepared, usually an alphabetical index of grantors' names and a separate alphabetical list for grantees. Deed books and the indexes are usually housed in the same courthouse or town hall where they were originally recorded and can be researched on-site. When distance prevents actually viewing the deed books, microfilm can be substituted. The Family History Library in Salt Lake City has microfilmed the deed books in almost every courthouse and town hall in the United States.

When compared to many other documents, deeds are relatively easy to access. So when searching for solutions to those perplexing lineage problems, the genealogist or family historian should not overlook deeds as an excellent source for establishing family connections and for placing an ancestor in a specific place at a specific time. A careful study of an ancestor's deeds might just uncover the piece of evidence needed to break through those brick walls.

Sources


LIVES, LOVES AND SCANDALS: A Look at Court Records

By Sharon DeBartolo Carmack, C.G.

Before the Internet—and even after it opened the world of genealogy to researchers everywhere—one of the hot spots where genealogists liked to hang out was the county courthouse. That's the place where our ancestors created all sorts of fabulous records about their lives, their loves and their scandals. If you haven't ventured into court records yet, just wait until you see what you've been missing. In court records you can find marriages and divorces, wills and probate, adoptions, civil and criminal proceedings, deeds and mortgages, tax lists, naturalizations, commitment papers, military discharges and more.

Let's look at the four most sought-after court records and what they can tell us:

Marriages

Marriage bonds were common in some states, particularly in the South, into the 18th-century. They were posted in the county courthouse to help offset costs of legal action in case the marriage were nullified. The groom, and usually either the father or brother of the bride, each posted a bond. Women rarely posted bonds. When one did, she was likely the bride's mother, who was posting the bond because the father was deceased.

Licenses eventually replaced bonds in the 19th century, but in some states, no license was required for a couple to be married, or the license might have been recorded in a jurisdiction other than that where the marriage took place.

If you are doing research in a state that required a license, keep in mind that some couples took out a license or application but never made it to the altar. So make sure you follow through and look for further evidence confirming the marriage actually occurred, such as a recorded marriage certificate.

Wills and Probate

Simply put, a will is a legal document providing for the disposition of a person's property after death. The person making the will is known as the “testator.” Some wills are a page or less in length; others may be several pages long and include unusually detailed instructions to be carried out after death.

Wills go through a court process known as probate, which oversees the transfer of property and items of the deceased to heirs. These transfers are identified in either the wills or in court orders. When a person dies leaving a valid will, that person is said to have died “testate.” When a person dies leaving no valid will, then that person is said to have died “intestate.” Not everyone left a will, and not all wills were recorded. Wills are usually probated in the court that has jurisdiction where the person resided at death.

When you find a will in a clerk’s will book, you are looking at the recorded document, not the original. Ask if the “probate packet” still exists, as this should contain all the surviving documents generated during the probate process, including the original will. Contested wills and other kinds of records are kept in the court of the original probate, usually within this packet. If the original will still exists, you should check it against the recorded will, because errors could have been made when the clerk hand-copied it into the will book. Sometimes, though, the recorded will is all that has survived.

Within the probate packet, recorded in the will books or possibly kept in separate volumes, you might find an inventory of your ancestor’s estate. This will detail the deceased’s belongings and assign a monetary value to them. From an inventory, you can figuratively follow the executor or administrator going from room to room in the person’s house.

**Land Records**

For the most part, you can find land records from the beginning of a town or county’s settlement. Land transactions between individuals are generally recorded in deed books in the county where the land is located, and there are usually indexes to these volumes. Deed books may also contain items like mortgages, gifts of transfer, powers of attorney, marriage property settlements and bills of sale for goods—and, often, for slaves.

There are usually two types of indexes. One is for grantors—persons selling the property, which may be called a direct index in some states. The other is for grantees—persons buying or receiving the property, also known as an indirect index.

Transactions with more than one buyer or seller may be indexed under the first person listed in the document, followed by “et al.” This means “and others.” Or you may see after a man’s name “et ux”—this means “and wife.” If the owner of the property was deceased when the land was sold, and the person’s executor executed the transaction, then the deed may be recorded under the executor’s name.

As with any other index, there may be omissions and errors; you need to take this into consideration if you do not find a land entry for one of your ancestors, although you have other documents that lead you to believe they owned land.

**Naturalizations**

If the ancestor you are studying came to America from abroad, there may be a record of his or her arrival. Depending on the date of arrival, naturalization records may list the date and port as well as the name of the ship, the port of departure and the immigrant’s date and place of birth.

For goods—and, often, for slaves.

Some records, however, may give you only a year when the immigrant arrived.

