Luck, Leisure, Liberty:

Yuletide Letters of Three Presidents

PLUS

Yulefest 1780
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From the President General

This Veterans Day, American Spirit celebrates women veterans of all generations who have sacrificed so much in service to our country. We spotlight the U.S. Army Women's Reunion, a four-day event that brought together Army women to share their experiences and to honor absent comrades. We also tell the engaging stories of two World War II women veterans...who just happen to be DAR members.

Our cover story celebrates the festive season with a look at the personal letters of our first three Presidents—George Washington, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. No one thinks of the stoic John Adams as wanting his son, the future President John Quincy Adams, to do anything but study. But one frosty December, the father wrote to his son not about visions for his career or his desire for him to work harder, but about something much more fun—ice-skating.

The holiday spirit continues in our feature on Yulefest, an annual celebration of a 1780 Virginia Christmas. On the first weekend in December, you can travel to Goodlettsville, Tenn., to experience the customs, music, dance and even the foods of our 18th-century ancestors.

Just in time for the gift-giving season, American Spirit’s Bookshelf showcases patriotic books for children. Try our age-appropriate recommendations, including funny books on our Founding Fathers and entertaining profiles of Patriot heroes and heroines. As a special treat, a few of the young relatives of the magazine staff have read and declared their favorites.

This issue’s Historic Homes department not only takes you inside President James K. Polk’s 1816 ancestral home, but it also gives insight into the life of one of the most educated first ladies of her time, Sarah Polk. Following the President’s death in 1849, just three months after leaving office, Sarah dedicated the rest of her life to preserving her husband’s memory, which lives on in quaint Columbia, Tenn.

Our Spirited Adventures department whisks readers away to beautiful Edenton, N.C., a key Colonial city. The waterfront town is best known for the Edenton Tea Party of 1774—when 51 local women boycotted East India tea to protest British taxation—one of the earliest known examples of female political activism in the Colonies. Today, Edenton still celebrates its history, and preservation groups, including the local DAR chapter, helped it earn the honor of being named a “Distinctive Destination” by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

This November, festivals in Oregon and Washington will celebrate the 200th anniversary of Lewis and Clark’s arrival on the shores of the Pacific. American Spirit focuses on one of the expedition’s most exceptional members—York, the slave of William Clark. Despite being a part of the extraordinary journey, his place in history has long been obscured.

I hope you will enjoy this issue of American Spirit and that it will be a part of a blessed and joyous holiday season for you and those you hold dear.

Presley Merritt Wagoner
Five questions every woman should ask herself.

- Do I have a signed will to protect my assets as well as my family and friends and is it stored in a safe place?
- Do I have any low-yielding stocks that I could reinvest in a charitable gift annuity or living trust for a better stream of income?
- Did I protect my family from the burden of high estate and income taxes due upon my death?
- Did I make arrangements in my estate plans to preserve the futures of the charitable organizations, like NSDAR, that I supported during my life?
- Did I take advantage of the new NSDAR gift planning program that is free with no obligation?

If you answered “no” to any of the questions above, you may benefit from speaking with a member of the Gift Planning staff in the Office of Development at the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution. Simply complete the form and mail it to the address listed, or please call 1-800-449-1776 or e-mail giftplanning@dar.org to speak to someone about bequests, gift annuities, trusts or other estate planning tools.

I would like to receive more information about:

- General Estate Planning
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- Wills and Bequests
- Gifts of Life Insurance or Retirement Plans
- Gifts of Personal Property or Real Estate

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Lessons in Literacy

I thought you might be interested to know how I used the fine “Q & A With Carol Berkin” on her book Revolutionary Mothers (May/June 2005). I have been working with a woman from El Salvador who wants to improve her conversational English. During my last session with her, I had her read the interview aloud. As we progressed through the article, we worked on her pronunciation and stopped and discussed points being made about the women in the American Revolution. She would give a nod and an expression of understanding, relating to some of her experiences resulting from the revolution in her country.

This was a satisfying session for both of us and even her middle-school-aged son who had come with her. Yes, we caught him listening in!

Thank you and Ms. Berkin for providing such an interesting lesson.

Patricia H. Miller
Ketoctin Chapter,
Bluemont, Va.

Praise for Publications

I read the May/June 2005 American Spirit issue yesterday. Cover to cover, it is the best yet of all your wonderful issues. I’m proud to be a member of DAR and proud of our publications.

Estel “Ann” Garlick
Cape Sebastian Chapter,
Pistol River, Ore.

Surprises From Lowell Mill

While traveling by train to our farm in Ohio, I read the article in American Spirit about the cotton mills in Lowell, Mass. (May/June 2005). My husband and I have been clearing out the old house, which was originally built in 1906 and renovated in 1948. Much to my surprise, we found several old cotton towels made in Lowell. They were a bit yellowed, but after washing, they made very good dish towels.

Jane Stauss
Jose de Ortega Chapter,
Woodland Hills, Calif.

The Sounds of Patriotism

Your May/June 2005 issue had five American history questions, and I taught those answers from 1956 to 1983. As a music teacher in Florida schools for 30 years, I used every idea I could think of to write music education units for seventh and eighth graders. I taught about the music of our early settlers, cowboys, war songs from the American Revolution, World War I and World War II, and Stephen Foster’s songs, including our state song, “Suwannee River.” “The Star-Spangled Banner” was a must-know, and students sang all four verses in class.

I have thoroughly enjoyed your magazine’s wonderful stories of our country for the last four months. My husband and I have both loved history and have traveled to many historic places. Keep sending those great issues—they are well-written and the pictures are great.

Janet Rich Garner
Sara DeSoto Chapter,
Sarasota, Fla.

Sometimes You Feel Like a Nut

“I Nutty Buddy,” the National Treasures department in the July/August 2005 issue, is an interesting article. Please note, however, that the “nut” head of the doll dressed in brown is not a black walnut or even an English walnut.

A black walnut is larger, more rounded and has a darker color than the nut pictured. Speaking as an old farm girl, I recognize the nut used for the doll head as a hickory nut.

Marie McCollom
Cahokia Mound Chapter,
Belleville, Ill.

Eagle Eyes

In the July/August 2005 issue, in the article “Visions of America,” I would like to point out one error. On page 15, there is a picture of a living flag showing 10,000 Blue Jackets at U.S. Naval Training Station in Great Lakes. The men are correctly identified on page 14 as sailors, but the paper clip caption on page 15 calls them 10,000 “soldiers.” The men at Great Lakes were officers
and sailors, not soldiers. I served in the U.S. Navy for 20 years and never dreamed of calling my “Blue Jackets” soldiers (a term for Army and Marine personnel, not Navy-enlisted personnel). They are sailors and proud of it. Looking forward to many more excellent issues of your magazine.

Lieutenant Commander (Ret.) M. V. Couillard, U.S. Navy Baton Rouge Chapter, Baton Rouge, La.

The Write Stuff

We were thrilled to see the September/October 2005 article on “Early American Naturalists.” The writer refers to Maxine Benson’s book on Boulder’s Martha Maxwell. Maxine is a longtime member of Arapahoe Chapter, Boulder, Colo., but that wasn’t mentioned. We hope you will give Maxine credit!

American Spirit just continues to get better and better. Sometimes I can hardly put it down.

Kay Seale, Regent
Arapahoe Chapter, Boulder, Colo.

Celebrate Memorial Continental Hall With a Staircase Finial Replica

This crystal pinecone is an adaptation of the glass pinecones in Memorial Continental Hall. Glass finials in the shape of a pinecone grace the 26 newel posts of the two elegant staircases in the original DAR Headquarters.

