American Spirit
Daughters of the American Revolution
July/August 2004

Saving Old Glory
Smithsonian Preserves a National Treasure

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From The President General

What a pleasure it is for me to greet American Spirit readers for the first time as the newly elected President General of the NSDAR! Since its founding in 1890, the DAR has remained steadfast in its commitment to promoting historic preservation, education and patriotism. American Spirit is one of many ways through which we convey this message.

In this issue, we meet Marilyn Zoidis, who has headed the multiyear Smithsonian project to preserve one of our most precious national treasures, the Star-Spangled Banner. The life of this storied flag bridges much of our existence as a nation and, in addition to its symbolic importance, reflects changing ideas about proper treatment of the flag. An accompanying article profiles a DAR member whose love of the flag inspired a small business, and who works diligently to educate her clientele about proper flag etiquette.

Our Spirited Adventures travel section takes us to five small towns whose citizens banded together to save crumbling Main Street districts and bring new life to them. Similarly, DAR and others banded together almost a century ago to preserve Paul Revere’s home in Boston, which today is a leading historic tourism attraction.

Revere also appears in another feature, this one on the origins of political cartoons in America. His engraving of the Boston Massacre helped arouse public opinion against the British at a time when it was unclear whether the Colonies would actually revolt. It is interesting to note that today’s editorial cartoons seem rather tame compared with the acid-penned creations of the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

Summer is a time for school vacations, recreation and, of course, escaping from the heat. Our Crafts department suggests some easy activities to keep youngsters occupied, while the feature article “Patriot Games,” describes how our ancestors spent what little free time they enjoyed. Of course, nothing beats the heat like finding a cool, quiet spot to read, and we have two recommendations from our Bookshelf—Ron Chernow’s new biography of Alexander Hamilton, and a fascinating look at the history of “strong drink” in America.

Speaking of beverages—long before refrigerators were invented, ice was the only means of cooling drinks or food. It took a canny Yankee businessman to see the potential in taking American ice halfway around the world to lands that had never seen snow, as described in “Boston’s Ice King.”

Finally, noted poet, author and professor Richard McCann offers a heartfelt essay in a new section entitled My American Experience.

Throughout this issue, you will notice a small image of a bell. It has been chosen as the symbol of this administration—“The Bell of Freedom ... The Sound of Patriotism.” The ringing sound of a bell stirs the soul and lends a sense of strength and purpose to all those who hear it. It is, therefore, my sincere hope that you will embrace this symbol and, with every turn of the page, allow it to resound in your heart and fortify your patriotic spirit. We welcome any comments and suggestions that you may have so as to ensure that the sound of freedom is heard by all.

Presley Merritt Wagoner
Memorial to Black and Female Soldiers Opens

A seven-year project that has grown from a modest, commemorative sculpture to a $20 million memorial park will welcome its first visitors this summer. The Fort Des Moines Memorial Park & Education Center—America’s premier memorial to black and female soldiers—will be dedicated with a weekend of activities July 23–25, 2004, in Des Moines, Iowa. The 5-acre park and museum is located at Fort Des Moines—the site of the U.S. Army’s first black officer candidate class in 1917 and first Women’s Army Auxiliary Corp (WAAC) in 1942. “The successful graduation of these two candidate classes demonstrates how the military has led the march toward racial and gender equality in American society,” said Stephen J. Kirke, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Fort Des Moines Memorial Park & Education Center. For more information or to register for events, call (515) 226–3344 or e-mail eventpros@mchsi.com. More information on the park is available at www.fortdesmoines.org.

Becoming a Nation: Americana From the Diplomatic Reception Rooms is a unique touring exhibition sponsored by the U.S. Department of State. It features the best craftsmanship and artistic talent of the golden age of American decorative and fine arts. The tour began at the Cincinnati Art Museum in February and will visit the following museums:

- Huntsville (Ala.) Museum of Art
  May 21–July 18, 2004
- Sioux City (Iowa) Art Center
  August 13–October 10, 2004
- Portland (Maine) Museum of Art
  October 28, 2004–January 2, 2005

The State Department’s Diplomatic Reception Rooms provide an exceptional window on America’s remarkable cultural accomplishments in fine and decorative arts of the 18th and 19th centuries. Visiting chiefs of state, heads of government, foreign ministers and other distinguished foreign and American guests are entertained officially in these lavishly decorated rooms, which opened in 1961. A link to a virtual tour of the rooms may be found at www.state.gov/m/drr. More information about the items in the touring exhibition is available at www.state.gov/m/drr/19056.htm.

DATES TO REMEMBER

(Sources include Library of Congress’ “American Memory” memory.loc.gov)

July 4, 1776: The Declaration of Independence is unanimously adopted by the Second Continental Congress.

July 11, 1804: Aaron Burr mortally wounds Alexander Hamilton in a duel.

July 13, 1729: Minutemen leader John Parker is born in Lexington, Mass.

July 16, 1790: Washington, D.C., is made the permanent capital of the United States.

July 17, 1754: King’s College, now Columbia University, opens in New York.

July 18, 1792: Naval hero John Paul Jones dies in Paris.

July 20, 1591: Colonial religious leader Anne Marbury Hutchinson is baptized in Alford, England.

July 20, 1848: Seneca Falls Convention on women’s rights is held.

July 24, 1847: Brigham Young and followers in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints reach Great Salt Lake Valley.

August 4, 1753: George Washington becomes a Master Mason, the highest rank in the order.

August 9, 1814: The Creek Indians and Major General Andrew Jackson sign the Treaty of Ft. Jackson, ending the Creek Indian War.

August 24, 1682: William Penn receives an award of Colonial land, today the state of Delaware.

August 26, 1791: The U.S. Patent Office gives John Fitch a patent for a steamboat.
National Trust’s Top 12

The fifth-ever National Trust for Historic Preservation’s 2004 Dozen Distinctive Destinations list includes a culturally and geographically diverse array of locations:

**Astoria, Ore.** The oldest U.S. settlement west of the Rockies.

**Galena, Ill.** Spectacular architecture and reminders of the past in this riverside town.

**Glenwood Springs, Colo.** This historic resort town offers natural hot springs and links with Rocky Mountain frontier past.

**Guthrie, Okla.** Oklahoma’s first territorial capital, born literally overnight in the epic Land Rush of 1889.

**Lewisburg, W.Va.** Civil War history, arts, folklore and natural splendor.

**Macon, Ga.** Diverse cultures spanning 12,000 years shaped this city.


**Napa, Calif.** Now the hub of the famed Napa Valley wine region, Napa also served as a staging site for the Gold Rush of the late 1850s.

**New Paltz, N.Y.** A hip college town with a French Huguenot past.

**Newport, R.I.** “America’s First Resort” was a bustling Colonial port and a 19th-century millionaires’ playground.

**Oberlin, Ohio** “The most cosmopolitan small town in America,” nurtured many of the major reform movements of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

**Old San Juan, Puerto Rico** Founded in 1521 as a military stronghold and base for Spanish explorers, with colorful Colonial architecture, historic sites and great nearby beaches.

The winners met the following criteria: well-managed growth, a commitment to historic preservation with a protected historic core and meaningful context, interesting and attractive architecture, cultural diversity, activities for families with children, an economic base of locally owned small businesses, and walkability for residents and visitors. In each community, residents have taken forceful action to protect their town’s character and sense of place. For more information on preservation programs, visit www.nationaltrust.org.

The summer of 1804 witnessed momentous events in the nation’s history, as Meriwether Lewis, William Clark and the men of the Corps of Discovery headed up the Missouri River into what would become America’s heartland.

**First Tribal Council**

The expedition celebrated the first-ever Independence Day observance west of the Mississippi River by firing two shots from their keelboat’s cannon on the riverbank near present-day Atchison, Kan. In late July 1804, the expedition held their first large-scale meeting with Native Americans at what came to be called “The First Tribal Council” in Nebraska. A Bicentennial Signature Event commemorating this gathering will take place July 31—August 3, 2004, with living history demonstrations, Native American cultural areas and interactive workshops held at the Fort Atkinson State Historical Park near Fort Calhoun, 9 miles north of Omaha, the site of the historic meeting. For more information, visit www.lewisandclarkne.org.

Meanwhile, at Fort Calhoun, a “Corps of Discovery Festival” will feature living history encampments, as well as a small 1830–40s Lakota village depicting tribal life on the Great Plains, and a rendezvous camp depicting the life of 1830s traders. Another Signature Event, scheduled for August 27–28, is the Circle of Tipis at Oacoma, S.D., at the Native American Scenic Byway Information Center. This event will note the expedition’s visit at the Oceti Sakowin (Seven Council Fires). Tours will be available through September 26, 2004. For more information, visit www.attatribal.com.
With preservation funds at an all-time low, America’s cultural and historical landmarks are threatened by decay and are in danger of disappearing. America’s national parks are getting just two-thirds of the funding they need, leading to the deterioration of park facilities, estimates the National Parks Conservation Association.

Hampton Hotel’s Save-A-Landmark program has come to the rescue of some of these important sites, spending the past five years preserving 19 historical, fun and cultural landmarks across the United States.

The program has invested nearly $1 million to help research landmarks in need, promote their importance and restore selected sites. From helping the 80-foot Blue Whale in Catoosa, Okla., to the historical National Monument to the Forefathers in Plymouth, Mass., Hampton employee volunteers provide the labor while the national office provides the dollars to refurbish the landmarks, sometimes up to five locations per year.

Hampton Hotels encourages Americans to submit details on local treasures in need, especially American Revolution-era landmarks, to its Save-A-Landmark program. Details can be submitted online by clicking the Save-A-Landmark icon at www.hamptonlandmarks.com or by mailing recommendations c/o Save-A-Landmark to 8730 Sunset Blvd., Fifth Floor, Los Angeles, Calif. 90069.

**Saving a Whale**

Hampton employees from four Tulsa, Okla., hotels joined together to restore the 80-foot Blue Whale, a roadside attraction in Catoosa, Okla., off of Route 66. Volunteers gave the whale a much-deserved bath and supplied its picnic area with new plumbing, new paint and new landscaping.

**Restoring ‘Faith’**

Hampton volunteers recently helped restore the National Monument to the Forefathers in Plymouth, Mass. Built by the Pilgrim Society, the monument, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, was dedicated in 1889. The lady “Faith” stands 36 feet tall and is grounded by a 45-foot granite pedestal. Volunteers removed cracked and decaying pavers from the historic 107-foot walkway leading to the monument.

**Sprucing up Uncle Sam**

Hampton volunteers joined together on July 2 to help give Uncle Sam “a new coat” in time for Independence Day. The statue, which adorns the lawn of the All-American Fireworks Company on U.S. 223 outside Toledo, Ohio, required 25 gallons of red, white and blue paint.

**On the Road Again**

Summertime is cross-country driving time. Make the drive a little unconventional by checking out some of the country’s more eccentric sites.

Hampton has created a special Web site promoting Route 66 and lesser-known “hidden” landmarks to travelers. Available at hamptonlandmarks.com, this online resource offers hundreds of locations for travelers looking for places and tours that harbor some of the United States’ unknown and most unbelievable secrets and legends.
**The Bookshelf**

By Harvey King • A new biography provides lessons on the complex ingredients of American democracy.

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**Dueling for the Legacy Of Alexander Hamilton**

On the 200th anniversary of the death of Alexander Hamilton, Ron Chernow assesses the “Father of America’s Government.”

Ron Chernow, author of best-selling, award-winning biographies of Gilded Age business barons, steps back a century in his latest book, *Alexander Hamilton* (Penguin Press, 2004, $35), to tell the story of the Founding Father most responsible for creating our market-based economy—a creation that eventually enabled those later-day titans to succeed.

Chernow convincingly credits Hamilton—and his widow, Eliza, who spent nearly a half-century after his death trying to protect and defend his reputation—with a pivotal role in American history, no less than the “father of our nation’s government.” In Hamilton, Chernow has found the historic figure worthy of his obvious gift for discovering and telling large, sweeping, yet tightly crafted stories of transitional business empires and those who created and built them.