Before 1906, an immigrant could go to any court of record and apply for citizenship. In fact, your ancestor could have initiated naturalization in one court and completed it in another court. To find naturalization records, check at various levels of courthouses—municipal, county, state and federal—where the immigrant arrived and/or settled.

**Obtaining Court Records**

More than likely, you do not live where your ancestors lived, and, even now, relatively few court records are available online. There are several choices for getting these records:

You may write to the courthouse for copies, go to the courthouse or inquire if the records have been microfilmed and are available through the Family History Library in Salt Lake City.

To use the Family History Library, check its online catalog at familysearch.org, looking under the desired locality to see if records of interest have been microfilmed or abstracted. You can order the micro-filmed records through your local Family History Center. *Your Guide to the Family History Library* by Paula Stuart Warren and James W. Warren (Betterway Books, 2001), will give you guidance on using this library on-site, online or at a Family History Center.

While you have the clerk on the phone, ask if you will be allowed to search the indexes and records yourself. In some courthouses, you are allowed to search yourself; in others, a clerk will do it for you. Some courthouses will let you view the records only on microfilm.

Sometimes, the repository has off-site storage, which means you may have to wait a day or two for the records to be brought to the courthouse for research. If you call ahead, ask that these records be available when you visit.

Some courts have divisions, with records such as marriages, deeds and naturalizations in one court, and divorces and probate in another court. To make sure you have the right court jurisdiction when writing for records, consult either Ancestry’s Red Book or *The Handy Book for Genealogists*.

No matter how you obtain the records, you’ll find all sorts of fascinating information on your ancestors in court records. Don’t stop with just the four types of records discussed here. Your ancestors’ records are bound to be in several different places, and you’ll discover all sorts of information about their lives, loves and scandals.

Sharon DeBartolo Carmack is a Certified Genealogist, a contributing editor for *Family Tree Magazine*, and the author of 14 books, including *Your Guide to Cemetery Research* and *You Can Write Your Family History* (July 2003). She is a former regent of Zebulon Pike Chapter, NSDAR, and can be reached via her Web site, SharonCarmack.com.
10 Byways That Shaped American History

Some trails follow ancient footpaths, some trace pioneer wagon roads and others simply chart a guiding route through battlefields or burial grounds. But all represent an invitation to explore history.

The word "trail" itself contains the seeds of exploration: It descends from the Old French verb *trailier*, "to hunt without a foreknown course." Today, more courses are foreknown than not, but the spirit of exploration bubbles up in our desire to know more—about who passed this way before us, about the events that shaped who we have become and about places that have been defined by remarkable people and events.

These 10 trails—some well known, others less so—lead visitors into different chapters in American history, from the Revolutionary War to the Westward Expansion. Most follow relatively flat terrain, and many are wheelchair accessible. All provide some form of interpretation—maps, signs or guides—that allow visitors to readily accept the invitation inscribed in the land: Get out of the car, step down from the bus and explore.
FREEDOM TRAIL • BOSTON, MASS.

This 2.5-mile urban walking trail takes visitors back to 18th-century Boston, when the city was a cauldron bubbling with Revolutionary fervor. The trail links 16 places where pivotal events in the nation’s history played out, including the monument to the battle of Bunker Hill, and the Old North Church, where a Patriot’s lanterns signaled the approach of British troops. In front of Faneuil Hall, a brick market building dating from 1742, Revolutionary orators once roused crowds. The U.S. Constitution, a.k.a. “Old Ironsides,” was launched here in 1797 and saw action in the War of 1812. It is now docked for boarding in a Navy yard.

Getting Around: Marked by a red stripe, the trail runs on busy sidewalks through densely settled neighborhoods. Wheelchair travel is possible on most of the route, but not all attractions are accessible. A self-guiding brochure is available at the Boston National Historical Park Visitor Center, a good place to get oriented and start the tour. Information about trolley tours is available through the city’s visitors bureau. Even though the trail is short, it encompasses some of Boston’s most popular tourist destinations, so allow a full weekend to savor its offerings.

CHESAPEAKE & OHIO CANAL TOWPATH • WASHINGTON, D.C.

The C&O Canal hugs the Potomac River for 184.5 miles from Washington to Cumberland, Md. From 1828 to 1924, it served barges hauling coal from Maryland to Georgetown during one of the nation’s biggest industrial growth spurts. Today, the towpath, which begins in the city’s elegant Georgetown neighborhood, forms a scenic footpath beside a historic urban waterway. The canal is lined with old industrial buildings that now house shops and restaurants. Astute visitors will spot relics from the industrial past, such as massive iron rings on buildings where barges once tied up. Locks and other canal structures remain intact. A canal boat docked near the National Park Service Visitors Center offers water tours.