Heritage Irish Crystal of County Waterford, Ireland made this exquisite 3-inch replica to celebrate the centennial anniversary of Memorial Continental Hall. A stand accompanies the crystal pinecone to exhibit as a decorative piece or it can be displayed on its own as a paperweight. The reproduction of the staircase finial makes a perfect holiday gift.

The Crystal Pinecone can be purchased from
The DAR Store for $95 each plus shipping and handling.
Call The DAR Store toll-free at (888) 673-2732.

Salvaged Seeds of Liberty

After reading about Liberty Trees in the September/October 2005 issue, I thought readers would be interested to know that all is not lost of these trees. Susan Corbett at the American Forests Historic Tree Nursery (historictrees.org) verified that her company salvaged some seeds after the Annapolis Liberty Tree was taken down. However, only 13 germinated since they were the previous season’s seeds. In 2001, these cloned trees were presented to the governors of the original 13 colonies. No more Liberty Tree second-generation trees exist, and it will be about 10 years before the clones produce seeds.

Jane Gardner Jones
Harrison Colony Chapter, Harrison, Ark.

Supportive Voices

At July’s DAR Continental Congress, four DAR members won a special pin in a drawing to support the American Spirit Magazine Endowment Fund. To contribute to the fund, contact the DAR Development Office at (202) 879-3343.

Two of the winners responded:

Just wanted to let you know that I received the DAR Magazine Pin and I love it. Thank you so much. Believe me, I will work even harder to promote our magazine. It is such a class act!

Freddie M. Nichols
William Boydston Chapter, Gladstone, Mo.

 Needless to say, I am totally thrilled and surprised at winning the pin! Thank you!

But most of all, thanks to the fantastic people who make American Spirit the quality publication that it is. I can hardly wait for each issue to arrive. NSDAR is so fortunate to have a publication of this quality and character as their frontline public relations tool. Keep up the excellent work.

Now that I am a former State Regent, I will be able to promote the magazine more effectively throughout the state. I love American Spirit!

Ann Beebe
Honorary State Regent of Idaho
Idaho Pocahontas Chapter, Caldwell, Idaho
WHEN LISA PENNINGTON finds a few free days in her busy schedule, she packs her bag and takes a trip—to Barbados, Curaçao, New York, Virginia. It's not a sandy beach or a relaxing setting that leads her there, but a man named Isaac Allerton.

Attorney by day and genealogy sleuth by night, Mrs. Pennington has always been interested in her lineage—and she knew she was related to Allerton, who came to America on the Mayflower in 1620. But it wasn't until her husband, David, stumbled upon a 1789 reference to a Bible owned by Allerton that the real interest kicked in.

“Before becoming a member, I was not aware of how involved the DAR is across the country in making sure history is preserved,” she says. “Serving on the board really opened my eyes to that. It really gives you a better view of what is going on in the organization.”

The importance of preserving one’s lineage is a DAR principle she tries to instill in her three children. “All our vacations are history trips, which we do get some complaints about,” she says. “But I think it’s very important to link your children with their American past and to get your whole family to realize—wherever they live or wherever they’re from—that they’re a part of the history of the country.”

Outside of her work and family responsibilities, Mrs. Pennington still finds time to contribute to local philanthropic efforts. A board member of the Houston Bar Association, she helps raise money for legal services for the indigent. “It’s really about wanting to give back to the community that has given to you,” she says. “I see giving as an obligation for people who were fortunate enough to have a privileged life.”

Treasure Hunter

Genaalogical Society. “It’s just a little window into his life,” she says. “He had underlined certain biblical passages, which, when we saw it, let us know what he was thinking almost 400 years ago. I think it’s very important for us to understand what the people on the Mayflower were thinking.”

When the couple retires, they would like to write a book about Allerton. “He traveled all over the world as a merchant,” she says. “He has a fascinating story—very enigmatic.”

Until retirement, though, the Penningtons will have to settle on Allerton being a side project. As managing partner of Houston law firm Baker and Hostetler, Mrs. Pennington stays busy overseeing the 120 attorneys and staff in her office, as well as the long-term planning for the firm’s 10 offices around the country. “It’s a challenge, but it’s the greatest job in the world,” she says.
Stamps Honor U.S. Marines

ON NOVEMBER 10, the United States Postal Service will introduce its latest commemorative stamp honoring legendary Marine Corps heroes, including John Basilone, who was the only Marine in World War II to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor, Purple Heart and the Navy Cross for his service.

THE "DISTINGUISHED MARINES" COMMEMORATIVE STAMPS WILL BE UNVEILED AT A SPECIAL CEREMONY IN WASHINGTON, D.C., ON NOVEMBER 10, WHICH MARKS THE 230TH BIRTHDAY OF THE U.S. MARINE CORPS.

Army Reservist Helps Iraqi Children

ONE CHILD'S TRASH IS ANOTHER'S TREASURE—even halfway around the world. That's the premise of Kicks for Kids, a program started by Army Reservist Addie Collins, who was stationed in Iraq as a military broadcaster. Shocked by the sight of barefoot Iraqi children running around a war-torn country, she started asking for new and used sneakers in lieu of care packages from friends and family. She received more than 15,000 pairs of shoes. Even though Sgt. Collins has finished her tour of duty, she continues to help make sure Iraqi children have shoes on their feet.

For more information, visit www.emrn.com/html/kicksforkids.htm.
GET IN THE SPIRIT OF THE SEASON at Colonial Williamsburg. Experience Colonial life during the holidays with a series of entertaining and educational programs. Start by getting a first look at Colonial Williamsburg’s world-renowned natural holiday decorations during the Grand Illumination weekend, December 3-4. Every attraction at Colonial Williamsburg will celebrate the holidays, from the Governor’s Palace, where you can learn about 18th-century holiday traditions through dancing, music and dining, to the museums, where you and your family can explore Colonial holiday customs around the Folk Art Christmas Tree, create your own greeting cards and enjoy holiday music, plays and other performances.

For more information on these and other Colonial Williamsburg holiday events, visit www.colonialwilliamsburg.org.

ON THIS DAY IN History
(Sources include Library of Congress’ “American Memory” http://memory.loc.gov)

November 5, 1844: Dark-horse Democratic candidate James K. Polk defeats Whig candidate Henry Clay to win the presidency.

November 7, 1811: The United States defeats Tecumseh’s American Indian Confederation in the Battle of Tippecanoe.

November 11, 1954: Veterans Day is established to honor veterans of all U.S. wars.

November 15, 1777: Congress adopts the Articles of Confederation.

December 4, 1619: Thirty-eight Englishmen leave their ship, venture into the Virginia wilderness and observe a prayer of Thanksgiving.

December 12, 1791: President George Washington signs the charter of the Bank of the United States to counteract high debt and inflation from the Revolutionary War.

December 16, 1773: Sixty Massachusetts Patriots dressed as Mohawk Indians protest the British Tea Act by dumping crates of tea into the Boston Harbor.

December 26, 1776: George Washington crosses the Delaware River and captures Hessians at Trenton, N.J.

Quick Quiz

VETERANS DAY
1. What is the highest military award bestowed by the United States?
2. What was the former name of Veterans Day?
3. Of the almost 25 million military veterans in the United States, how many are women?
4. Which patriotic song became popular at the New York World’s Fair on November 11, 1938?
5. Who said, “To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan,” the motto of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs?

Answers on page 10.
ON NOVEMBER 7, 1805, the Corps of Discovery viewed the Pacific Ocean for the first time. On November 9, a flood tide overflowed their campsite. The next day, a member of the Corps of Discovery recorded seeing sea porpoises, sea otters and sea gulls.