Readers familiar with Chernow’s biographies will find interesting parallels in Hamilton to his previous work, notably *Titan*, his best-selling biography of John D. Rockefeller Sr. With both men, Chernow must first play the role of detective in sorting out the mysteries surrounding the humble, tragic and somewhat bizarre childhoods they later worked hard to obscure.

Hamilton was born on the Caribbean island of Nevis, the illegitimate son of a common-law couple who, despite upper-class lineages, had each fallen into abysmally bad fortune. Ultimately abandoned by his father and orphaned by the death of his mother, his prospects seemed slim. Miraculously, however, within a few short years, slightly more than a teenager, he would find himself on another continent, playing a pivotal role in the liberation and creation of a new nation.

And what was that miracle? According to Chernow, Hamilton literally “wrote himself out of poverty.” At about age 16 (the year of birth is disputed), he penned a letter about a hurricane that appeared in an island newspaper. Recognizing the obvious talent of the youthful writer, a group of business leaders raised the funds necessary to send young Hamilton to a boarding school in Elizabethtown (now Elizabeth), N. J.

In this exhaustive and admiring exploration of his life and accomplishments, Chernow makes a convincing case that Hamilton had few equals in thought and deed during an age noted as a historic high-water mark for thinking and doing. Writing about Hamilton’s role as first U.S. Treasury Secretary, the author credits Hamilton for being “… a skilled executive and a political theorist, a system builder who could devise interrelated policies … someone who could build an institutional framework consistent with constitutional principles.”

As a thinker and writer, Hamilton became an indispensable member of George Washington’s Revolutionary War “family”—an aide de camp who composed a significant portion of what military historians credit as one of the finest examples of documentation by a commander-in-chief.

Not satisfied with his critical, yet desk-bound duties, Hamilton pleaded for years for a battlefield command, gaining it only in the waning days of the war. At the Battle of Yorktown, he “established his image as a romantic, death-defying young officer, gallantly streaking toward the ramparts.” Thus, Hamilton was celebrated at the time, not only as the most prestigious of Washington’s aides, but also as a dashing war hero.

Years later, Hamilton would once more assume a role as the ghost-writing collaborator of Washington, assisting him on many of the documents most associated with the Father of the Nation, including perhaps his most famous, the Farewell Address. However, sharing writing assignments with Washington was but a small part of their collaborative accomplishments. With Hamilton as his Treasury Secretary, Washington’s presidency is noted for leaving such legacies as a sound federal government with a central bank, a funded debt, a high credit rating, a tax system, a customs service, a coast guard, a navy and many other institutions necessary to guarantee strength and preserve liberty. Chernow notes Hamilton’s vital role in enabling Washington to activate “critical constitutional doctrines that gave the American charter flexibility, forged the boundaries of nationhood, and lent an energetic tone to the executive branch in foreign and domestic policy.”

*Alexander Hamilton* is a worthy addition to the library of recent mega-hit...
biographies of America’s founders by such authors as David McCullough and Garry Wills. Accessible and engaging, it is a book that will find its way to both the college classroom and the vacation cottage. It provides great fodder for scholarly debate or fascinating weekend reading for the history buff. The book will undoubtedly serve as the basis for lively arguments about the relative roles of Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, James Madison and Hamilton, echoing arguments that reach back to the era in which they lived and likely to continue for centuries to come.

Chernow’s book appears at an opportune time. For those who seek to find it, the book provides many lessons on how freedom, liberty, stability and democracy are the result of great sacrifice, conflict, tragedy, compromise and confusion. No doubt, TV pundits will describe (as they always do) the current presidential election as “the most negative ever.” Yet even the most casual look at the presidential politics practiced by Hamilton and his opponents during the nation’s formative years will make current “negative campaigning” seem tame by comparison.

Alexander Hamilton left historians a Mt. Everest of written works that have taken nearly two centuries to fully document, archive and publish. While his best known writings were his contributions to the Federalist Papers, he wrote constantly, interpreting and debating the formative policies of the new nation and its institutions ranging from banking to military.

Because of his death at age 49, from wounds suffered in the July 9, 1804 duel (exactly two centuries prior to the publication date of this magazine’s current issue) with the sitting Vice President of the United States, Aaron Burr, Hamilton did not enjoy the opportunity given to his two most notable contemporaries and, in different ways, his political foes, Jefferson and John Adams. They used their long lives to snipe at Hamilton and burnish their own accomplishments through lengthy correspondence and other writing, notes Chernow. “With his prolific pen and literary gifts, Hamilton would certainly have left voluminous and convincing memoirs.”

What Hamilton’s untimely death left undone, Chernow has now accomplished.

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**Spirits of America**

**A Social History of Alcohol**

**ERIC BURNS | Temple University Press, 2003**

$29 hardback; $16.95 paperback; August 2004

As our British cousins might say, Colonial America was a rum place. Literally, reports Eric Burns, host of “Fox News Watch,” in this breezy but well-documented account of America’s often-ambivalent relationship with booze. From morning to night, from cradle to grave, from hovels to high estates, early Americans quaffed copiously. Booze was far cleaner than most water, and consumption was regarded as promoting good health.

Of course, the custom of drinking heroic amounts of alcoholic beverages was not invented here. Beer had solaced and nourished the working man since ancient Sumer and Egypt. Much later, Europeans consumed their fair share of all sorts of strong drink. But, Burns muses, the struggle to survive in the New World may have added a certain urgency to the desire to medicate aches and pains, warm the chill nights and find courage to face tomorrow.

Scattered among countless anecdotes, Burns provides amazing statistics, such as: The average 15-year-old male in the 1790s drank almost 6 gallons of absolute alcohol a year, based on consumption of about 34 gallons of beer and cider, 5 gallons of distilled liquors and about a gallon of wine. Rum was by far the Colonies’ leading libation, and the thirst for it helped fuel future troubles, including the slave trade and the growing tension with England. Taverns were favored gathering spots where, as now, politics were a hot topic and plotters gathered to discuss the tax on tea. Speaking of politics, Burns recounts how George Washington won election to his first assembly seat in a previously hostile district by making sure the polling places had some 144 gallons of potent potables on hand for parched voters.

Sometime in the early 19th century, however, public concern about excessive drinking prompted the creation of temperance societies—some of which were founded in the only available meeting place, a local tavern. Originally calling for temperance in drinking rather than total abstinence, these movements soon became totally “dry.” This polarization set the stage for much social legislation attempting to stamp out alcohol consumption, including Prohibition in the 1920s.

Writing in an informal, anecdotal style, Burns constantly reveals startling little gems. For instance, he takes aim at the popular conception that whites introduced Native Americans to alcohol. Tribes were brewing their own drinks “as far back as history can detect,” often for semi-religious uses as well as for the release it offered. Whites brought beverages much stronger than Native Americans were used to, and frequently used this potent firewater alcohol to exploit and cheat the natives.

Continuing his saga through the temperance crusades of the 19th century and the bathtub-gin joints of Prohibition, Burns provides a fascinating, often-humorous and balanced account of America’s battles over the bottle. The story has even come full circle: Today’s medical science endorses temperate alcohol consumption as a means to preserve and prolong life. Our forebears would certainly drink to that. —**Bill Hudgins**
By Tamara E Holmes • Keep pace with technology to preserve keepsakes.

Enduring Memories

It’s common knowledge that technology makes it easy to record special memories of your family’s day-to-day lives through e-mail, digital photos, audio recordings and videos. But you might not know that you can convert many of your family’s memories of yesteryear into formats that can be enjoyed for years to come.

Photographs are some of the most enduring of family mementos because they allow future generations to glimpse the lives of ancestors who lived and died before them. The growing popularity of digital cameras makes it easier than ever for people to shoot a picture, upload it to a computer and send it off for other family members to enjoy.

But what happens to those pictures over time? Will people remember to pull them off of their hard drives before upgrading to their next computer? Or will digital photos be lost the next time a computer virus or major malfunction causes your hard drive to crash?
To avoid such scenarios, it’s best to come up with ways to preserve those photos now.

Printing them out is not the best option. “Prints fade and get discolored,” says Rob Blue, owner of Digital Memories, an Orient, Ohio-based company that preserves photos and videos. “In the past, pictures traditionally were stored as prints. Today, everything’s going digital,” he says.

The company uses scanners to digitize “hard-copy” photos such as slides and prints. It then takes those digital images, along with any other digital images a family may have already stored on a computer, and puts them on CD-ROM or DVD.

Companies such as Digital Memories can also touch up any pictures you want corrected, by enhancing the color or performing any number of tricks to improve the picture quality.

There are different types of electronic file formats in which photos can be stored. The one you should choose depends on your intentions. Photos saved as TIFF files, for example, have excellent quality, but they take up more space on a CD-ROM. If you want to fit more photos on a CD-ROM, save them as JPG files instead, a format that sacrifices some photo quality in order to compress them into smaller files.

Once your photos are stored on a CD or DVD, you can take them to a photo processing company to make reprints any number of times.

While photos stored on a CD or DVD are safer than those stored on paper or a print-based backing, they still aren’t totally protected. A CD can be scratched, or a catastrophe such as a fire could destroy it and all your family memories, Blue says.

For that reason, he suggests making two copies of each CD or DVD. One copy can remain at home and the other should be stored in a safe place, such as a safe-deposit box, where it will serve as a digital backup.

Making Video Work

Home videos provide another way to capture the memories of family members for posterity. Video recorders that capture sound as well as images also allow families today to continue the tradition of passing on audio memories to future generations. If you’re like many people, you have several VHS videotapes lying around with family celebrations, reunions and other important milestones.

But DVDs are quickly replacing VHS tapes. So, as more families upgrade from a VCR to a DVD player, the risk of losing any family footage stored on VHS tapes grows. Fortunately, there are companies that can convert your VHS-taped images and audio to DVDs.

Even if you plan to keep your old VCR, there are still good reasons to convert your VHS tapes to digital format. VHS tapes can decline in quality over time. If you’ve ever watched an old tape and noticed that it is fuzzy or inaudible at certain spots, you’ll appreciate the fact that the superior quality and stability of DVDs can help ensure your memories remain safe.

Another reason to convert is that it may be increasingly difficult to replace your VCR as DVD players climb in popularity. Again, it’s a good idea to make more than one copy of your valuable family DVDs and store the backup in a safe place.

Archiving E-mail

A discussion on the preservation of electronic memories would not be complete without addressing e-mail. While the convenience of e-mail may cause it to be overlooked as a source of family information, most everyone has a trove of messages containing family memories, discussions, arguments, event announcements and other information.

When you upgrade your computer, you don’t want to lose that information. Likewise, if you get a lot of e-mail every day, it can be easy to misplace these family messages and in the process misplace a part of your family history.

The best way to index and archive e-mail messages is to use an e-mail management software program such as Microsoft Outlook Express. Although free Web-based programs such as Hotmail may satisfy your daily e-mail needs, more feature-filled programs allow you to sort and organize messages by sender, date or other categories you can create.

These programs have another useful feature: They walk you through the process of downloading messages to an offline location, such as a hard drive, floppy disk or CD-ROM, where they can be stored and held for future reference.

If you have a lot of e-mail messages and attachments to store, it’s probably better to do so on a CD-ROM rather than a floppy disk. CD-ROMs are fast replacing floppy disks for storage. In fact, many new computers don’t even have floppy disk drives.

The shift from floppy disks to CD-ROM (and soon to DVD) as storage media illustrates an important point: It’s essential to stay current on changing technologies. It is virtually impossible to say with certainty that a storage format popular today will be readily available 10, 50 or 100 years from now. By keeping
up with technology and regularly transferring your digital memories to the latest storage media, you can ensure they will long be accessible to you and your descendants.

**Keeping the Music Going**

Images are not the only mementos that illuminate one’s family legacy. Sounds can be just as rich with meaning, particularly recordings of an ancestor. In the early part of the 20th century, home phonograph record-making equipment was popular with many families who wanted to record their voices for entertainment, as a special message to a loved one or just for posterity. A record might capture the voice of an ancestor singing a song or a child performing a favorite church hymn. Likewise, public events such as fairs promoted this kind of equipment to attract people to an amusement booth.