For More Information:
Boston National Historical Park Visitor Center: (617) 242-5642; nps.gov/bost
City of Boston Convention and Visitors Bureau: (888) SEE-BOSTON; cityofboston.gov/freedomtrail

National Park Service Visitors Center: (202) 653-5190; nps.gov/choh
Washington, D.C. Visitors Information Center: (202) 328-4748; dcvisit.com
OVERMOUNTAIN VICTORY NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL • ABINGDON, VA.

In the fall of 1780, a militia of hill-country patriots trekked for 14 days and 220 miles across the Appalachians to the Piedmont region of the Carolinas, where they defeated an American Loyalist army at the Battle of King’s Mountain. The victory helped lead to the British surrender at Yorktown. Though some of the original route is lost to time, the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail—a commemorative highway following state road and Interstate routes through scenic mountains—links the journey’s beginning and end points: Abingdon, Va., and King’s Mountain, S.C. The trail can be driven from either direction, but Abingdon makes a pleasant starting point. This 18th-century town at the edge of the Blue Ridge Mountains is the home of the Barter Theatre, where Depression-era farmers traded milk and produce for tickets, and actors, including Patricia Neal and Gregory Peck, launched their careers. Shops, galleries, restaurants and a 20-block historic district round out the downtown attractions.

Getting Around:
Pick up a map and brochure at the Abingdon Convention and Visitors Bureau at 335 Cummings St., and take a self-guided, 2-mile tour through the historic district. The visitors bureau and most of the route (though not all sites) are wheelchair accessible.

For More Information:

CANE RIVER CREOLE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK  •  NATCHITOCHES, LA.

This park, which encompasses parts of Oakland and Magnolia plantations, lies within the 40,000-acre Cane River National Heritage Area in north-central Louisiana. A 90-minute guided walking tour leads visitors through the 60-acre agricultural property, which was farmed for more than two centuries. Dozens of pre-Civil War buildings, including plantation owners’ homes, farm structures and a rare collection of slave cabins, still stand. Magnolia Plantation, which once raised cotton, is now one of the largest and most nearly intact plantation complexes left in the country. The buildings on neighboring Oakland Plantation display some of the finest surviving examples of French and Creole architecture.

Getting Around:
The Cane River Creole National Historical Park can be visited only through guided tours, available four times daily (9 and 11 a.m., 1 and 3 p.m.) or by appointment. Tours are free; the property is not yet wheelchair accessible.
CALIFORNIA AND OREGON TRAILS
INDEPENDENCE, MO.

The grassy swales behind the Bingham-Waggoner Estate are some of the last remains of the wagon roads that started out from Independence, the “Queen City of Trails,” during America’s westward push in the 1840s. Three main westbound highways began here: the Oregon, California and Santa Fe trails, which ran together until they split in Kansas. From there the Oregon Trail veered northwest to the Oregon coast (the Oregon Trail Chapter of DAR placed a commemorative marker in nearby Hebron, Neb., in 1915), while the California Trail tracked west to northern California, and the Santa Fe Trail headed southwest. The Bingham-Waggoner Estate was once home to artist George Caleb Bingham. Across the street, the National Frontier Trails Center and the Oregon-California Trails Association (OCTA) offer more historical information, including pioneer diaries useful in genealogical research. For those who can’t visit in person, OCTA sells a CD ($29.95 plus shipping) containing emigrant names that crop up in the diaries.

Getting Around: The Bingham-Waggoner Estate, 313 West Pacific Ave., is not wheelchair-accessible, but the National Frontier Trails Center (which also houses OCTA) at 318 West Pacific is. The estate and trails center lie about three blocks from Independence Square and charge $4 for adults and $3.50 for seniors.

WABASH HERITAGE TRAIL
BATTLE GROUND AND WEST LAFAYETTE, IND.

This level, 13-mile scenic walking trail links seven parks and two historic sites. Many visitors start out at the north end in Tippecanoe Battlefield County Park. Here in 1811, Gen. William Henry Harrison defeated the Native Americans of the Wabash country. The battle launched Harrison toward the presidency and was one of the key events leading to the War of 1812. The Tippecanoe Battlefield Museum and a 100-acre park now mark the spot. From here the Wabash Heritage Trail follows Burnetts Creek to the Wabash River, terminating a mile south of Fort Ouiatenon, where an 18th-century French fort and trading post once stood. A park surrounds a replica of the fort’s blockhouse.