The bicentennial celebration of the Lewis and Clark expedition lands at its destination, the Pacific Ocean, with a host of events commemorating the expedition’s arrival in the Northwest. The signature event for this region, “Destination: The Pacific,” takes place on November 9, a vote and “Desti nation: The Pacific,” takes place. The next day, a member of the Corps of Discovery viewed the Pacific Ocean in Astoria, Ore., or take part in the reenactment of the historic vote on November 24, 1805, at Station Camp, Wash. Sixty-five years before the 15th Amendment granted slaves the right to vote, the Corps of Discovery, including Sacagawea and York, William Clark’s slave, cast their votes to either stay on the north bank of the Columbia River or cross the river and build their winter camp on the south bank. “Destination: The Pacific” promises to educate and entertain festivalgoers of any age.

For more information, visit www.destinationthepacific.com.

COMING TO AMERICA

RELINE ONE OF THE MOST LASTING American legends in “The New World,” in theaters this month from New Line Cinema. Recounting the often mythological story of John Smith and Pocahontas, “The New World” is a fictitious account of the contentious relationship between the settlers of Jamestown, Va., and the native Algonquian Indians—as well as the budding bond between Smith (Colin Farrell) and Pocahontas (Q’Orianka Kilcher).

The star-studded cast also includes Christian Bale as John Rolfe, an aristocratic suitor of Pocahontas, and Christopher Plummer, who plays Captain Christopher Newport.

Before you see the movie, check out www.thenewworldmovie.com, which features a movie blog and reading list for teens.
Take a step inside the DAR Museum for a closer look at its fascinating collection.

Priceless Pooch

Curious dog-shaped bottles, called *schnappshunde*, were favorites of 17th- and 18th-century German glassblowers. The DAR Museum’s *schnappshunde*, dated sometime after 1750, was most likely forged in the Alloway, N.J., glassworks of the German-born Casper Wistar.

The first glass factory in America was built in Jamestown, Va., in 1608, and other glasshouses followed in the Colonies, particularly in New Amsterdam, Philadelphia and Salem, Mass. However, the first successful factory was set up by Wistar, who immigrated to Philadelphia in 1717. He began his career as a merchant, and by the 1730s, he had become an influential member of Philadelphia society. Despite a lack of experience in glass manufacturing, he founded Wistarburg Glass Works in 1739, recruiting glassmaking experts from Germany. He and his son Richard successfully operated the factory until about 1782.

Only a handful of pieces are known to carry a Wistarburg attribution. The DAR Museum purchased the object in April 2002.
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Unwrap the Gift of Patriotism

Searching for the perfect holiday gift for your little patriots? Get them hooked on history with books that resurrect Revolutionary battles and Colonial characters and bring to life chapters in early American history and foundational values such as liberty and democracy. From profiles on Patriot heroes and heroines to true tales about America's celebrated battles and symbols, these stories of courage, sacrifice and patriotism make enriching, beautiful gifts sure to entertain and inspire children.

By Emily McMackin | Photography By Kristina Krug
Most children learn early on that Betsy Ross made the first American flag, but how much do they know about the woman behind the sewing basket? Alexandra Wallner’s *Betsy Ross* (Holiday House, 1994) weaves an engaging profile of Ross, her devotion to the American cause and her lasting contribution to one of our country’s most famous symbols. Wallner’s folk art illustrations suit the time period and provide enough detail to entertain the most restless reader. The book addresses doubts about Ross’s historical role in the flag’s design in an editor’s note.

Esther Morris never liked being told that she couldn’t do something. All her life, she watched men vote and wanted to cast her ballot, too. *I Could Do That!: Esther Morris Gets Women the Vote* (Farrar Straus Giroux, 2005), written by Linda Arms White and illustrated by Nancy Carpenter, uses witty watercolors and snappy vignettes to tell the story of this spunky pioneer woman who fought for suffrage in Wyoming and eventually became the first female to hold public office.

Being captured by a rival tribe when she was a little girl and sold into marriage with a French fur trader didn’t stop Sacagawea, a Shoshone Indian, from living an adventurous life. Her instincts and cunning guided explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark through danger and uncertainty as they mapped out the American West for future generations. *A Picture Book of Sacagawea* (Holiday House, 2000), written by David A. Adler and illustrated by Dan Brown, paints a vivid picture of the brave Indian woman and her bold acts.

Many children grow up singing “The Star-Spangled Banner” and hearing about the Fort McHenry flag that flew through a fierce battle during the War of 1812 and inspired Francis Scott Key to write his famous tribute. *The Flag Maker* (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), written by Susan Campbell Bartoletti and illustrated by Claire A. Nivola, retells the story through the eyes of 13-year-old Caroline Pickersgill, who helped her mother Mary sew the flag. The simple, yet skillful narrative will leave youngsters with a deeper appreciation of the national anthem and a better understanding of the roles they play in serving their country.

A woman can’t be president of the United States, or so the narrator of this story is told. In *Madam President: The Extraordinary, True (And Evolving) Story of Women in Politics* (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), author Catherine Thimmesh tackles this stereotype by taking young girls on a fast-paced trip through history to illustrate the impact that women—from Colonial first ladies such as Abigail Adams to modern government leaders such as Condoleezza Rice—have made on American democracy. Embellished portraits by Douglas B. Jones add an empowering feel. Girls with big dreams will love this page-turner.

With the rumble of war in the air, few Philadelphians in 1777 would notice a little girl putting scarlet stockings on a clothesline with toes hanging up, down and filled with cobblestones. But for Maddy Rose, what appears to be a meaningless task is actually a secret code to inform her brother, Jonathan, a soldier in Washington’s
Army, of the positions of enemy ships. *The Scarlet Stockings Spy* (Sleeping Bear Press, 2004), written by Trinka Hakes Noble and illustrated by Robert Papp, is a touching story exemplifying the bravery and loyalty that even the most ordinary and smallest colonists showed during the fight for independence. The stark reality of war comes through (the book alludes to Maddy’s father and brother’s death), but so do the sacrifices early Americans made for their country.

**True Tales**

**AGES 4 TO 8**

Mix a town of determined villagers with the best cheese in Massachusetts, and what do you get? A 1,235-pound cheese for President Thomas Jefferson to serve his White House guests. *A Big Cheese for the White House: The True Tale of Tremendous Cheddar* (Farrar Straus Giroux, 1999), written by Candace Fleming, brings the obscure story of this unusual presidential gift from Cheshire, Mass., to life with clever humor and fun puns. Colorful pen and ink drawings by S.D. Schindler capture villagers’ gritty resolve to show the president that their cheese is the best. Phineas, the town naysayer who doubts their efforts, will make children laugh out loud with his sarcastic cracks.

Looking for a Colonial Christmas story to teach children about true holiday spirit? *When Washington Crossed the Delaware: A Wintertime Story for Young Patriots* (Simon & Schuster, 2004) by Lynne Cheney is the ideal gift. Youngsters will learn about the selflessness of Washington and his soldiers, who though downtrodden and poorly equipped for battle rally to cross the icy Delaware River on Christmas Eve 1776, launching a surprise attack on the British. The gripping narrative, eyewitness quotes and striking oil paintings by Peter M. Fiore entertain and the message of generosity and persistence inspires. The vice president’s wife recites this story to her own grandchildren at Christmastime.

What better way to trace the Lewis and Clark expedition than to tag along with Clark’s dog, Seaman? That’s the approach author and illustrator Patricia Reeder Eubank takes in *Seaman’s Journal: On the Trail With Lewis and Clark* (Ideals Children’s Books, 2002). Children can join Seaman as he ventures across mountains, down rivers and through the wilderness with his master, exploring wonders of nature and wildlife. His canine observations capture the triumphs and hardships of the journey as well as the bravery of the travelers. This fun, interactive book about the historic adventure will make a lasting impression on children.