Among the types of equipment used to record early audio were wax cylinders and Edison Phonograph Records. The equipment is obsolete today, but if you have any of these recordings, you can convert them into a form that will enable you to hear them.

Michael Cumella of New York City started collecting personal recordings about five years ago. He quickly realized he could make money by converting other people’s personal recordings onto cassettes, digital audio tapes or CDs. Recognizing the value of “hearing voices of ancestors or for a great-grandchild to hear a great-grandfather speak,” Cumella was inspired to turn his hobby into a business operated from his personal Web site (www.michaelcumella.com).

Different types of recordings require different machines and processes—not surprising, since there were many brands of home-recording equipment from such companies as Packard-Bell, National Recording Disc and Silvertone. Cumella says he uses a combination of old and new technologies to coax sounds out of these personal recordings and transfer them to modern media.

Once the recordings are converted, you’ll have a valuable family resource. Again, be sure to make multiple copies to increase the odds of keeping the recordings alive for a very long time.
Early Americans carved out lives for themselves in small towns, often along rivers or railroads. Most of these towns developed along Main Streets, where a wagon-traveler’s every errand could be completed within a few blocks. But after automobile travel became common, America grew and sprawled, gradually deserting many of its original Main Streets.

Over the past two decades, history-conscious citizens and city planners have realized that urban and suburban sprawl has contributed to the demise of community. For instance, mall shoppers don’t meet clerks who know their names, chain supermarkets don’t provide the same personal service that neighborhood corner markets do, and neighbors rarely gather to chat in supercenters.

Often inspired by the National Main Street Center of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, hundreds of towns and cities across the United States have begun revitalizing their original commercial districts through historic preservation and economic development. Across America, these towns are experiencing a return to community cooperation, hometown pride and the authentic charm of America’s Main Streets. Here’s a look at the progress made in a few towns across the country.
Cedar Falls, Iowa

The agriculture crisis and recession of the mid-1980s left much of the Midwest economy fairly depressed. By 1987, downtown Cedar Falls, Iowa, was virtually vacant, according to Cary Willoughby Anglum, Director of Community Main Street, Inc. “The personality of your city extends from the city center,” Anglum says. “Our local leaders realized that it was the responsibility of the entire community to take care of its core.”

The Community Main Street organization was launched in 1987, but the area’s most dramatic changes have happened in the past three years, Anglum says. Recognized as one of America’s “Top 100 Small Arts Towns,” Cedar Falls has leveraged its artistic charm and focused on making its downtown an arts and entertainment district. The organization initiated a “Names on Main” program that celebrates artists who grew up in or were educated in Cedar Falls, and unveils new names in an annual dedication ceremony. “They’ve all been honored to come back for the celebration,” Anglum says. “We haven’t had to twist anyone’s arm.”

The downtown also hosts Magic on Main, a celebration of the arts that showcases artistic talents of local junior high and high school students. And in the summer, downtown Cedar Falls features concerts and shows such as “Overman Unplugged,” an acoustical guitar celebration.

In the early 1990s, the restoration of the town’s historic opera house theater, the Oster Regent, became a catalyst for more development. In recent years, downtown Cedar Falls has experienced a resurgence of high-end, locally owned restaurants and a large investment in retail stores. Downtown shopping now ranges from funky specialty shops to handmade blacksmithing. Since 1987, this town of 34,000 has invested more than $21 million of private funds in the downtown area and logged more than 26,000 volunteer hours.

“We want to make it a 24-hour downtown,” Anglum says. “We’ve worked hard to create a nightlife and daytime business atmosphere that complement each other.”
When the city of Georgetown, Texas, organized a celebration for the U.S. Bicentennial in 1976, many of its citizens experienced a renewed interest in the history of their own community. They formed a historic society and performed the necessary research for the downtown district to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Filled with historic Victorian homes and buildings, downtown Georgetown became one of the largest historic districts in Texas—but many of the buildings were vacant or abandoned.

Spurred by local government, Georgetown formed a Main Street organization in 1982, and within two years, 40 historic downtown buildings had been rehabilitated. “There was a snowball effect,” says Eugenia Harrell, former Main Street Manager. “We started small, but once everybody saw how beautiful the buildings could be, it was dramatic.”

Since 1982, the city of approximately 30,000 has spent $10.5 million in private donations and $20 million in public funds to revitalize its downtown district. “Without the commitment from city government, our efforts would never have been as strong,” says Shelly Hargrove, Director of Georgetown Tourism and Main Street Manager. “Our city leaders have been progressive from the beginning and willing to put their money where their mouths are, so that private individuals are willing to get involved as well.”

Because the area was already designated as a National Historic District, investors were able to take advantage of low-interest loans and investment tax credits, and soon the sleepy downtown became quite a bustling tourist attraction. With its magnificent courthouse square, Victorian buildings and a riverside park with hiking trails and swimming holes, downtown Georgetown garnered publicity from across the region. And with “tons of historic markers,” it became a favorite destination for history buffs, Hargrove says.

“As more tourists came, people became more aware of the economic development value of our downtown,” Hargrove says. “We began focusing on tourism and opened up a visitor bureau. That generated a great deal of civic pride, which continues today.” These days, downtown Georgetown continues planning for the future, with a current focus on becoming “more of a shopping mecca,” Hargrove says.
Rockville, Connecticut

Like many towns across America, Rockville, the downtown district of Vernon, Conn., saw much of its activity decline during the 1960s and 1970s, following the development of shopping malls and strip centers. “About 20 years ago, what once had been a vibrant town center had been reduced to a few holdouts clinging for life,” says Steve Marcham, President of the Board of the Rockville Downtown Association. “But the downtown always had a lot to offer, including lots of Victorian architecture and visually appealing structures.”

Because Rockville is the center of city and county government as well as a hospital district, the area remained populated during the daytime. “That gave us a basis from which to build, because we still had people coming in,” Marcham says. “Now we’re working to restore the area’s image and get people to think it’s cool to come downtown.”

The Rockville Downtown Association has made significant progress in reaching those goals since it was founded in 2000. The organization’s signature event, “July in the Sky,” brings more than 3,000 people downtown for an Independence Day celebration. The event includes the town’s traditional fireworks display and a street festival including a community band playing patriotic tunes.

From June to September, Rockville hosts “Third Thursdays,” which involve a block party and concert, along with discounts and special offers from downtown merchants, on the third Thursday evening of the month. “People who hadn’t thought about coming downtown on a Thursday night for 10 years are now down here dancing in the street,” says Luise Ernest, Executive Director of the Downtown Association. “It’s been a great way to attract people of all ages.”

Rockville has also initiated an “Adopt a Green Space” program, which not only beautifies the downtown district, but also allows groups from across the community to get involved in the effort. “People from all over town have embraced the fact that downtown does matter, and they want it to be vibrant,” Ernest says.

“The interesting thing about this whole process is that the public really wants us to succeed,” Marcham adds. “The town seems to understand the value of not letting our downtown area go the way of the dinosaur. We just have to figure out how that area was once exploited and try to do it again.”

Six historic woolen mills remain in downtown Rockville. The association plans to install interpretive walking trails to promote the city’s past as an important textile center.
Tuscumbia, Alabama

The revival of Tuscumbia’s downtown began because local businessman Harvey Robbins wanted a good milkshake. He’d grown up drinking milkshakes at the Palace Drugstore soda fountain, and in late 2000, when the Palace had been closed for the better part of a decade, Robbins decided to do something. His company, Robbins Property Development Inc. (RPDI), negotiated the purchase of the old building, cleaned it out, and consulting old photos, restored the soda fountain to its original 1906 appearance, complete with a pharmacy in the back. Within the first year after reopening, the business had sold more than 10,000 milkshakes, along with chili dogs, grilled cheese sandwiches and other old-fashioned specialties, says David Blazer, Vice President of RPDI.

While the Palace Drugstore was experiencing success, more than 50 percent of the buildings surrounding it in downtown Tuscumbia remained empty. RPDI became committed to helping revitalize the area, buying one building after another to be renovated and filled with commercial or residential tenants. Other developers began following Robbins’ lead, and the town has quickly come alive again. The central business district, almost completely vacant a few years ago, is now dotted with new businesses including a piano shop, art gallery, bookstore, herb shop, dress shop and flower shop. Many of the buildings house loft apartments on the upper levels.

“People like the small-town, ‘Mayberry’ atmosphere, and there are waiting lists for the apartments and the retail space,” Blazer says. “People here don’t want to turn Tuscumbia into a modern city. They just want to increase the tax base so it can support itself and preserve our way of life.”

As the birthplace and childhood home of Helen Keller and the site of America’s first frontier railroad and several antebellum homes, Tuscumbia is full of history, and it plans to capitalize on its heritage to continue drawing visitors. For instance, with a grant from the federal and state governments, the city of 8,000 people is renovating its old train depot and adding a train ride through the park.

“The tour buses used to spend a couple of hours seeing our historic sites and then travel on to other surrounding towns,” Blazer says. “But now they’re starting to stay all day in Tuscumbia. And we want to keep it that way.”

Preserving a Way of Life
Wenatchee, Washington

In the late 1980s, the main street through downtown Wenatchee was a four-lane state highway. Not only was the downtown district experiencing high vacancy rates, but the high-traffic situation made it unlikely that people would ever spend time browsing and meandering through the area, says Kathy Allen, Executive Director of the Wenatchee Downtown Association. For that reason, a major streetscape project became the downtown organization’s first effort to revitalize the city center.

“Our city and county worked with the state Department of Transportation to change the highway route to two other streets just west of Main Street,” Allen says. “The change happened in 1989, and our Main Street is now a two-lane street, with angle parking rather than parallel parking.”

The streetscape change opened the door to more revitalization, and in the past 15 years, Wenatchee’s downtown space has gone from 20 percent to 7 percent vacancy at street level. “We’ve taken it one project at a time, focusing on historic buildings,” Allen says. “Many of our old buildings were slip-covered with metal facades that were used to unify downtown buildings in the 1960s and 1970s in an effort to replicate the look of mall stores. Because of that, people had forgotten that we had beautiful buildings. Most of the changes have been made by private property owners who began renovating buildings they’d owned for a long time.”

As a result of the renovations, downtown Wenatchee has welcomed 202 new and expanded businesses over the past 10 years, Allen says. Those businesses include a number of restaurants and unique retail stores, as the downtown area has worked hard to differentiate from the offerings at area malls. “With about 24 restaurants, a new performing arts center and a historic movie theater, there are many more people coming down in their leisure time,” Allen says.

Wenatchee’s new downtown features a public art exhibit called “Art on the Avenues,” which rotates annually and displays 65 pieces of sculpture in various public places throughout downtown. Riverfront Park, previously separated from downtown by railroad tracks, has recently been linked by a walking overpass, making the park easily accessible by pedestrians.

With a $45 million total investment over the past 10 years, this city of almost 30,000 isn’t finished yet. “We have a plan for waterfront redevelopment, which includes trails and ballparks,” Allen says.

“It has been an interesting evolution,” he says. “People look at downtown in a different way; now it’s a place where they like to come and hang out. People have decided it’s a worthwhile place to invest.”

Must-see landmarks in Wenatchee’s new downtown include The Owl Soda Fountain and Gifts, which has operated continuously for almost 100 years.
The DAR and the Restoration of The Paul Revere House 1902–1908

BY PATRICK M. LEEHEY
RESEARCH DIRECTOR
PAUL REVERE MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION
In 1770, 35-year-old Boston silversmith Paul Revere purchased his first home, on North Square, in Boston’s North End neighborhood. The house, a late Tudor-style wooden building with front overhang and prominent decorative drops, was by no means new when Revere bought it. It had been built almost a century earlier, about 1680, as a wealthy or prominent person’s home. The first owner, Robert Howard, was a wealthy Puritan merchant.