Getting Around: The main trailhead lies in Battle Ground, Ind., off Interstate 65 and State Road 43. A portion of the trail is blacktopped; elsewhere the surface is packed earth. The parks are free and open from 8 a.m. to dusk. The Tippecanoe Battlefield Museum is open noon–4:30 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday; admission is $3 for adults, $2 for seniors and students. The museum is wheelchair-accessible.
KNIFE RIVER INDIAN VILLAGES NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE • STANTON, N.D.

Twelve miles of trails, including a 1.5-mile self-guided interpretive walk, wind through this 1,758-acre site, where Mandan and Hidatsa Native American villages once spread out over the land. The most recent inhabitants left in 1845, when survivors of a devastating smallpox epidemic moved north. Archaeologists believe Native peoples have lived on this land for almost 8,000 years. Today, clusters of circular impressions, 30 to 40 feet in diameter, mark the spots where their earth lodges once stood. Linear ruts trace paths where dogs and horses dragged travois—slings strung between two poles used to haul heavy objects.

Getting Around: Park at the visitors center and see the museum and orientation film before heading out to explore the park via its numerous foot trails, including the interpretive Villages Trail to two of the village sites (1.5 miles round-trip). A full-size earth lodge has been reconstructed behind the visitors center. Although the trails are not wheelchair accessible and driving is prohibited, an electric cart is available to take people around the property, and the visitors center is fully accessible. Open 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. from Memorial Day to Labor Day; 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. from Labor Day to Memorial Day. Admission is free.

LEWIS & CLARK TRAIL STATE PARK • WAITSBURG, WASH.

This 37-acre park in southeastern Washington lies on the ancient Nimipoo Trail, formerly known as the Nez Perce Trail, which ran from the Rockies to the Pacific. The Nimipoo used it as a trade route and traveled it to their favorite fishing grounds in Oregon. In the spring of 1806, heading back East, the Lewis and Clark expedition followed part of this trail through the land that is now the park, a forested spot on the Touchet River. Two main trails allow visitors to explore: One is a flat, self-guiding nature trail (0.8 mile) that points out plants and animals Lewis and Clark might have seen. The other is a half-mile hiking path along the river through old-growth evergreen forest. Interpretive displays and programs highlight the area’s rich history and prehistory—woolly mammoth fossils have been found nearby.

Getting Around: The park is on Highway 124, about 25 miles northeast of Walla Walla, and accommodates overnight camping ($15 per night; no RV hookups) as well as day visitors. For day use, there is a $5 parking fee. Restrooms are not wheelchair-accessible, but the nature trail has a level, graveled surface that will accommodate wheelchairs.
SANTA FE NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL • SANTA FE, N.M.

This 900-mile trade route led from Independence, Mo., to the trading post of Santa Fe in what was, in the 1840s, still part of Mexico. After the route was surveyed in the 1820s, American soldiers traveled it during the Mexican-American War of 1846–48. The U.S. victory over Mexico claimed about half of that country’s territory, including today’s New Mexico. After the war, traffic on the trail picked up as settlers, hunters and prospectors made their way west during the Gold Rush. Today the trail’s western endpoint in the old Santa Fe Plaza is a popular tourist destination. In this traditional enclosed Mexican market square, lined with shops and restaurants, local artisans still spread out their handicrafts. Nearby in Amelia White Park, traces of old wagon ruts are visible, and many historic Spanish-style buildings still stand in this 400-year-old city.

Getting Around: The city center, including the plaza, is eminently walkable, though not all buildings are wheelchair accessible.

For More Information:
Santa Fe National Historic Trail: (505) 988–6888; nps.gov/safe
Santa Fe Convention and Visitors Bureau: (800) 777–2489; santafe.org

America's Best Natural Monuments

MUIR WOODS NATIONAL MONUMENT
STINSON BEACH, CALIF.

The land for this popular national park was donated in the early years of the 20th century by a philanthropist who wanted to save an ancient redwood forest. Forests like this blanketed the northern California coast until being heavily logged in the 19th century. Named for John Muir, one of the founding fathers of the American conservation movement, the forest contains trees as old as medieval cathedrals, the tallest of them soaring 260 feet into the air. Six miles of paved, level trails allow visitors to experience the majestic groves of this 560-acre park.

Getting Around: The park lies off Highway 101, north of San Francisco in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area in Stinson Beach. Driving is still the only reliable way to get here. Open 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. April 6 to September 14. To avoid traffic congestion, visit during off-peak times, such as weekdays, and before 10 a.m. and after 4 p.m. on weekends. Admission is $3 per person, but seniors can buy a Golden Age passport at any national park for $10, and everyone in the car gets in free—for life. Most of the trails and the visitors center are wheelchair accessible.