George Washington did all he could to save his men—and his teeth. He was successful in war, but fought a losing battle against toothlessness. *George Washington’s Teeth* (Farrar Straus Giroux, 2003), by Deborah Chandra and Madeleine Comora, gives children a fresh, funny perspective on Washington, using his predicament with his teeth to touch on his military feats and reveal his stubborn will and humility. A hilarious narrative and slapstick illustrations by Brock Cole will make any child giggle. The book refutes the legend that Washington wore wooden teeth and traces his dental problems in a timeline.

**KID’S TAKE**


“His mommy should have made him brush his teeth,” he said.
AGES 9 TO 12

History books cover the Pilgrims’ trek across the Atlantic and the *Mayflower* landing at Plymouth well, but not always interestingly. *Mayflower 1620: A New Look at a Pilgrim Voyage* (National Geographic Society, 2003) veers from traditional accounts. Authors Peter Arenstam, John Kemp and Catherine O’Neill Grace of Plimoth Plantation base their story on firsthand sources, such as diary entries and ship logs. Photographers Sisse Brimberg and Cotton Coulson illustrate the voyage with scenes recreated by costumed interpreters. The book helps readers envision themselves on the *Mayflower* where they discover that not every shipmate was cooperative or seeking religious freedom.

Not all freedom fighters had white skin or came from England. Some were black slaves who fought not only for the Patriot cause, but also for their freedom. *The Black Regiment of the American Revolution* (Moon Mountain Publishing, 2004), written by Linda Crotta Brennan and illustrated by Cheryl Kirk Noll, celebrates these unknown soldiers. The book spotlights the 2nd Rhode Island Regiment, a group of African-American soldiers whose military skill and valor kept the British at bay during the Battle of Rhode Island. Slaves turned soldiers were promised freedom if they joined the Army, but many gave it up to stay with family members still living in slavery.

American Ideals

INFANT TO PRESCHOOL

Children know that Fourth of July brings picnics and fireworks, but what is the celebration really about? *The Story of America’s Birthday* (Candy Cane Press, 2000), written by Patricia A. Pingry and illustrated by Stacy Venturi-Pickett, breaks down the history and the meaning behind the holiday in a board book with short, easy-to-read text and colorful, animated pictures.

Every day at sea is the same for Jed McTavish and his brother, Nathan, who catch oysters along the Baltimore Harbor bay, until British sailors capture their boat and take them prisoner. The boys witness the ferocious sea battle that follows with fellow prisoner Francis Scott Key, who later writes a famous poem about it. *The*
Star-Spangled Banner by Amy Winstead (Ideals Children’s Books, 2003) gives kids a peek into the dramatic night in American history that sparked the words of our national anthem. Rich watercolors by Bob Dacey and Debra Bandelin enhance the thrill.

KID'S TAKE
Mary Sparks Lavey, 3, of Nashville loved The Star-Spangled Banner. She liked the part where British sailors told the boys to “Halt” and called them “Yankee Doodles.” She also laughed when her dad tried to sing the high notes to the “The Star-Spangled Banner” at the end of the story.

AGES 4 TO 8
Born in Paris, Little Miss Liberty knew that she was destined for something great, even though her skin was a little green. When she outgrows her classmates, her clothes and the city she loves, she sets out to travel the world and find a place of her own. Little Miss Liberty (Chronicle Books, 2005) by Chris Robertson uses a creative storyline and whimsical humor to teach children about one of America’s most famous historical landmarks. Kids will identify with the growth spurts that Little Miss Liberty goes through.

KID'S TAKE
Luke Boyer, 4, of Brentwood, Tenn., enjoyed reading Little Miss Liberty. He liked how she wore a bed sheet because her normal clothes wouldn’t fit and “how she outgrew her house and went to find her own safe place.”

Just because children know the Pledge of Allegiance doesn’t mean that they understand what it means. I Pledge Allegiance (Candlewick Press, 2002) by Bill Martin Jr., Michael Sampson and Chris Raschka demystifies the pledge by breaking it down word for word and using abstract pictures, cartoons and kid-friendly explanations to illustrate its principles. A flag-shaped poster in the back of the book printed with the pledge and line-by-line definitions offer parents an educational tool.

Dogs don’t know much about how democracy works, but with their owner running for mayor, Elmer and Sparky are about to learn. The comic-book style Vote! (Clarion Books, 2003) by Eileen Christelow introduces children to the complex issues of democracy and voting without intimidating young readers. The dogs trail the town’s mayoral candidate as she campaigns, deals with negative ads and endures a recount.

Biography Corner
LOOKING FOR MORE STORIES ABOUT COLONIAL LEADERS? TRY THESE POPULAR SERIES:

- Picture books on George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Patrick Henry and Paul Revere from Holiday House for readers ages 4 to 8.
- Profiles on Benjamin Franklin, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson from Ideals Children’s Books for readers ages 4 to 8.
- Patria Press’ books on Revolutionary poet Phillis Wheatley, Northwest Frontier explorer George Rogers Clark and Declaration of Independence signer John Hancock as children. The late Kathryn Cleven Sisson, a member of the Estahakee Chapter, Boca Raton, Fla., wrote the Hancock book. These books are targeted to readers 9 to 12.
- Young Patriots: Inspiring Stories of the American Revolution (Boyds Mills Press, 2004), a collection of short profiles on true and fictional Colonial children who contributed in some way to the Patriot cause. For readers 9 to 12.

Children in the midst of learning their ABCs will enjoy D is for Democracy: A Citizen’s Alphabet (Sleeping Bear Press, 2004) by Elissa Grodin and Victor Juhasz. Written in verse, the alphabet book breaks down the loaded subject of democracy into memorable concepts and funny, fanciful caricatures. Advanced readers can find more fun facts and in-depth information in the margins. Sleeping Bear Press offers similar books titled, A is for America and P is for Pilgrim.

The flag stands for one nation, but it has many uses as Pam Muñoz Ryan illustrates in The Flag We Love (Charlesbridge Publishing, 1996). Americans fly it at joyous events like parades and sporting events and at somber occasions like funerals and memorials. Muñoz Ryan’s poetic prose and Ralph Masiello’s lifelike artwork combine to create a memorable portrait of the reasons Americans love the flag.

Want to show children how beautiful America is without traveling cross-country? America the Beautiful: A Pop-Up Book (Little Simon, 2004) lets them glimpse America’s natural and man-made wonders without leaving home. Master paper engineer Robert Sabuda interprets the verses of Katherine Lee Bates’ “America the Beautiful” in intricate pop-ups with stunning dimensions. The book, a visual treat for children and adults, makes a great keepsake.

Looking for an introduction to other historical leaders? Try these books and series:

- Profiles on George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Patrick Henry and Paul Revere from Holiday House for readers ages 4 to 8.
- Patria Press’ books on Revolutionary poet Phillis Wheatley, Northwest Frontier explorer George Rogers Clark and Declaration of Independence signer John Hancock as children. The late Kathryn Cleven Sisson, a member of the Estahakee Chapter, Boca Raton, Fla., wrote the Hancock book. These books are targeted to readers 9 to 12.
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The Polk Ancestral Home
Preserving a Presidential Life
By Jenna Basha
Sarah Childress Polk, the wife of President James K. Polk, had the longest widowhood of any first lady of the United States. Following the president’s death in 1849, just three months after he left office, Sarah dedicated the rest of her life—42 years—to preserving her husband’s memory. Thanks to her perseverance, his legacy—and the legacy of one of the most educated first ladies of her time—lives on in quaint Columbia, Tenn., at the ancestral home of the 11th president of the United States. With more than 1,500 furnishings, documents and memorabilia, the house is the country’s premier depository of Polk presidential artifacts.