By the time Revere bought the house, it had been altered several times. In particular, a third-story addition had been attached at the front, the old, leaded diamond-paned casement windows had been replaced with newer, wooden sash windows, and beam casings and Georgian-style paneling had been added to the interior. Paul Revere owned the house for 30 years, from 1770 to 1800, but he and his family did not live there for some periods during the 1780s and 1790s. After Revere sold the house and moved to a newer dwelling on nearby Charter Street, the old Revere home quickly became a rooming house, and the ground floor was eventually converted into shops. Beginning in the 1840s, large numbers of immigrants rapidly transformed the North End into an overcrowded slum.

Reviving Revere

Paul Revere did not become famous until well after his death. His “midnight ride,” while known about, was generally considered as just one of a number of events associated with the “Lexington Alarm” and the battles of Lexington and Concord. Even the publication of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s now-famous poem, “Paul Revere’s Ride” in the Atlantic Monthly in 1861 did not immediately make Revere into a household name. By the late 19th century, however, the social dislocation produced by increasing immigration and rapid industrialization created among many a nostalgia for earlier times, as well as a perceived need for national heroes to combat what were increasingly seen as alien, un-American influences.

These ideas led to movements such as the Colonial Revival, which involved the investigation into and preservation of artifacts, buildings and documents reflecting the way of life of America’s Colonial past. By this time, Paul Revere had become sufficiently famous that thousands of visitors to Boston each year stopped by to view the old tenement. In spite of its significance, the structure probably would have been torn down or moved eventually if efforts had not been made to preserve it at its original location.

The first organization to take an interest in saving the old Paul Revere home was the newly formed Paul Revere Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. In 1895, the group arranged to have a commemorative plaque placed on the façade of the building, and for an impressive celebration of this event to be held at the nearby Old North Church, where the signal lanterns had been hung on the night of Revere’s famous ride (see accompanying article on page 21).

On December 31, 1902, John Phillips Reynolds Jr., a fourth-generation descendant of Paul Revere, purchased the old Paul Revere home for $12,200. A prominent local businessman, Reynolds was certainly aware of the existence of his famous ancestor’s home. For a time in the 1890s, he may have passed it each day on his way to work at the Walter N. Lowney Co., a chocolate manufacturer in the North End. In 1901, a small fire broke out in the basement of the Revere House. Although it caused minimal damage, this event probably helped focus renewed attention on the structure.

When Reynolds purchased the building in 1902, it had deteriorated a considerable extent, although the basic structure of the house remained remarkably intact. Compared to its neighbors, however, the building was noticeably antiquated and impractical for modern purposes. Asked by a reporter from the Boston Transcript why he purchased the old structure in what was then seen as a less than desirable part of town, Reynolds replied:

“Being much interested in old Boston and regretting the changes which are rapidly obliterating so many of its historic buildings, it seemed to me, when an opportunity arose to secure Paul Revere’s house on North Square, that advantage should be taken of it. It is hoped that others interested in a like way will join in preserving this venerable landmark, and that satisfactory arrangements can be made with some of the historic or patriotic societies for its restoration and maintenance under conditions which will allow the public access to it, which it does not now have. The value of the Revere House is comparatively...”
small, but as the building is entirely unsuited to modern purposes, its destruction could not long be delayed unless a distinct effort were made for its preservation.” (Boston Transcript, December 31, 1902)

Although discussions on the future of the house undoubtedly took place, there is no record that any firm plans were made or any funds collected prior to the spring of 1905. It seems that Reynolds was content to let Mrs. Santosuosso continue to operate a vegetable and fruit store in the former Revere home undisturbed until her existing lease on the property ran out in April 1905.

A Preservation Movement Begins

In a letter dated April 10, 1905, a committee of citizens led by Governor William L. Douglas issued a call for a meeting to be held at the Twentieth Century Club in downtown Boston on April 14, “to organize a movement to save the Paul Revere House.” They sent this letter to a number of prominent individuals in Boston.

The next day, April 11, the Boston Globe published an article titled, “Famous 225-Year-Old Landmark That Boston Soon May Know No More.” In this article, the reporter laments the possible imminent demise of the former Paul Revere House, issuing a dire warning “The march of improvement in North Square, where [the Revere House] stands, together with the steady deterioration of the structure itself, has become such a menace to its further existence that nothing can save it from demolition save a subscription of a sufficient amount for its purchase and permanent preservation.”

Although no formal record of the meeting at the Twentieth Century Club has come to light, various newspaper articles published in the next few days give a good account of the proceedings. Those present—20 of the most prominent citizens of Boston—voted to form a new organization, to be known as the Paul Revere Memorial Association (PRMA), for the purpose of purchasing the former Revere House from its current owner and restoring it to something like its original condition. The officers of the new organization included Lieutenant Governor Curtis Guild Jr., President; Henry L. Higginson, Treasurer; and William Sumner Appleton, Secretary; who along with Reynolds and two others formed the executive committee.

A “permanent executive committee” was also created. This included the governor, the lieutenant governor, the mayor of Boston, Miss Sawtelle (the mistress of the Paul Revere School, a Boston public school near the house), and William B. Revere (a banker and great-grandson of Paul Revere). Also named to the committee was one delegate each from a large number of patriotic and historical organizations, including the Sons of the American Revolution, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Colonial Society, the Massachusetts Historical Society; the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanics Association, St. Andrew’s Lodge of Masons and the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Revere.
Recapturing 18th Century Life

The first recorded meetings of the PRMA were held on March 8 and 12, 1907. Members were elected, the new organization authorized architect Joseph Chandler to proceed with plans to restore the house, and the members voted to establish a fund to finance the purchasing and restoration of the house.

In a letter to the Boston Transcript a few days later, William Sumner Appleton outlined the goals of the new organization, the most important of which was raising the $30,000 needed to purchase and restore the house.

Appleton also outlined the possible uses for the home once it had been restored: “The uses to which such a house, when restored, may be put are various. Part at least, must be devoted to a collection of Revere relics. There should be found examples of his engraving and silver work, either originals or facsimiles, and such personal souvenirs as can be obtained. It has been suggested that the ground floor might be used as a public library branch, or perhaps one of the many North End charities could be here provided with quarters. Another possibility is the use of the whole house as a museum to illustrate in all its details domestic life in an old Boston home of the 18th century.”

At the end of his letter, Appleton appended a long list of those who had already contributed to the Revere House fund. Prominent on this list were Pauline Revere Thayer, great-granddaughter of Paul Revere, and her husband Nathaniel Thayer, who donated $1,000 each. Several DAR chapters and many individual DAR members made donations as well. Fund raising proceeded rapidly, and by August 1905, the association had collected more than $10,000. Funds came in more slowly after this point, but by the winter of 1907, while the restoration work was in progress, all but about $4,000 of the total amount needed to complete the work had been subscribed. It appears that Nathaniel and Pauline Revere Thayer provided the final $3,500 needed in the form of a loan, which was paid off by the PRMA in installments after the house was opened to the public.

The Grand Opening

On December 11, 1906, John Phillips Reynolds Jr. sold the Paul Revere House property to several trustees, who in turn sold the home to the Paul Revere Memorial Association on May 1, 1907. By April 1908, restoration work on the house had been completed, and the structure was ready to be opened to the public. At the opening ceremonies held in the first floor front room (“the Hall”) on April 18, 1908, Reynolds gave the opening speech and then introduced former Governor John D. Long, the featured speaker for the occasion. Long’s speech recapped the heroic deeds of Paul Revere and referred to the house as a symbol of the American spirit for the Italian immigrants then living in the neighborhood. Following the governor’s speech, the guests were invited to look around the house, which was furnished with artifacts such as Revere’s “water-ewer” and “toddy-warmer” (goffering-iron), a spinning wheel, four-poster bed, and other Colonial-era furniture and memorabilia.

As restored, the Paul Revere House presents an interesting combination of 17th and 18th century architectural features. Because Joseph Chandler decided to remove the third story front addition to the building (he felt that it had been added after Revere sold the house in 1800), the exterior today more closely resembles its appearance when the house was built around 1680, rather than its appearance in Revere’s day. Chandler retained as many early features inside the house as he could (including a fragment of wallpaper that probably adorned the walls during Revere’s occupancy).

From 1908 until the early 1970s, the Paul Revere House was operated by an assortment of paid caretakers, guides and volunteers under the supervision of various committees on the PRMA board. During this time, a series of changes were made to the decorative finishes and furnishings in the house, all in an effort to provide a more accurate picture of the Revere use of the house. Substantial restoration work was also done on the south wall of the house after an adjacent structure was torn down in 1942. In the early 1970s, realizing that visitors would increase dramatically during the bicentennial celebration of American independence, the board hired the house’s first professional director.

During the period 1983–86 the board and staff of the Paul Revere House committed significant research and money to restoration work that produced the basic look of the rooms as they are shown today. The key change was to furnish and decorate the large ground floor front room (“the Hall”) to reflect the first ownership of the house. The other three rooms contain furniture and artifacts from Paul Revere’s era, including six pieces of furniture that have come down through the Revere family, original Revere silver pieces and other personal artifacts from the PRMA collection.

Since opening in 1908, the Revere House has educated more than 8 million visitors, 2 million in the last 10 years alone. In recent years, PRMA has focused its efforts on refining its interpretation of the house; developing numerous educational programs for children, adults and families; maintaining active research, outreach and publications programs; and augmenting its collection, while at the same time remaining one of the most visited historic sites in downtown Boston.
On April 18, 1895, the newly formed Paul Revere Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution placed a bronze plaque on the facade of a dilapidated wooden building at 19 North Square in Boston. The marker stated simply: “Here Lived Paul Revere. 1770–1800. Placed by the Paul Revere Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution. 1895.”

At the time of the plaque’s dedication, Paul Revere’s former home contained a cigar factory, grocery store and tenement apartments. The DAR intended this memorial to inspire patriotism among the predominantly foreign-born people who lived and worked in the neighborhood. The tablet, placed with little ceremony, was positioned between signs advertising the businesses that operated out of the building. The plaque was designed by the chapter and was specially manufactured by the Blake Bell Company, a firm that traced its origins back to Paul Revere’s bell-casting business.

The Paul Revere Chapter was formed on April 19, 1894, by a group of 16 women from Boston and its environs who met at the Marlborough Street residence of Mrs. Charles M. Green, Massachusetts State Regent of DAR. The name Paul Revere was suggested and unanimously approved in honor of the meeting day, the first Patriots Day, designated as such by Governor Greenhalge to commemorate Paul Revere’s ride and Massachusetts’ participation in the Revolutionary War.

The Paul Revere Chapter, the third formed in Massachusetts, received its charter from the NSDAR on September 27, 1894. At the February 7, 1895, meeting of the chapter, Mrs. Crosby read a recent Boston Post article about Paul Revere, his residence at 19 North Square and his activities as an engraver and Patriot. Inspired by this article, the Paul Revere Chapter decided to publicly commemorate Revere by placing a tablet on his former residence.

To officially dedicate the plaque, an elaborate Patriots Day celebration was held the next day, April 19, 1895, at 11 a.m., at the North End’s Old North Church (Christ Church). The church was sumptuously decorated with American flags. Portraits of George and Martha Washington on gold easels flanked the altar, and a silk banner bearing the image of Paul Revere was draped over the high pulpit.

The Paul Revere Chapter repeated its Patriots Day celebration at the Old North Church for more than 10 years. As time passed, local children became increasingly involved in the event. An article in the Boston Journal on April 20, 1897, reported that as patrons of the third annual event in 1897 left the church, “youth of most prominently foreign lineage besought of each the privilege of showing Paul Revere’s house.” In 1904, the Paul Revere Chapter included 200 neighborhood children in the ceremony as special guests to “increase and stimulate” in them a love for their adopted country.

It is not known whether the plaque placed by the Paul Revere Chapter at 19 North Square and the annual Patriots Day celebrations that followed gave the cigar manufacturer, immigrant banker or tenants who occupied the famous house the intended pride of place, love of country and interest in American history. We do know that visitors to the North End became increasingly aware of the existence of Paul Revere’s house because of the efforts of the Paul Revere Chapter.