For More Information:
Golden Gate National Recreation Area Visitor Center: (415) 388–2596; nps.gov/muwo
San Francisco Visitors Bureau: (415) 391–2000; sfvisitor.org
Gone Fishing: Tall Tales for Summer Readers

By Harvey King

Fishing—"That solitary vice" as Lord Byron termed it—is one of those pastimes whose devotees appear to spend as much time reading about as actively catching and cooking. (Golfers and baseball fans share a similar book-hobby correlation.) Fortunately, some of America's best writers have been inspired to apply their literary talents to exploring their passion for and understanding of fish—both the catching and the cooking. Ernest Hemingway, of course, is the old man in this sea of books.

Recently, historian-anglers have joined author-anglers in blending their professional and personal pursuits of piscatory knowledge. Readers of history, even those who have never wet a fishing line, net the benefits and pleasures of these well-researched labors of love.

The Founding Fish

John McPhee
Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2002
368 pages, $25

A recent addition to this genre is John McPhee's exploration of the American shad, The Founding Fish. Describing the annual out-migration of juvenile shad down the Delaware River near Holyoke, Mass., Mr. McPhee writes with the precise skill of a professional photographer. "What the human eye sees, as it observes the dimpling of the Shad on the blue river bordered with turning leaves, is early Impressionism rooted in the Hudson River School—the peace and the quiet of Nature with touches of silvery motion in it, an Arcadian pastoral vision."

Mr. McPhee's brilliant career as a New Yorker magazine writer and Pulitzer Prize-winning author is marked by his ability to apply such poetic prose to the majesties and miracles around us, whether they are rock outcroppings along an Interstate highway or Bill Bradley's fade-away jumper. The Founding Fish, like all of his books, is a journey of discovery into one of his passionate curiosities.

Mr. McPhee's compelling style derives in part from his self-effacing, layman's way of expressing the wonder of discovery—here, as a personal memoir chronicling his quest to understand the shad's significant roles in science, in American history and in the frying pan.

In The Founding Fish, Mr. McPhee spends considerable effort exploring, and convincingly debunking, an enduring fish tale about George Washington: the legend that migrating shad saved the starving soldiers at Valley Forge in much the same way manna saved the children of Israel in the wilderness. While the fish played a significant role in Washington's life (one of the revenue sources at Mr. Vernon was the commercial fishing of shad), there is little evidence, "except the history books," to back up the Valley Forge shad story, according to Mr. McPhee's investigations.

Another shad-related tale from the Revolution, perhaps of equally shad-y pedigree, is Henry David Thoreau's reference to a militia unit known as "The Shad." In Mr. McPhee's words, these fictional fighters stood "bravely at the bridge in the Battle of Concord prepared in every way except training." Apparently on the day they were scheduled for military drilling, the captain's "sense of duty had been overcome by the sense that shad were in the river." According to Thoreau, the name shad was applied to that and subsequently all irregular militia units.

Cod: A Biography of the Fish that Changed the World

Mark Kurlansky
Penguin USA, 1998
294 pages, $14 (paperback)

Were it not for his unsurpassed writing skill, Mr. McPhee's book could be described as a shad fisherman's me-too version of the 1997 bestseller Cod: A Biography of the Fish That Changed the World. This book is still the trophy catch of the fish-in-American-history pond.

Unlike shad, cod is not a fish that lends itself to classic angling prose: They take any bait and put up little fight. Rather, the history of cod is the history of American commerce, according to Mr. Kurlansky. Seen through his eyes, the reasons for the Pilgrims' settlement, the Colonists' economic philosophy and, ultimately, the Revolution itself, can all be tied to the catching and trade of cod. He recounts the fascinating story of cod in a concise, insightful fashion, surprising the reader with his ability to turn a story of a bland-tasting fish into a spicy tale of adventure and war.

Despite their vast differences, shad and cod share a distinct role in the history of America in another way: Each is closely identified with its own city. What cod is to Boston, shad is to Philadelphia, explains Mr. McPhee. In 1901, the author Louis N. Megargee wrote, "a Philadelphian has a right to talk about shad, because only in and near Philadelphia are the delights of the fish appreciated, and only in and near Philadelphia is it ever properly prepared for gastronomic delight." And, if the recipes found in Mr. Kurlansky's book are any indication, Bostonians may claim the same for cod.

If you're looking for summer reading, don't let these get away.
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   a Small carriage clock, DAR insignia, quartz movement, $100
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   c Carriage clock, DAR insignia, quartz movement, $210

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