An Extraordinary Couple

The president lived in the Columbia house, his only surviving residence outside of Washington, D.C., for only six years. After graduating from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, N.C., he returned to Columbia to open a law practice, staying with his parents while he courted Sarah Childress, the privileged and educated daughter of a prosperous innkeeper in nearby Murfreesboro. Sarah was educated by private tutors before enrolling at Salem Female Academy, the best girls’ school in the South located more than 400 miles from Murfreesboro in Salem, N.C. After returning home, she met Polk, and they married in 1824 shortly after his election to the state legislature. Articulate, self-confident and known for her grace, wit and charm, Sarah played an important role in her husband’s life as he rose to political greatness. Not only was she a social asset to the president’s political career, she also served as an adviser to him, essentially taking on the role of campaign manager when he ran for governor and acting as a political consultant during the four years he was president.

Polk set four goals for his administration and accomplished them all: reinstating an independent treasury, reducing taxes, settling the dispute over the Oregon boundary and acquiring the California Territory from Mexico. In terms of reaching goals, he is considered one of the most successful U.S. presidents.

“Sarah evidently felt comfortable fitting herself into her husband’s career,” says Betty Boyd Caroli in First Ladies: From Martha Washington to Laura Bush (Oxford, 2003). “Whenever she could help him, she was there.”

In fact, Caroli considers Mrs. Polk an exception to the norm of mostly subordinate first ladies during the first half of the 19th century. But many critics argued that Mrs. Polk was trying to control her husband’s life.

“...she was simply assisting her husband in order to protect his health,” Caroli says. “He had never been strong, and she recalled that she had once reprimanded him for keeping late hours. In reply, he handed her a stack of papers to read for him. Thus began what became standard practice in their relationship—she marked those portions she thought deserving of his attention, folded the papers so that he would not miss the important parts and passed them back to him.”

A former frontier girl, Sarah had no trouble transitioning from life on the frontier to the glamorous life as the first lady of the United States. Like former First Lady Dolley Madison, she was a fan of high fashion, both for her petite 5’2” frame and for her home. While in the White House, she developed an affinity for fine furnishings, such as velvet sofas and gilded mirrors, which she ordered from New York to furnish Polk Place, the Nashville
circular family and two stepids. The family lives in the house, and the house is decorated with white flowers in the dining room. In the living room, Sarah and her daughter, Emily, sit on the couch. The family is surrounded by various objects, including paintings and decorative items.

On the wall, there is a large painting of a woman in a white dress. The room is furnished with a large couch, a coffee table, and a bookshelf filled with books. The ceiling is decorated with intricate designs, and the walls are adorned with wallpaper.

The family is dressed in traditional clothing, and Sarah is holding a white dress. The family is engaged in a conversation, and the atmosphere is warm and inviting.
Along with many of the furnishings and belongings of Sarah Polk, years at the helm of the country took its toll on Polk, who died just three months after leaving office. Devastated by his death, Sarah spent the rest of her life wearing only black until her death in 1891.

Three years after her husband’s death, Sarah adopted Sally Polk Jetton, an orphaned great-niece who helped the widowed first lady turn Polk Place into a veritable shrine. Despite Sarah’s constant state of mourning, her door was always open to visitors, including Presidents Rutherford B. Hayes and Grover Cleveland in the late 1870s. Following Sarah’s death in 1891, the once warm and hospitable Polk Place became dilapidated and later was sold by the state of Tennessee and ultimately torn down in 1901. Along with many of the furnishings and belongings of Sarah Polk, a cast-iron fountain from the Polk Place garden was moved to the Polk Home, the ancestral home in Columbia, where it is displayed in the courtyard.

Sign of the Times

Built in 1816 by James K. Polk’s father, Samuel Polk, a wealthy Tennessee farmer and surveyor, the house was designed in the popular Federal style. Elegant by the standards of the time, the Polk Home incorporates many of the Federal style’s distinguishing characteristics: the low-pitched gabled roof, nine-paned window sashes, a small entry porch and a simple front door flanked by a semicircular fanlight and two sidelights. Except for the roof, the entire structure of the house is original.

The first floor features a long entryway that opens to two parlors with high ceilings; another long, open hallway and three bedrooms comprise the second floor. The wood floors—white ash downstairs and yellow poplar upstairs—are original, but all carpets, including the large oil cloth in the main hallway, wallpaper and window treatments are reproduced based on patterns available in Tennessee during the early 19th century. In the rear of the house is a courtyard that leads to a detached kitchen, which was reconstructed on its original foundation in 1946.

Next door to the Polk Home is the Sisters’ House, circa 1820, also constructed in Federal style, where two of the president’s married sisters lived at different times. Today, the Sisters’ House serves as a visitor’s center and museum for the Polk Home.

Treasures Within

A rich wood floor and vibrant green trim, reproduced from old layers of paint discovered during a restoration, make for an inviting entrance to the Polk Home. To the left of the entryway is the main parlor, which contains many treasures, including a forte piano from Sarah’s childhood in Murfreesboro and the original copy of the president’s first State of the Union address. Velvet couches and other luxurious furnishings purchased for Polk Place fill this room, and portraits of Sarah and the president decorate its walls. Behind the parlor is the dining room, displaying an exquisite collection of White House china Sarah would have used to entertain friends and dignitaries. The china Sarah chose for her White House was unique from earlier patterns: Instead of each piece matching perfectly, her pieces varied and coordinated with other pieces. A door leading from the dining room to the courtyard provided easy access from the detached kitchen into the house.

In the entryway, a steep quarter-turn staircase leads to the second floor. A large portrait of Spanish explorer Hernando Cortes, a gift from General William North, watches over the upstairs hall.

Items from Polk’s office when he practiced law in Columbia furnish one of the front bedrooms. A bookcase includes volumes that belonged to both the president and his well-read wife.

The second front bedroom showcases the many facets of Sarah. Fine jewelry and lace garments from her days in the White House contrast with a silk-on-silk needlework that she created as a young lady at Salem and the traveling desk she carried with her when making the long trip from Washington, D.C., back home to Tennessee. A portrait of the first lady perched above the fireplace, taken about a year after the death of the president, illustrates how mourning aged her.

The master bedroom, which looks out over the courtyard and side street, evokes the later years of the first lady’s life. A later portrait of Sarah is the focal point of the room that displays some of her elegant black attire. The canopied bed belonged to Sarah’s great niece and companion, Sally.

To the Rescue

Founded in 1924, the James K. Polk Memorial Association acquired the Polk Home and opened it to the public in 1929. Descendants of the first family bequeathed hundreds of items to the home. Since then, the James K. Polk Memorial Association and Memorial Auxiliary, with help from the state of Tennessee, has restored the house, reconstructed the kitchen and laid out a memorial garden. The association is currently reproducing a workroom adjacent to the detached kitchen, where members of the Polk family likely performed duties such as spinning wool and churning butter.

VISITING THE POLK HOME

The Polk Home welcomes visitors from 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and from 1 p.m.–5 p.m., on Sundays. The house is located at 301 West Seventh St., Columbia, Tenn. For more information, call (931) 388–2354 or visit www.jameskpolk.com.
Edenton
Preserving the History of a Colonial Town
by the Editors of American Spirit
When, according to tradition, Penelope Barker organized a petition on October 25, 1774, she likely had no idea how significant that was. Barker and 50 other women in Edenton, N.C., pledged to support a position taken by the North Carolina Provincial Congress in defiance to the English monarchy: to refrain from drinking East India tea or exchanging goods with Great Britain. To historians, this signed declaration was one of the earliest known examples of political activism by Colonial women. Proud of this tie to the Revolution, the people of this small coastal town have been committed to preserving their history—not as a museum, but as a thriving community with living links to its celebrated past.