By the time the house had been purchased in 1902 by John Phillips Reynolds Jr., a Revere descendent, and money was being raised to restore the building, the Paul Revere House had already been visited by thousands of patriotic Americans. The Paul Revere Chapter did not abandon its charge after the Paul Revere Memorial Association (PRMA) took over as official guardian of the Revere House in 1907. Instead, the women in the chapter donated money and furniture to the museum and became life members of PRMA.

Today, the plaque placed by the Paul Revere Chapter of DAR remains not only as a memorial to Paul Revere but also to the patriotic chapter he inspired.
BY THE THOUSANDS, THEY COME to observe, the line snaking around the block on Washington’s Constitution Avenue: Moms with their children. School groups on field trips. Visitors from dozens of foreign countries. Veterans. And, of course, Daughters of the American Revolution members.

They’ve arrived to watch an operation in progress. The “patient” is in open view, the subject of a meticulous, painstaking effort to stave off any further damage. Day by day, month by month, year by year, the caretakers go about their duty, knowing that while the patient will never be restored completely, their devotion will ensure a sense of vibrant permanence.

For the last six years, this has been the scene at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History in Washington. The “patient” is the 190-year-old Star-Spangled Banner, the very flag that flew over Ft. McHenry in Baltimore. At the end of a 25-hour British bombardment on September 14, 1814, a Washington lawyer named Francis Scott Key saw the flag flying over the fort by the dawn’s early light and was inspired to write a poem.

BY DENNIS MCCAFFERTY
Top left: Detail of one star of the Star-Spangled Banner (photograph by Jeff Tinsley). Top right: The Star-Spangled Banner just before it was taken down in December 1998 for the conservation treatment (photograph by Hugh Talman). Bottom: Shortly after the Star-Spangled Banner was taken down from display, conservators inspect and document the flag’s condition while sitting or lying on the gantry, a movable bridge that allows access to all areas of the flag (photo by Jeff Tinsley).
Visitors look through a 50-foot glass wall into the conservation lab where conservators treat the famous flag to clean and stabilize it. While the conservation work will be completed this summer, the flag will remain on view in the lab until a new state-of-the-art gallery is finished in about two years. The almost 200-year old flag is too fragile to hang at a 90-degree angle and will remain supported on a table at a low angle (photo by Jeff Tinsley).
The poem was later set to music based on a then-popular tune, “To Anacreon in Heaven.” It gradually gained the status of a national anthem, although it was not officially granted that designation by Congress until 1931.

Over the years—at first because of artillery fire, and later because of damage from light, wind, unaccommodating temperatures and even bugs—the flag has deteriorated considerably. It has shrunk about 240 square feet from its original 30 by 42 feet. Much of the damage was actually intentional. Before modern-day codes of flag stewardship took hold, pieces of the Star-Spangled Banner were cut out and given to a deserving community or military leader, which was considered a great honor. The 15th star has been missing since before 1873.

For decades, the flag remained with the estate of Lieutenant Colonel George Armistead, who commissioned it to fly over his fort and acquired it after the battle. It arrived at the Smithsonian in 1907 on loan and, in 1912, became a permanent gift. But by then, it was in disrepair and in danger of further deterioration. Although various efforts held off critical damage, it was clear that a major conservation undertaking would be needed.

In 1998, thanks to $18.6 million raised in private and public funding, the Star-Spangled Banner Project was launched. At the forefront of this project is its curator, Marilyn Zoidis, a native of Bangor, Maine, who first saw the flag when she was 14 while visiting Washington on a family vacation. “I remember it clearly, as part of an entire, wonderful trip to the nation’s capital,” Zoidis says. “As someone who has always loved history, it was overwhelming to me.”

Her conservation work on the flag has always been on public display, inside a state-of-the-art laboratory with a 50-foot-long, floor-to-ceiling glass wall for visitors. There have been seven professional conservators working on the flag itself, along with a combination of educators, curators, designers and management officials involved in the overall project. The room is kept at a moderate temperature with a steady humidity level of 50 percent. Slightly positive air pressure inside the room prevents infiltration of dirt, and an exhaust system—nicknamed the “elephant trunks”—removes chemical vapors directly above specific workspaces.

It’s much more than a clinical demonstration; observers are emotionally moved by the scene. “It chokes me up to see this,” says Deanna Williamson, a visitor from Fredericksburg, Va. “This flag represents so much. We’re such a disposable society today. I’m worried that there won’t be anything left for my children to see and appreciate. Having an effort like this take place, with all the time and energy that’s gone into it, it is so worthwhile.”

Now, Zoidis’ years of dedication to the project are nearing a productive end with the successful completion of the project in late summer 2004. Her book, For Which It Stands: The American Flag in American Life (Smithsonian Books) will be out in spring 2006. By June 2006, the museum will officially open a two-story, central gallery to house the flag, which will be enclosed in a chamber to protect it from light and other potentially harmful elements. In a recent conversation with American Spirit, Zoidis explains why this effort is such a critical part of keeping our nation’s often-fragile relics of history alive. “Our goals are two-pronged,” she says. “One is to save the flag, that’s first and foremost. The other is to tell the story of not only this flag, but of the American flag as a whole.” Here’s more of what she has to say about the Star-Spangled Banner and the effort to save it:

 qué flag inspire such passion?

We’re asking these questions ourselves. We’ve found that people are passionate about this flag because it represents a time when the state of this young country hung in the balance. The War of 1812 was not going well for us. If the British had captured Baltimore, who knows which direction it would have gone. If they had won, would this American experiment of democracy have survived? When Francis Scott Key saw the flag amid the victory, he wrote this very eloquent poem. It really struck a chord with Americans. Eighteen newspapers reprinted his words. At the time, we had been through a lot. The American Revolution was a long, drawn-out conflict. There was financial hardship in the land. There was uncertainty. The government was embarking upon the writing of a new Constitution. There was tension: The Whiskey Rebellion resulted in (George) Washington’s sending troops to Western Pennsylvania to quell it. That’s why the flag meant so much. As Key wrote: “Oh, say, does that Star-Spangled Banner Yet Wave ...” It still strikes a chord with Americans. It still matters. In difficult times, the flag is still there.

And the flag continues to be there...

Exactly. After the terrorism attacks of September 11, 2001, on the World Trade Center and Pentagon sites, a new generation of Americans is turning to this flag. They feel that this symbol stands for a larger measure of what this country means, what we’re all about and how we measure up.
Here at the museum, immediately after the attacks, we discussed whether we should close the flag exhibit. There was much uncertainty about another attack, and this flag was just sitting here, an attractive target. The day of the attack, we all were ordered to evacuate. But the very next day, on September 12, we came back, and we decided that we’d keep the flag on display. “If there was ever a time for Americans to see the flag,” we reasoned, “it is now.”

And the people who visit can see that, like this nation, the flag has been through a lot. Pieces are worn away. Parts of it are soiled. The age it’s showing is part of the history of the flag, part of our heritage. People find that very compelling.

Tell us about the wonderful anecdotes you’ve encountered, about visitors expressing their emotions at the project site.

It’s been so special. Conservators will look up from working on the flag and see people giving them the “thumbs up” or a high-five in the air. Visitors will put their hands on their hearts and mouth the words “Thank you.” Military men and women in uniform will salute them. Once, we had a second-grade class burst out singing the anthem. One time, I saw a woman who was just staring so intently. She just stared and stared. I started a conversation because I was so curious. I said something to the effect of “Pretty impressive, huh?” She said, “This flag means so much to my family.” I told her that the flag means a lot to many families in America. She said, “Yes, but especially mine. I had five brothers who went to serve in World War II. Three came back. I had two go to Korea. One came back.”

When you hear something like this from a member of the public, you’re humbled.

Tell us some of the back story about this flag’s journey. It’s been through a lot, hasn’t it?

Yes. It was designed to last for two years, from 1813 to 1815. It flew in the sunlight and that damaged it. There was dirt flying. There was incendiary damage from the battle. Then, Lieutenant Colonel Armistead, the commander of the fort, took it home when he left the
the Flag Lady

By Lori B. Murray

Mary Leavitt vividly recalls when her son was sent to the Mediterranean during the Iranian Crisis in the 1970s. He had just completed boot camp in San Diego, and the family was living in Libertyville, Ill., which they chose because Leavitt simply liked the name. At the same time, Leavitt stumbled onto a new career when a Chicago disc jockey encouraged people to support U.S. troops and fly the flag. The trouble was that Leavitt couldn’t find a flag—it was autumn, and retailers told her to come back in the spring, closer to Memorial Day. Frustrated, she searched the Yellow Pages for a flag manufacturer. After learning that the company only sold wholesale, she convinced them to let her sell 12 flags. They gave her a week to complete the task; she sold them all in four days.

Leavitt started selling flags out of the trunk of her car. By the following year, the Chicago Sun-Times did a story about her remarkable success and dubbed her “The Flag Lady.” Now 25 years later, she is the owner of the Flag Lady’s Flag Store in Columbus, Ohio, a haven for patriotic paraphernalia and flags of every make and model, especially the American flag.

A member of Ann Simpson Davis Chapter of DAR in Columbus, Ohio, Leavitt’s deep-rooted patriotic spirit is unsurpassed. Her grandmother carried a 4- by 6-inch flag in her purse, and Leavitt remembers the day they sent her older brother off to serve in World War II. Her mother placed a star in the window, and the family proudly flew the American flag. “Because of my childhood, I have always been attracted to patriotic themes, the flag and the red, white and blue,” she says. “I thank God I was born in the United States of America.”

Visitors to the Flag Lady’s Flag Store (www.flagladyinc.com) find a thriving business propelled by an increase in patriotic sentiment since 9/11. Patriotic music plays in the background, and friendly sales clerks answer questions about everything from creating a custom flag to flag etiquette. Leavitt also designs and makes a host of flags for corporate America, along with a selection of decorative flags for the home and garden.

Whitney Smith, of the Flag Research Center in Winchester, Mass., knows Leavitt well because of her frequent inquiries. “Mary is full of enthusiasm and always wants to do things right,” he says. Smith fields a variety of questions about vexillology (the study of flags) every day, and many of them are about flag protocol.

At no time has Leavitt’s patriotic spirit been stronger than over the past year, while troops continue to be deployed to Iraq. People who have loved ones in the armed forces visit the store to purchase their flags, flag pins and yellow ribbons. “It’s interesting when you see the passion, emotion and love they have for this country,” she says. “It’s heartwarming to hear them talk about it.”

For Mary Leavitt, it’s just one more reason why she loves being called The Flag Lady.

Visit the Flag Lady’s Flag Store at 4567 North High St., Columbus, Ohio, 43214; (800) 797–FLAG (3524).
America’s Treasures project. Ralph Lauren heard about this and contacted the White House to say he’d like to participate.

It’s not that unexpected. Mr. Lauren has put the American flag on his clothing, and he’s the personification of the story of the American dream. This means a lot to him. In fact, we just made a presentation to the Polo Ralph Lauren Foundation and corporate officers to update them on the progress and talk about plans for June 2006.

You have made a career out of not only studying the flag, but all of America’s patriotic symbols. Why is this intriguing to you?

I’m fascinated by how they express the ideals of this country, and how our visions of these symbols change to reflect the changes in the nation. Take the Bald Eagle. If you look at quilts and other materials depicting it throughout history, you’ll see the eagle mature from this scrawny-looking thing to a big and bold bird. Uncle Sam transformed in the same way. By the 1890s, he was a very masculine and strong figure. This came from the Spanish-American War and Teddy Roosevelt and the Rough Riders. Uncle Sam couldn’t be some wimpy-looking guy, after all.

How do you get young people interested in symbols such as the flag and the Star-Spangled Banner?

First of all, we shouldn’t assume that it will be difficult for them to get interested. Kids love the story behind this flag. They ask all kinds of questions about it. Young people today are very interested in finding out about what is myth and what is real. And, like many museums, we encourage a lot of hands-on involvement. At our science center, we have a program for children age 5 or older, where they can test flag material to see if it’s wool or cotton. They can peer at microscopes and determine the specific weave of the material. We have “flag hunt days,” where they go on a sort of scavenger hunt, looking for images of the flag in other parts of the museum, like on a Native American’s moccasins.

The fact that the flag has been through a lot and has survived seems an appropriate metaphor. What are your thoughts on that?

It’s a metaphor for this country. We’ve seen war, the Depression, civil unrest and so much else. But we’ve endured. This flag has survived battle, the elements and had pieces cut out of it, but it has survived. It was only made to last two years, and it’s lasted nearly two centuries. It speaks to the resiliency of both the flag and our nation.

When you see it, there’s no mistaking it: The flag is still there.

For more information about the Star Spangled Banner project, visit americanhistory.si.edu/ssb.
Photography By Allen Clark • Endless summer days sparkle with the joy of bubbles.

Summer Breeze
### Patriotic Bubble Wands

**What You Need:**

- Star-shape cookie cutter
- 40-inch piece of 20-gauge wire
- Wire cutters

**Instructions:**

Use different sized cookie cutters for variety.

1. Fold a 40-inch piece of wire in half. Starting at one point of the star, bend the wire around the cookie cutter to form the star outline. When the wire meets, twist to secure.

2. Straighten the ends of the wire and trim them with wire cutters to make them an even length.

3. Carefully remove the star from the cookie cutter. Spray-paint the star. Let the paint dry, then grab a bottle of bubbles!

**More Ideas:**

- Decorate your deck for the Fourth of July with the wands.
- Transform the bubble wands into napkin holders by wrapping the handle around an empty paper towel tube to make a ring.
- Wrap containers of bubble liquid in red and blue construction paper to complete the holiday atmosphere.
COLONIAL AMERICA AT PLAY

As James Howell Is Famously Credited With Saying,

“All Work and No Play Make Jack a Dull Boy.”

BY MAUREEN TAYLOR

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG FOUNDATION WILLIAMSBURG, VA.
Time for sport and recreation was limited throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, as Colonists labored to establish new homes and provide for their families. There were no vacation days or family trips, except to visit relatives or for business. The tourist industry didn’t develop until the 19th century, but earlier generations used whatever free time they had to indulge in a variety of activities—survival skills, athletic games and deadly contests.

The ball games, blood sports and pub activities of the 17th and 18th centuries were varied and dangerous, and played only by men. Women did not participate in any of these diversions. Their husbands and fathers didn’t think them fit for sports, although plenty of women engaged in strenuous physical labor to help their families. Women primarily socialized with each other at quilting bees and church events.

Puritans and Quakers encouraged recreational pursuits that caused no injury and were natural, such as hunting and fishing, because they produced food as well as sharpened military skills. Any activity regarded as frivolous or injurious met with strong opposition from Colonial leaders.

The common belief that New England Puritans disliked sports was untrue. They actually thought physical activity was healthy, as long as it didn’t take place on the Sabbath. Southerners didn’t bring such restrictive rules to the Colonies. Instead, they introduced sports and games first codified by King James I in his Book of Sports in 1618, a book reprinted by his son Charles I in 1633.

Ball Games

Young men—students, black and white sailors, and soldiers—engaged in rowdy ball games. Although Englishmen participated in sports such as soccer, none of these was common in the New England Colonies until the late 17th century. Participation in idle and noisy pursuits was discouraged. On Christmas Day 1621, Governor William Bradford of Plymouth Colony recorded in his journal that he had found a group of workmen playing stool ball, a predecessor of cricket. To the Puritan mind, this diversion was an unsavory activity.

Despite the feelings of their political and church leaders, 17th-century New Englanders persisted in playing games. Some resembled contemporary sports such as football, soccer, cricket, golf, handball and lacrosse. The “Boston game,” played by kicking a ball past opponents and over a goal line, resembled football. Revolutionary War hero Nathan Hale liked to play a game that resembled soccer. Men enjoyed a variety of ball games throughout the Colonies. Wicket or cricket players used a shovel-shaped bat. An ancestral version of handball called “fives” required players to hit balls with their hands. Dutch and Scottish settlers brought with them the game of golf, or *kolf*, while Native American tribes played more than 40 versions of a type of lacrosse.

Modern-day baseball descends from several Colonial games that had common features recognizable today. For instance, an English game known as “bittle ball” had bases and a pitcher, while “rounders,” also known as the “New England game,” was played by two teams hitting a ball and running around bases. Initially popular in New England, it spread to other Colonies where a student
at Princeton dubbed it “baste ball.” Revolutionary War soldiers played it and at least one called it “playing at base.” In Albion’s Seed: Four British Folkways in America (Oxford University Press, 1989), David Hackett Fischer referred to baseball’s “order and action, reason and emotion, individuality and collective effort” as being representative of its Puritan origins.

Bowling, also known as skittles, used a ball to knock down pins. Enterprising Revolutionary War soldiers who lacked a regulation ball used cannonballs instead.

It is unknown exactly how common these ball games were in the 18th century because there is little written evidence. These games were products of occasional leisure time, not planned pursuits. Team and town sports didn’t become established until the early 19th century.

Martial Arts
Military preparation, necessary in the Colonial world, contributed to the development of skills-based sports. In the 17th and 18th centuries, men between the ages of 16 and 60 met weekly to practice marksmanship, running and hand-to-hand combat on training days. The effectiveness of these skills meant the difference between life and death for a frontier community. Competitions pitted men against each other in contests of shooting, running and wrestling. Two 17th-century Connecticut ministers, the Reverends Henry Smith and John Trumbull, became legendary for their wrestling abilities. In most of the country, all men participated in these activities. But in Colonial Virginia, many activities were reserved for gentlemen of the ruling elite only.

Spectator Sports
While most recreational activities were between individuals or small groups, horse racing holds the distinction of being the only organized spectator sport in the Colonies in the 18th century. Racing became a pastime that encouraged individuals to travel to races. Even small communities had racecourses for events. Betting on the outcome was firmly in place by the time of the Revolution. Southern planters often wagered outrageous sums of money and hundreds of pounds of tobacco on these events.

Men also competed against each other in front of an audience. Today’s track and field events have roots in the Scottish “Caledonian Games.” Foot races, jumping, shot putting, sack races and the three-legged race were imported by Scottish immigrants. Part athletic competition and part social event, these games attracted visitors from outside the community.

Tavern Tales
Drinking, often to excess, was an everyday part of Colonial life. Social drinking, indulging at meals and drunkenness all contributed to an average consumption of approximately a gallon per week of hard cider, distilled spirits and wine per man. Women rarely drank.

The inebriated state of many tavern patrons led to dangerous and uncontrolled fights that often broke out over minor disagreements, with biting, kicking and eye gouging a standard part of the process. Some Colonies passed laws regulating fistfighting. Boxing with rules bore little resemblance to these tavern brawls.

Taverns were notorious for offering entertainment that encouraged brutality. Blood sports were especially common at taverns. In Puritans at Play: Leisure and Recreation in Colonial New England
Seventeenth-century Puritans accepted dancing as an expression of happiness, as long as men and women danced separately. In other areas of the country, couples mingled but danced apart.

Swimming was a natural extension of living in the wilderness. With ponds, lakes, rivers and the ocean nearby, many young boys learned to swim. Benjamin Franklin frequently swam. In the winter, those same rivers and ponds became usable for ice-skating, a popular activity on the Schuylkill and Delaware rivers.

Social Settings
Not all recreation involved physical exercise. Women were discouraged from physical exercise, except when it was economically important. But they could participate in socially acceptable recreational venues, gathering together with other women to sew or work on church-related activities. Card games and dances offered women entertainment, even if they didn’t interact directly with men.

Cards games appealed to all economic groups, and even women played cards. Manuals such as the Complete Gamester (1674), and Hoyle’s (1743) provided rules to games like whist. Whist was the game of choice for the professional classes and, unlike poker, did not encourage gambling. Cribbage, a game of the lower classes, is still played today. Native Americans also engaged in games involving dice and cards.

Puritans in the 17th century accepted dancing as an expression of happiness, just as long as men and women danced separately. In other areas of the country, couples mingled but danced apart. Couples in the 18th century danced in groups according to the rules of contradanses or cotillions that prescribed certain steps. The dance ended when the couples had executed the full set of steps. Mixed couples didn’t become fashionable until the waltz in the early 1800s.

The Evolution of New Games
Regardless of where your ancestors lived, there were physical activities or entertainments to fill time between work, church and sleep. For instance, Quakers encouraged passive entertainment such as gardening. Enjoyed by both men and women, working in the garden was also useful because it provided food.

Sports and recreation activities offer evidence of the varied opportunities for relaxation, both those imported by immigrants and those incorporated from native cultures. In some cases, this crossover resulted in new games such as ice hockey—a combination of English field hockey and Native American lacrosse.

Our ancestors’ interest in recreation crossed cultural boundaries and class distinctions, uniting the country. With their physical exercise, sociability and competition, sports and games were just as enthralling to our ancestors as they are today.

Next time you watch the Super Bowl or World Series, think about the humble beginnings of these games played without padding, rules or playing fields.
American Spirit • July/August 2004

BOSTON’S ICE KING

Frederic Tudor And The Frozen Water Trade by Sharon McDonnell

Next time you swirl ice in your glass or relish a dish of ice cream, think of the canny Boston merchant who chopped blocks of ice from New England lakes in the early 1800s, and shipped them to the American South, the Caribbean and even India, due to an unshakable conviction that people in warm climates might enjoy cool beverages.
New Englanders saw frozen lakes in winter; they thought of skating. When Frederic Tudor looked at ice, he saw dollar signs. Everything that could possibly go wrong for him did. He endured scorn and derision for years for his obsession with a "worthless" commodity.

Tudor suffered debtors’ prison, unreliable partners, problems with foreign governments, melting cargoes, shipwrecks, pirate attacks, bouts of yellow fever and inclement weather. Yet, the "Boston Ice King" died at 80 a wealthy and respected man. The "frozen water trade," as seamen called the industry that he pioneered, supplied the public’s cravings for ice—a craving it previously didn’t know it had—and employed thousands of men and horses many years before artificial refrigeration was invented.

From the very epitome of the triumph of steely perseverance over adversity, Tudor lived by a motto that he inscribed on the leather cover of the ice diaries he kept from 1805-38 (now at Harvard Business School): “He who gives back at the first repulse and without striking the second blow, despairs of success, has never been, is not, and never will be, a hero in love, war or business.”

From Rockwood Pond to the Caribbean

Born in 1783 to William Tudor, a Harvard-trained Boston lawyer and judge advocate in George Washington’s army, Frederic Tudor ended his schooling at 13 when he left Boston Latin School and became an apprentice in a shop. Two catalysts in his youth sparked his interest in ice. The Tudor children enjoyed iced drinks and ice cream in summer thanks to ice from Rockwood Pond, near Boston, where the family’s country estate was located. The family stocked an icehouse in winter, as did some other affluent Bostonians. He was also affected by an 1801 trip to Havana, Cuba, and Charleston, S.C., that he took at age 17 with his older, invalid brother John Henry, where they suffered from the intense heat.

When he turned 21, Tudor and his more skeptical brother, William, 26, decided to pool their money and ship ice to the Caribbean in 1805. The French colony of Martinique was their test market. The French-speaking William and their cousin, James Savage, were to meet with the Colonial governor to request a monopoly to sell ice on the island, which Frederic was convinced he needed to stave off the rivals that would appear immediately. Staying home to make arrangements, Frederic had no choice but to buy a brig for $4,750, instead of paying a freight charge on a ship, since ship owners refused to carry an ice cargo—fearful that it might melt so much the ship might be harder to handle later on.

Despite ridicule from Boston merchants and his father’s strong disapproval, Tudor sailed on the Favorite with 130 tons of ice, packed in hay, in February 1806—carved, most likely, from Rockwood Pond. He arrived less than a month later in St. Pierre, Martinique, to an audience utterly unprepared for the strange commodity for sale. Although flyers printed in French advised customers to bring a wool cloth or other material to wrap the ice in, one man placed his ice chunk in front of his house on a plate on a sunny day, and then complained when it vanished. Another placed it in salt. Because the island had no icehouse to store the ice, Frederic was forced to sell his ice directly from the Favorite. In a few days, it had entirely melted. His one success was a café, where the grateful café owner learned how to make ice cream.