A Key Colonial City

Formed in the late 17th century and incorporated in 1722, Edenton played a key role in North Carolina’s Colonial society. The colony alternated its General Assembly meetings between Edenton and New Bern from 1737 to 1743. During the early 18th century, the town, with its strategic location on Edenton Bay at the head of the Albemarle Sound, was the second largest Colonial port. Edenton gained even more attention on October 25, 1774—when 51 of its prominent women pledged to support resolves made two months earlier by the North Carolina Provincial Congress, banning the drinking of East India tea and the exchange of goods with Britain.

The Edenton women’s pledge in support of the revolutionaries was one of many, largely overlooked acts of defiance by Colonial women, acts which also included signing petitions, participating in mass demonstrations and boycotting British goods. Though ignored or ridiculed at the time for their patriotic zeal, these women’s courage inspired future generations of women to preserve their legacy.

Community Contributions

Edenton’s women have continued in the tradition of civic activism established by their Colonial ancestors. The local DAR chapter even took its name from the 1774 event.

At the first meeting of the Edenton Tea Party Chapter in 1948, members voted to save a local home, the James Iredell House, from destruction. One of the United States Supreme Court’s first justices, James Iredell was appointed to the court by President George Washington in 1790 and served until his death in 1799. His Edenton residence was built in three phases: the first phase, consisting of four
The 1767 Chowan County Courthouse has a view of the stunning Edenton Bay, at the head of North Carolina’s Albemarle Sound.

rooms, was constructed in 1759; the second phase was completed in 1776 and added two spacious rooms to the existing two-story structure; and in 1810, Iredell’s widow expanded the house even further and added the verandas. When the Edenton Tea Party Chapter learned that the Iredell House was about to be demolished, they got a bank loan, signing the note without their husbands’ permission. According to Linda Eure, manager of the Edenton State Historic Site, the women were able to make payments on the loan by holding card parties, gathering and selling pecans that had fallen from the town’s numerous trees and holding bake sales and luncheons.

The women formed the James Iredell Association and put the property in the association’s name. The members realized that they could never make more than the interest payments on the mortgage, so they successfully lobbied the state to purchase the Iredell House and make it a state historic site.

The DAR chapter is not alone in keeping Edenton’s history alive. The Edenton Woman’s Club holds biennial pilgrimages to
historic homes with the proceeds going to preservation projects. The James Iredell Association is still active, recently taking part in the restoration and relocation of the 1827 Brandon Plantation Smokehouse.

Edenton also has a rich African-American history. The childhood home of Harriett Jacobs, an escaped slave who wrote about her imprisoned youth in Edenton in the memoir *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Edenton offers visitors numerous preserved sites relating to the town's slavery past, including the attic where Jacobs hid from her master for several years.  

**A Distinctive Destination**

In 2003, the National Trust for Historic Preservation named Edenton a Distinctive Destination, praising the town's interesting history, distinctive architecture and vibrant downtown. With its idyllic location on the Albemarle Sound and its more than 25 homes and buildings making up the North Carolina State Historic Site, Edenton boasts a reputation as the "prettiest town in the South."

The community lives up to its nickname each December, when Edenton celebrates the holiday season by hosting festivities in some of the town's most important historic buildings. The 2005 events are set for December 9 and 10. The 1758 Cupola House, which some have called the most important early wooden residence still standing in the South, hosts an annual Wassail Bowl. Visitors are invited to enjoy a cup of wassail amid 18th-century decorations and music. The James Iredell House's "Groaning Board" welcomes visitors with tables laden with homemade desserts. The 1782 Barker House, the residence of Thomas and Penelope Barker, one of the principal figures in the Edenton Tea Party, hosts a Holiday Repast.

The events are free and open to the public from 1 p.m.–5 p.m. Area choirs will gather for Caroling on the Courthouse Green Friday, December 9, at 6 p.m. Refreshments will be available inside the 1767 Chowan County Courthouse, a National Historic Landmark. The next day, Edenton will host its annual Christmas parade.

The Christmas Candlelight Tour of historic homes is the highlight of the weekend. Decorated to the hilt for the holidays, a dozen of the town's private residences are open for touring from 4 p.m.–8 p.m. Tickets are $25, and proceeds benefit the Edenton Historical Commission's ongoing preservation efforts.

Visitors can round out the festive weekend at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Built in 1736, it is the second oldest church building in North Carolina.

For more information on travel to Edenton and for Candlelight Tour tickets, call the Edenton-Chowan Chamber of Commerce at (800) 775–0111 or go online to www.visitedenton.com.
Ever wonder how our 18th-century ancestors celebrated the holidays? You can experience the customs, music, dance and even the foods of a 1780 Virginia Christmas at Yulefest, December 3 and 4 in Goodlettsville, Tenn. The cabins in reconstructed Mansker’s Station Frontier Life Center are dressed for Christmas with fresh evergreens, ribbons, fruit and candles, and costumed interpreters entertain visitors with craft and music demonstrations.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY STEVE LOWRY
Old-fashioned toys, including buzzers, or magic wheels, fascinate Yuletide’s younger guests. The centerpiece of the festive weekend is a candlelit Saturday evening program featuring period music and dance. Professional musicians fill the cabins with the sounds of the 18th-century Celtic harp, fiddle, guitar and the glass harmonica, played by rubbing fingers along glasses of water. Even the refreshments are authentic, with traditional holiday sweets—such as orange currant scones, Italian cream cake and plum pudding—tempting visitors.
LACK, LEISURE, LIBERTY:

Yuletide Letters

OF THREE PRESIDENTS
A stoic George Washington crosses the icy Delaware in a portrait of the 1776 Battle of Trenton, bravely leading his troops in an ambush against the British. But in a letter to an officer two nights before, Washington reveals apprehension about his plan. On a frosty December in 1780, John Adams writes to his son, future President John Quincy Adams, not about visions for his career, but about ice-skating. In a handwritten deed drafted on Christmas Eve 1794, a jolly Thomas Jefferson frees his longtime slave. Personal letters written by our first presidents during the holidays before they took office give readers an intimate glimpse into their lives—and their humanity.

By Patricia Bates.
The bearer is sent down to know whether your plan was attempted last Night—and if not, to inform you that Christmas day at Night, one hour before day is the time fixed upon for our Attempt on Trenton.

For heaven’s sake keep this to yourself; as the discovery of it may prove fatal to us, our numbers, sorry I am to say, being less than I had any conception of—but necessity, dire necessity will—nay must justify any [Attempt] Prepare, & in concert with Grif[fin] at] tack as many of their Posts as you [pos]sibly can with a prospect of success. The more we can attack, at the same Instant, the more confusion we shall spread and greater good will result from it.

If I had not been fully convinced of the Enemys designs I have now ample testimony of their Intentions to attack Philadelphia so soon as the Ice will afford the means of conveyance.

As the Colonels of the Continental Regiments might kick up some dust about Command (unless Cadwallader is consider’d by them, in light of a Brigadier, which I wish him to be,) I desired Genl Gates, who is unwell & applied for leave to go to Philadelphia, to endeavour if his health would permit him to call and stay two or three days at Bristol in his way.

I shall not be particular—We could not ripen matters for our attack, before the time mentioned in the first part of the letter—so much out of sorts, & so much in want of everything, are the Troops under Sullivan & ca—

Let me know by a careful express the Plan you are to pursue. The Letter sent[j] forward on to Philadelphia—I could wish it to be in, in time for the Southern Post’s departure which will be, I believe by 11 Odock to morrow I am Dr Sir Yr Most Obt St

G. WASHINGTON

P.S. I have order’d our Men to be provided with three days Provisions ready Cook’d; with which, and their Blankets they are to March, for if we are successful which heaven grant & other Circumstances favour we may push on. I shall direct every Ferry & Ford to be well Guarded & not a Soul suffer’d to pass without an officers going down with the permit. Do the same with you.
John Adams to His Son John Quincy Adams, Amsterdam, December 28, 1780:

The Ice is so universal now that I suppose you spend some Time in Skating every day. It is a fine Exercise for young Persons, and therefore I am willing to indulge you in it, provided you confine yourself to proper Hours, and to strict Moderation.

Skating is a fine Art. It is not Simple Velocity or Agility that constitutes the Perfection of it but Grace. There is an Elegance of Motion, which is charming to the sight, and is useful to acquire, because it obliges you to restrain that impetuous Ardour and violent Activity, into which the Agitation of Spirits occasioned by this Exercise is apt to hurry you, and which is inconsistent with both your Health and Pleasure.

At Leyden, I suppose you may see many Gentlemen, who are perfect in the Art. I have walked, several Times round this City from the Gate of Utrecht to that of Harlem, and seen some thousands Skating upon the Cingel, since the Frost set in.

I have seen many skait with great Spirit, some with prodigious Swiftness, a few with a tolerably genteel Air, but none with that inimitable Grace and Beauty which I have seen some Examples of; in other Countries, even in our own.

I have seen some Officers of the British Army, at Boston, and some of our Army at Cambridge, skait with as perfect Elegance, as if they had spent their whole Lives in the study of Hogarth's Principles of Beauty, and in reducing them to Practice.

I would advise you, my Son, in Skaiting, Dancing and Riding, to be always attentive to this Grace, which is founded in natural Principles, and is therefore as much for your Ease and Use, as for your Pleasure.

Do not conclude from this, that I advise you to spend much of your Time or Thoughts upon these Exercises and Diversions. In Truth I care very little about any of them. They should never be taken but as Exercise and Relaxation of Business and study.

But as your Constitution requires vigorous Exercise, it will not be amiss, to spend some of your Time, in swimming, Riding, Dancing, Fencing and Skaiting, which are all manly Amusements, and it is as easy to learn by a little Attention, to perform them all with Taste, as it is to execute them in a slovenly, Awkward and ridiculous Manner.

Every Thing in Life should be done with Reflection, and Judgment, even the most insignificant Amusements. They should all be arranged in subordination, to the great Plan of Happiness, and Utility. That you may attend early to this Maxim is the Wish of your affectionate Father,

JOHN ADAMS
Christmas Freedom for Jefferson's Slave

Content in his retirement at Monticello, his home in Charlottesville, Va., Thomas Jefferson anticipated spending Christmas of 1794 with his much-loved grandchildren, 4-year-old Anne and 3-year-old Thomas.

Jefferson's nearly 155 slaves were also looking forward to time off from the backbreaking work of growing tobacco and tending to Jefferson's experimental crops on the farm's 10,000 acres. The holiday season was an especially joyful one for Robert Hemings, Jefferson's one-time valet. With a handwritten deed effective on Christmas Eve, Jefferson set him free.

Hemings could now be reunited with his wife, Dolly, at the Richmond home of Dr. George Frederick Stras, her master. Hemings still had to pay back Stras, who gave Jefferson 60 pounds in the transaction. Hemings reimbursed Stras, and in 1802 he became a deliveryman in Richmond, where he bought a half-acre of land.

Jefferson had supported gradual abolition since 1769, when he was a young lawyer in the Virginia courts, but had grown less outspoken about emancipation by 1794. Robert Hemings became the first of two slaves that Jefferson quietly released in his lifetime. The second was Hemings' brother, James, a French-trained chef, in February 1796. Both were sons of Betty Hemings, whom Jefferson inherited from his father-in-law, John Wayles. Betty was reportedly the mistress of Wayles, with whom she had Robert and several of her 10 children. One of Betty's daughters was Sally Hemings, known for her affair with Jefferson. In his will, Jefferson only released four of Sally's children, since the others had to be auctioned from his estate to repay debts.

Thomas Jefferson's Deed of Manumission for Robert Hemings, Effective December 24, 1794:

This indenture witnesseth that I Thomas Jefferson of the county of Albermarle have manumitted and made free Robert Hemings, son of Betty Hemings, so that in future he shall be free and of free condition, with all his goods and chattels and shall be discharged of all obligation of bondage or servitude whatsoever; and that neither myself, my heirs executors or administrators shall have any right to exact from him hereafter any services or duties whatsoever.

In witness thereof I have put my seal to this present deed of manumission. Given in Albemarle this twenty fourth day of December one thousands seven hundred and ninety four.

T.JEFFERSON

Signed, sealed and delivered in presence of D. CARR

Patricia Bates' article is adapted from the book she is authoring, The Wise Men: Presidents and Their Early Christmas Letters, Diaries, and Speeches.
L laughter, sighs and stifled sobs echoed from the timbered ceiling, voicing the emotions of the women gathered in a small Army chapel. They came to remember the ties that bound them to each other and to the absent comrades they came to honor.

In April, 300 women from 38 states met at Fort Lee near Petersburg, Va., for the 2005 U.S. Army Women's Reunion. The four-day event, sponsored by U.S. Army Women's Museum Foundation, marked the 63rd anniversary of women in the Army and the 50th anniversary of the museum.
All Gave Some, Some Gave All

The memorial service honored, among others, the 37 women who lost their lives in the last two years while serving in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and Operation Iraqi Freedom. A soft breeze stirred outside the chapel windows as the roll call tallied the names and hometowns: Flagstaff, Ariz.; Brooklyn, N.Y.; Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico; Quakertown, Pa.; Taylor, Mich.

With each name, a retired Women's Army Corps (WAC) member placed a small U.S. flag into a red, white and blue silk bouquet of remembrance. “Taps” sounded from an Army bugle somewhere beyond the chapel.

“America doesn’t raise its daughters to become soldiers,” Major General (Ret.) Dee McWilliams, of Falls Church, Va., said. “Each woman who has worn the uniform of the U.S. Army is distinctive and extraordinary. These women courageously gave up their tomorrows so we could enjoy our todays.”

A Reunion of the Exceptional

The stories shared at the reunion—from reveille to retreat, in the chow line, at seminars and at dinner while a WAC band played classic Glenn Miller—confirmed this was a gathering of ordinary women who each became exceptional in her own way.

Some had been among the first in the Army, serving in World War II. Others were still on active duty, most recently in Iraq and Afghanistan.

One veteran was represented by her daughter. Linda Kady drove from Cleveland with a portrait of a young brunette in uniform. Her mother, Mildred Panfil, had served in New Guinea and the Philippines in 1942 and 1943 but rarely talked about life in the Army. She died in 1978.

“I’m here as a memorial to her and to maybe find someone who could tell us more about her Army days,” she said.

Like Panfil, some had served a few years; others served for most of their adult lives. Some are still close friends; others had not seen each other since their discharge 45 years ago. They bonded over a shared admiration for the women who had served before them.

Many of the women served during WAAC (Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps) and WAC eras, before 1978 when the Army “integrated” men and women. While they might be a small minority at most Army veteran reunions, this gathering of female soldiers gave the veterans a renewed connection and a rejuvenation of pride in their service to their country.

That Was Then: The Role Models

In 1943 Dr. Lynn Ashley was a riveter at a Douglas Aircraft factory in Illinois but her heart was in the skies. She wanted to fly like her brother who was piloting P51s over Europe. She enlisted and spent most of her two-year Army career in Carlsbad, N.M., scheduling, not flying, bombardier training planes.