Cool Drinks in Cuba

Though the Martinique experiment resulted in $4,000 in losses, Tudor was undeterred. He wanted to pursue Cuba and the British West Indies next. His brother was sent to London
to seek a monopoly for Britain’s Caribbean colonies. Despite initial suspicions that the request was a cover for smuggling, the monopoly was granted for Barbados, Jamaica, and Antigua.

Determined that from now on an icehouse must be ready in any port where he planned to sell ice, Tudor had a primitive icehouse built in Havana through another cousin, William Savage, who lived there. After 180 tons were shipped to Havana in January 1807, the ice scored a big hit with cafes for cool drinks and ice cream, and Savage sold $6,000 worth of ice in two weeks.

Unfortunately, Tudor was unable to take advantage of his British West Indies monopoly and had to drop the Havana trade. This was due to the Embargo Act, under which trade by American ships away from East Coast seaports was banned from 1807–09; the War of 1812, which similarly affected American shipping; and his serious financial problems. He landed in debtors’ prison for the first time in 1812, and again in 1813 for owing $300. One might assume Tudor would be discouraged, but one would be wrong.

“I smiled to think that anyone should believe I was beaten, or in the slightest degree daunted in the steady purpose I had formed of accomplishing the payment of every dollar of debt and lifting myself to lord it over, if I chose, my humble creditor and his instrument. I never doubted I should accomplish what I have accomplished,” he wrote in his diary.

An Enterprising Marketer

But then Tudor’s fortunes began to turn, and he conquered three Southern cities in fairly short order. He won over Charleston, S.C., in 1817, after he craftily persuaded a Boston merchant, Samuel Davenport, to front the money for an icehouse in exchange for a one-third ownership interest. Savannah, Ga., warmly embraced his frigid cargoes in 1819. New Orleans—where he sold four times more ice than he expected in 1821—soon became his top U.S. market.

Enterprising in his pursuit of ice when the weather was unkind, in the summer of 1819 he dispatched a sea captain from Maine to sail near Labrador to hack off chunks from an iceberg. These were to be shipped to Martinique, a market he revived. Unfortunately, the iceberg toppled over, cutting a hole in the ship. Only steady pumping prevented a shipwreck, and the ship ultimately reached the Caribbean without further mishap. At other times, Maine’s Kennebec River served as his late-season ice farm, because it stayed frozen much longer than the lakes in Massachusetts.

While steamy New Orleans was ripe with potential for the ice trade, Tudor lacked the money to pursue it—until he had an astonishing stroke of luck. Admirers eager to subsidize his brother William’s literary career—he was now editor of The North American Review—offered to invest in his New Orleans venture so long as William received an annual annuity of $600.

Tudor soon sent another brother, Harry, as his agent to scout out a site for an icehouse. When he arrived, however, Harry found that potential investors had backed away, which threatened to torpedo the deal. Once again, good fortune smiled on him. By accident, Harry ran into a former Rockwood Pond neighbor in New Orleans, whose education had been paid for by the Tudors’ kindly father, and who gratefully loaned him money to buy an icehouse site.

Ice Harvesting Advances

Inventions by Nathaniel Wyeth, who supplied ice to Tudor from Fresh Pond in Cambridge, Mass., changed the ice trade forever.

Fresh Pond had become Tudor’s major ice-harvesting spot, where he was the biggest owner of shoreline rights to stake his claim for ice. In 1825, Wyeth, an ancestor of painter Andrew Wyeth, invented a horse-drawn plow whose metal blade cut grooves into the ice. The horses were then turned so that the plow was dragged at right angles over the grooved ice. Wyeth’s plow enabled mass production by allowing more ice to be cut faster and more efficiently than by the cumbersome process of hacking it out with a chisel and pickax. The ice also stacked easier, so less of it melted. This invention “would within 20 years or so transform America into the first refrigerated society, and make New England a major exporter of ice to countries as far away as India,” declared Gavin Weightman in his biography of Frederic Tudor, The Frozen-Water Trade (Hyperion Press, 2003). Naturally, the Wyeth plow also made it easier for

Tools such as the saw (left) and the ice tongs were necessary for the harvesting of ice from the lakes in New England.
Tudor had been tantalized by India for career, beckoned in 1833. Although and the most profitable market of his crowning achievement of Tudor’s life one-third interest, sailed on the William Rogers, who signed on at a sweltering Britons. Another partner, East India Company, and home to many Calcutta, headquarters of the British to ship ice 16,000 miles away to Samuel Austin suggested a joint venture sue it. But then Boston merchant years, he had lacked the money to pur- on the ship’s progress. Many Britons Calcutta newspapers excitedly reported Cape of Good Hope neared its end, in May 1833.

As the four-month voyage around the Subcontinent India, which would represent the crowning achievement of Tudor’s life and the most profitable market of his career, beckoned in 1833. Although Tudor had been tantalized by India for years, he had lacked the money to pursue it. But then Boston merchant Samuel Austin suggested a joint venture to ship ice 16,000 miles away to Calcutta, headquarters of the British East India Company, and home to many sweltering Britons. Another partner, William Rogers, who signed on at a one-third interest, sailed on the Tuscany as a business agent with a cargo of 180 tons of New England ice packed in hay in May 1833.

As the four-month voyage around the Cape of Good Hope neared its end, Calcutta newspapers excitedly reported on the ship’s progress. Many Britons thought it was simply a cheeky ex-colony’s joke on the mother country. But one newspaper proposed that the ice should be declared duty-free, so it could be unloaded without delay, and unloading at night to slow melting, despite the customary ban on unloading at night. Both steps were granted by the city’s Board of Customs, Salt and Opium. Still another newspaper fretted that a steamship should tow the Tuscany 70 miles from the Indian Ocean up the Hooghly River.

Calcutta offered the deliriously enthusiastic reception that Tudor had always dreamed of. The Calcutta Courier rapturously wrote that those responsible for bringing ice to their city “deserve to be handed down to posterity with the names of other benefactors of mankind—the importer of the potato into Europe, the disseminator of useful plants in regions where they were unknown, and the authors of every species of discovery,” according to Weightman’s biography.

A silver-gilt cup was presented to Rogers by the Governor-General of India, Lord William Bentinck, honoring, its inscription said, “the spirit and enterprise which projected and successfully executed the first attempt to import a cargo of American ice into Calcutta.” Tudor was not mentioned. Rogers then promptly vanished with the trophy and reportedly became a boardinghouse owner and part-time dentist in Calcutta. The cup is now in the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Mass.

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Winning Over the Subcontinent

In the letter, he summarized his 20-year history in the ice trade, and outlined his breaking with Rogers—whom he reviled as an ignoramus about ice—and Austin, whom he called “failure-prone.” A Calcutta newspaper printed his missive in full. As a result, the British community granted him a monopoly on ice sales and collected subscriptions to build a stone icehouse.

By 1847, Tudor began obtaining ice from Walden Pond, where he owned harvesting rights (to the horror of Henry David Thoreau, who lived in a lakeside log cabin). The ice trade then exported almost 52,000 tons of ice on 258 ships to 28 U.S. cities, from long-standing markets like Charleston, New Orleans and Savannah to Key West, Fla., Mobile, Ala., Washington, and Norfolk, Va. In addition, 23,000 tons were shipped overseas to Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Hong Kong, Ceylon, Rio de Janeiro, Jakarta, Indonesia and more than a half-dozen Caribbean islands. Singapore and Australia joined the list by the 1850s.

Boston still dominated the supply chain—ice was its biggest tonnage of cargo. Summer ice deliveries by horse-drawn wagons were common there, as well as in Philadelphia and New York City, where much ice came from upstate lakes and rivers. Visitors from Europe, where ice was a great luxury; wrote admiringly about how ice was served with beverages at social events on the East Coast.

The Death Knell of Refrigeration

In the 1860s, Boston’s dominance began to decline because of competition from extensive ice fields in areas such as Maine and the Midwest. But the death knell to the ice industry came from an invention patented in 1895 by a French monk and physics teacher, Marcel Audiffren. A precursor to today’s refrigerator, his electrically powered refrigerator used sulfur dioxide gas as a refrigerant. General Electric subsequently devised a much-improved version, and by 1931, 1 million of these mechanical coolers had been sold. When ice could be made so easily and cheaply at home and in businesses and restaurants, there was no reason to continue the cumbersome harvesting of natural ice.

Today, there are no monuments to Tudor near any of the New England lakes used to supply India and the tropics. He’s largely forgotten—until the next time you sip an ice-filled drink. ☕️
In 1902, Pennsylvania Governor Samuel Pennypacker introduced a bill into the state legislature saying, “In England a century ago, the offender would have been drawn and quartered and his head struck upon a pole.” His proposed legislation was in response to a yearlong series in which cartoonist Charles Nolan of the Philadelphia North American had depicted Pennypacker as a parrot, implying that the governor was only a mouthpiece. Despite this and other attempts throughout the years to legislate the art form out of existence, political cartoons continue to be part of American political dialogue, as they have been since the Colonial era. The Colonists used these satirical artworks to censure elected officials and agitate for political change, much as their counterparts do today.

By Paulette Beete
Benjamin Franklin is generally credited with creating the first American political cartoon in May 1754. His woodcut, “Join, or Die,” was published in The Pennsylvania Gazette in hopes of rallying the then-British Colonies to unite against the threat of French and Native American hostilities. The cartoon depicts a snake segmented into eight parts representing the various Colonies. (In Franklin’s drawing, “N.E.” actually comprises Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Connecticut; Delaware and Georgia are not pictured.) Based on the common superstition that a snake would resurrect itself if its severed pieces were placed next to each other, the message was clear. Unless the Colonies joined forces, they would fall to their enemies.

Prior to the mid-19th century, political drawings were referred to as “satire,” while the term “cartoon” referred to a preliminary sketch for a large work such as a fresco or tapestry. In 1843, Britain’s Prince Albert solicited designs of frescoes to decorate the new houses of Parliament. The designs were satirized in a series of works by John Leech of the London newspaper Punch. The first drawing of the series was titled “Cartoon No. 1,” giving rise to the contemporary meaning of the term. Today, “cartoon” usually denotes a visual satire that juxtaposes pictures with words, using caricature and symbols to deliver its message.

Scholars champion various versions of the form’s origin. Historian Randall P. Harrison traces cartooning back to early cave dwellers and credits the Egyptians with the first political caricature in 1360 B.C. “[This] would make political cartooning definitely the oldest of the cartoon arts, with a 3,300-year history,” he writes. Other sources cite 16th-century Europe as the birthplace of political caricature. In particular they credit the Reformation, Martin Luther and Pope Alexander VI with supplying “the great events and great figures which would establish conventions for the new means of expression.”

By the 18th century, Britain boasted several leading cartoonists. James Gillray, one of the period’s most famous practitioners of the form, targeted the British royal family, as well as Thomas Paine and Napoleon Bonaparte. “Gillray didn’t just make fun of the ruling establishment,” says historian Rachel Kaplan. “He had the nerve to portray his victims with blotched and pockmarked faces, towering wigs, bloated bodies, bare bottoms and sagging bosoms, and he showed them in the least becoming positions.” Gillray borrowed Franklin’s snake for the 1782...
The bloody massacre perpetrated in King Street Boston on March 5th 1770 by a party of the 29th Regt. Paul Revere used his skills as an engraver—and as a propagandist—to sensationalize the confrontation between Bostonians and British soldiers. The cartoon roused local passions against the British and helped stoke the fires of revolution. The building behind the British troops is the Royal Custom House, which bears a sign reading “Butcher’s Hall.” Beneath the cartoon are 18 lines of verse that begin: “Unhappy Boston! see thy Sons deplore, Thy hallowed Walks besmeared with guiltless Gore.” Listed as the victims of the fusillade are “Saml Gray, Saml Maverick, James Caldwell, Crispus Attucks and Patrick Carr,” who were killed, and two others who were mortally wounded, “Christr Monk and John Clark.” Courtesy of the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress; LC-USZC4-4600, LC-USZC4-110, LC-USZC2-4913, LC-USZ62-35522, LC-DIG-ppmsca-01657.
The Tea-Tax-Tempest, or Old Time with his Magick Lantern. Published in London on March 12, 1783, this cartoon gives a kind of summary of the course of the war. A fire fueled by the Stamp Act and fanned by a Gallic cock sitting on a bellows causes a teapot to explode. American troops advance on the right as British troops retreat. Father Time comments on the magic lantern show as America, seated on the left, and Britannia, on the right, look on. Courtesy of the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress; LC-USZC4-5257, LC-USZ62-1543.


Given the genre’s popularity in England, it is no surprise that it was imported to the New World. Franklin’s “Join, or Die” is said to have been reprinted in “every newspaper on the continent.” At the time, however, cartoons were not a common newspaper feature. Instead, they were produced as broadsheets and posted in taverns, men’s clubs and other meeting places throughout the Colonies.

Printing processes of the 18th century account, in part, for the relative scarcity of visual satire in newspaper form. Drawings were reproduced either as copper plate etchings or wood engravings. As these images were carved directly on the printing plate, it was rarely possible to print more than 1,000 copies before the plate degraded. It was therefore both expensive and impractical for publishers to regularly include cartoons in newspapers.

It wasn’t until lithography became widely available early in the 19th century that cartoons started to appear in newspapers on a more consistent basis. In lithographic printing, the image is applied to a flat stone or plate using greasy pigment. Since there is no carving on the plate to be worn down, publishers were able to produce larger print runs less expensively.

Early satirical drawings were heavily populated with figures who were attributed quotes via the use of speech balloons, an 18th-century convention. (“Join, or Die” is a notable exception.) Sara W. Duke, an Associate Curator at the Library of Congress, says the purpose of the balloons was to emphasize each speaker. In the 1798 print, “What think ye of C-o-n-ss now,” 15 speech balloons are crowded into the already busy scene. The look of contemporary cartoons evolved from technological advances. “In the early 20th century, when newspapers started using photographic reduction, the artists were forced to simplify their pictures,” says Duke. “It just wasn’t possible to reduce elaborate drawings in a clear manner.”

Other notable features of early cartoons are captions written in verse and wordy titles. The full title of Paul Revere’s engraving of the Boston Massacre is “The bloody massacre perpetrated in King Street Boston on March 5th 1770 by a party of the 29th Regt.” The 18-line caption begins, “Unhappy Boston! see thy Sons deplore, Thy hallowed Walks besmeared with guiltless Gore.” The cartoon leaves no uncertainty as to the parties involved or Revere’s opinion on the incident.

In this way, the broadsides served as news reports, albeit highly slanted ones. According to Bernard Reilly, a specialist in political prints, “Party strategists, editors, activists, political ‘wire-pullers’ and ‘fixers’ of all stripes in the young democracy found pictures to be powerful tools for advancing their agendas.”

Another interesting feature of early cartoon prints is the difference in the details of successive versions of the same print. Prints were made in black ink and then hand-watercolored, allowing for wide variations in color. Prints sometimes varied in textual details as well. “Congressional pugilists, Philadelphia,” an uncredited 1798 etching, shows a fight on the floor of Congress between representatives Matthew Lyon of Vermont and Roger Griswold of Connecticut. The Library of Congress owns three versions of

Cartoonists in the 18th century were also not squeamish about equating political corruption with bodily functions. In an anti-Jefferson cartoon by James Akin, “The Prairie Dog Sick’n’d at the Sting of the Hornet or a Diplomatic Puppet exhibiting his Deception,” Thomas Jefferson appears as a scrawny dog vomiting coins while being stung on its hindquarters by a hornet representing Napoleon Bonaparte. The cartoon criticizes Jefferson’s covert negotiations with France for the purchase of west Florida.

Another cartoon credited to Benjamin Franklin, “Magna Britannia; her Colonies Reduced,” portrays the Colonies as a woman whose arms and legs have been severed and strewn about her torso. It is hard to imagine a contemporary cartoonist expecting to publish such an image. “We’re a lot more prudish than our ancestors,” says Duke.

Early satirists had no qualms about trading originality for visual strength. Revere’s version of the Boston Massacre was actually a copy of someone else’s drawing. “While some artists merely lifted details, others produced unauthorized reproductions of entire cartoons,” writes Reilly. “Paul Revere is known to have plagiarized his famous portrayal of the Boston Massacre from a drawing loaned to him by his brother-in-law, the painter Henry Pelham.”

There is some debate as to the audience for these cartoons. Some sources suggest that, despite 18th-century legislation that provided for free public education, only a small percentage of the population was more than rudimentarily literate. Therefore, it was hoped that the images of the cartoons would disseminate the issues in lieu of words.
Other sources suggest that the cartoon’s messages were intended primarily for the middle class. “You had to be able to read and have income to vote, so these cartoons targeted those men and women,” Duke explains. “Even though women couldn’t vote, it was expected that they could influence their husbands and sons. These cartoons really colored people’s opinions, because there were no other media, like television or radio.”

During the 18th century, it was not uncommon for members of the middle class to rent satirical prints from publishers for an evening’s entertainment, a trend adopted from London. Duke adds that the cartoon artists expected their audience to have a certain level of literacy as the cartoons used literary, biblical and classical allusions to make their point.

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Here’s the world into which I was born: a brand-new, postwar subdivision of identical brick ramblers, each with a huge picture window overlooking a series of small, unsodded front yards and a tarred street strung with power lines. I don’t know exactly what my parents—both of them the grandchildren of Irish immigrants who’d come to America during the potato famine—were dreaming for our futures the June morning they moved us there in our father’s black DeSoto. But I do know they were proud enough of their new homestead—their first stake in the American dream of home ownership and suburban living—to have taken dozens of black-and-white Brownie snapshots of our daily lives throughout the 1950s.

For instance, there’s a photo of my brother and me sitting on our front stoop in matching sailor suits, holding our outsized Easter baskets in our laps; there’s one of us climbing the jungle gym our father built us in the back yard, beside the clothesline, which sagged with wet sheets and towels; and there’s one of us leaning against our mother’s two-tone Welcome Wagon Chevy, wearing our Davy Crockett coonskin caps.

I own these fading snapshots now, still piled in the old shoebox in which my mother stored them, though I sometimes find it hard to look through them, given the fact most of the people whose lives they chronicle—mother, father, brother—have died. Looking at them now, more than 50 years after our small brick house was built, I’m not always sure what these brittle, flimsy Kodaks with scalloped borders have come to signify.

On the one hand, I know these snapshots evidence my parents’ initial, bright suburban hopefulness, their deep relief at having escaped their difficult pasts—my father’s hardscrabble childhood in a Pennsylvania coal mining town populated entirely with Irish and German immigrants; my mother’s burdened history of having grown up in a depressive and alcoholic household; and each of their own previous failed marriages. I know these snapshots evidence my parents’ amazed delight in finding themselves at last arrived into what
must have seemed to be their personal Promised Land, a private Eldorado—3 bdrm, full basement, no down payment, VA/VHA approved. Here they were, at last, what my mother described as “real Americans.” It was in this happy mood, I imagine, that they introduced me and my brother to our new neighbors as their “miracle babies,” since my parents were almost in their 40s when we were born, and they could scarcely believe their sudden bounty or their swift good fortune in getting to start their lives anew.

But on the other hand, I also see in these photos something I doubt my parents ever recognized, a view of our suburban lives less sanguine than the one they shared as they sat together each night at the dining room table, poring through the Montgomery Ward catalogue (the “Dream Book,” my father called it), planning their endless home improvements. It’s what I see in the background of these photos that captures my attention now, not so much my parents’ sense of hopeful promise as my own disquieting sense of pastlessness—the barren lawns; the treeless streets where the sun burns into the windshields of Studebakers and Fords and Buicks parked at the curbs; the brutal regularity of the tract houses, each one tethered to its small lot only by the white slash of its sidewalk.

This was home, I tell myself. But what might “home” have meant, I wonder, in a place that looks like this? Although our suburb was located 9 miles north of Washington, D.C., where our father had accepted a government job, it looks in these photos as if it might have been anywhere—on a windswept prairie in Nebraska, perhaps, or right in the middle of a missile range in Nevada.

I’d like to see the place where I grew up only the way my parents saw it—or even as I myself saw it back when I was still a child riding up and down our block on my new Schwinn bicycle with multi-colored plastic streamers festooning its handlebars. Back then, I was still a devout believer, as were my parents, in the doctrine of endless futurity. After all, wasn’t that the doctrine we were always studying in our grammar school, cutting pilgrim hats from black construction paper at Thanksgiving and fashioning scale models of Conestoga wagons from balsa wood and twine, and scraps of cotton handkerchiefs? As the original settlers of our subdivision, we saw ourselves as kin to the generations of pioneers who preceded us, all of whom had had to cast the heavy load of the past from their covered wagons so they could ford the rising river on their ways to Eldorado. Our father built a log cabin playhouse in our backyard, where we invented games based on the exploits of Jim Bowie and Davy Crockett. In the evenings, we gathered in front of our Dumont television to watch “The Lone Ranger,” “Death Valley Days,” “Wyatt Earp,” “Gunsmoke,” “The Rifleman,” “Have Gun Will Travel.” One day, my brother and I agreed, we would volunteer to live in the first frontier settlement on the moon.

Of course, it’s easy to be ironical about the postwar suburbs now, at least in retrospect; it’s easy, for instance, to adopt the tone Peter Seeger took in his 1962 recording of Malvina Reynolds’ folk song about “little boxes on the hillside … made of ticky-tacky” that “all look just the same.” It’s easy to point out that my parents’ bright dreams for the future eventually gave way to building a make-shift bomb shelter in our basement, where we stacked metal shelves with canned food and plastic jugs of water so we could outlast a nuclear winter. A plan that required, I might add, our stringent, willful neglect of the fact that had an H-bomb ever fallen on Washington, our entire subdivision would have been demolished in the blast crater.

But, I suspect, in the end, the legacy of being among the first generation of those to grow up in a postwar subdivision—far from the small mining town where my father’s family first settled after coming to America, far from the Irish Catholic Brooklyn neighborhood my mother’s family called “home” for 60 years—is more complex than either nostalgia or irony will allow. How, for instance, did my parents’ belief in futurity, and their successive moves to newer subdivisions, lead to the sense of pastlessness I feel now? Where is the place I might call home—if by “home” we mean a place that remembers us as much as we remember it?

It’s not that the subdivision I grew up in has vanished; in fact, I can drive there in 30 minutes, given the fact I live only 10 miles south of it, in Washington, a few blocks from the White House. Sometimes, I make the trip, recalling how on Sundays after church my parents liked to drive us to new subdivisions farther out, so we could tour the model homes—though they were driving toward our imagined futures. I remind myself, whereas I’m going back to see what’s left of a past I once inhabited.

I park my car across the street from the small brick house where we once lived. The neighborhood looks good. The houses have grown more various, now that the owners have added Florida rooms and redwood decks and screened-in porches. The trees we and our neighbors planted have grown, giving the whole block a needed softening. It’s easy to recall how I loved this place as a child; how I loved it simply and unreservedly, the same way I loved my father’s annual backyard fireworks displays, when my brother and I ran with lighted sparklers through the dark.

But I also know that I’m a stranger here. I’m sitting in my car with the window rolled up, watching a realtor pound a “For Sale” sign into what I somehow still think of as the Fultons’ front yard, even though the Fultons moved away years before, even before we did. This is not a past that will admit me; there is no one here who bears me welcome or knows my name.

When I look up, I see a woman standing in the kitchen window of the house where we once lived, eyeing me nervously through her Venetian blinds. I know she imagines that whatever I’m doing, I’m up to no good. It occurs to me I’d better move on before she calls the police. This was always a transient place, I remind myself, just like any other frontier town, filled with the freshly arrived, wherever they came from. It was never really a place to linger. 🪌
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