Now 84 and an education consultant in Forest Park, Ohio, she cherishes her only stint in the pilot’s seat.

“The first time I went up it was as an observer,” she said. “Then the pilot asked me to take over the controls while he checked a problem in the bomb bay. There I was with the stick in my hand trying to keep level with the horizon. We were lucky to survive.”

Helen “Gig” Smith, now 83, enlisted in 1943 “for the duration”—about two and a half years—mostly doing intelligence work in the Pentagon. After the Army she played center field for the Grand Rapids Chicks in the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League and taught school in her native Richmond, Va. But the Army held a special place in her heart.

The Nazis launched their first buzz bomb attacks on London the day that Betty Branch, who enlisted in 1942, landed there.

“I didn’t have enough sense to be scared,” said Branch, who now lives in Fort Belvoir, Va. “But I did salute General Eisenhower in Grosvenor Square a few days later”

Jennie Woods DeAngelis from Roseville, Mich., was 21 when she joined the Army in 1943. She headed for England and France as a sergeant—a records clerk—with General Omar Bradley’s 12th Army. She claims four battle stars and remembers landing at Omaha Beach.

“They took the men right in on the beach, but we had to wade our way in,” she said.

Opportunities for women had expanded when Brigadier General Evelyn “Pat” Foote, the first woman to serve as inspector general in the Army, enlisted in 1959.

“A recruiting brochure showed an Army woman in a silver taupe uniform in the front seat...
of a red convertible with two good-looking men in uniform,” said Foote, who now lives in Accokeek, Md. “I didn’t fall for that, but within a few months I was an Army lieutenant.”

Marion Crawford, 75, from Eustis, Fla., enlisted at 18. Twenty years later, in 1965, she was a first sergeant in Vietnam overseeing the first WAC detachment ever in a combat zone at Tan Son Nhut just outside of Saigon.

“We didn’t have weapons, just fast feet and bunkers to run to,” she remembered.

LeAnn Swieczkowski wanted to crawl low; slide in the mud and feel bullets flying over her head. But when she tried to enlist in the 1960s, she was told she’d have to wear a skirt. By 1981, when she finally joined the army, skirts were no longer required for the career that took her to South Korea and Somalia. Now 55, Swieczkowski lives in Charlotte, N.C.

These brave women often defied the disapproval of family and friends to pursue their Army careers. In 1974 when McWilliams joined, her mother told people that she had a “nice government job” and suggested that a skirt would be more appropriate with her Army boots.

This is Now: The Contemporary Soldier

In 1973 Command Sergeant Major Debra Strickland saw the Army bursting with opportunities for an 18-year-old woman and joined the WAC.

The opportunity remains for the 70,000 females who now comprise 17 percent of the active Army, she said, but the types of jobs women do now are the ones she could only dream of 30 years ago. Still on active duty, Strickland serves in Crystal City, Va.

Women have more often served in administrative, finance and medical positions, but that will change, Foote added.

“The war on terrorism requires the redesign and transformation of our military to deal with scenarios unseen before,” she said. “Women in Iraq have been drawn toward combat. It’s the nature of the evolving beast of war.”

Captain Jill Davis, on active duty at Fort Lee, joined the Army in 1990 and was one of the last to go through all-female training. A personnel specialist, she spent eight years in Germany as a secretary.

With September 11, 2001, everything changed. Davis, a mother of three, deployed to Afghanistan and attached to a quartermaster corps where she scrounged for equipment and supplies, often haggling with local residents.

“There is no front line, no safe zone anymore,” she said. “Now women patrol, do entry control point duty, carry weapons and know how to use them.”

Debra Bingham, a retired master sergeant, faced the same reality in Iraq in 2003. Landing in Kuwait, she was told to pick up ammunition, and thought, “I’m public affairs. I don’t need live rounds in my weapon.”

Suddenly, what she had heard for years rang true: She was a soldier first.

“People don’t realize that women today are in combat areas even if they’re not in combat,” she said.

Four days in a convoy battling heat, sand and a lack of bathrooms took Bingham to Tikrit. After four months at an airfield with no running water, she and 11 other women moved into one of Saddam Hussein’s former palaces.

“Even there we had no electricity, no hot water, inoperable commodes,” she said. “It was a matter of being creative, but it was still rough. We worked 5 a.m. to 11 p.m. with no days off. But my experiences were easy compared to what other soldiers go through. [They have] so much to endure, and they do it with so much good humor.”

Her role models were the women of the 1940s and 1950s who joined the Army despite popular misconceptions about women’s intelligence and morality.

“I’m amazed at what the older ladies accomplished; they were so successful at tasks that were untraditional for women,” she said. “They dared to be different and blazed a trail for women like me and my daughter.”

Some of those role models mingled with the younger women at the reunion.

“There’s a bond you don’t share with anyone else,” Ashley said. “Talk to a vet and you immediately get to that place, that shared experience.”

Phyllis Speidel and John H. Shelly’s story on the voyage of the Perianger appeared in the January/February 2005 American Spirit.
Cathy Hardman’s walk through the U.S. Army Women’s Museum brought her military legacy full circle. An Army brat from Indianapolis, Hardman enlisted in 1977, one of the last women to be a WAC. In 1978 the Women’s Army Corps merged into the Army, and its members became true female soldiers.

Sergeant 1st Class Hardman, now living near Fort Bragg, N.C., served two tours of duty in Germany. After her official retirement in 1997, she did two tours in Iraq as a civilian contractor in Operation Enduring Freedom.

“This place brings back a lot of memories,” Hardman said. “Gives me a deep sense of pride at having been a part of something so special.”

The museum at Fort Lee, Va., represents all women who have served in the Army, from the Molly Pitchers who stood by their men on the Revolutionary War battlefields to the women serving in Iraq today.

Life-size dioramas depict a Civil War battlefield nurse, WACs bivouacked in field tents, WACs working in the 6888th Postal Battalion sorting mail, a WAC band with big band music and Sousa marches playing in the background, and a parachute-clad airborne WAC from the Vietnam era.

The exhibits chronicle the U.S. female soldier’s history through Bosnia, Haiti, Somalia, Panama and the Persian Gulf to the present day. It is, according to Director Judy Matteson, the only museum in the world dedicated to Army women.

“Our mission is to collect and preserve their story,” she said.

The museum originally opened in 1955 at Fort McClellan, Ala. When Fort McClellan closed in 1999, the museum moved to Fort Lee, the home of the first regular Army WAC Training Center from 1945 to 1954.

The museum, about to embark on an expansion, counts heavily on volunteer hours and monetary donations. To learn how you can help the museum, call (804) 734-4327 or e-mail AWMWeb@lee.army.mil.

The museum is open Tuesday–Friday from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., and on Saturday and Sunday from 11 a.m. – 5 p.m. — P.S.
Going Where Few Women Have Gone Before: DAR Veterans Remember WWII Service

A select few of the 168,000 DAR members across the world are members of another special group: more than 2,500 Daughters can also call themselves military veterans. Gladys Haynes, National Vice Chairman of DAR Service for Veterans Committee, who retired after 21 years with the Army, has been busy compiling the compelling stories of her fellow veterans. Haynes, a member of the Governor William Livingston Chapter, Spring Lake, N.J., was particularly impressed by the stories of Helen Hester Hrolacher Evans and Lucy Estelle Hall Taft, two Daughters who joined the armed services to support their country during World War II.

'Something New and Unknown'

Helen Hester Hrolacher Evans joined the military in August 1942, signing up to be trained for a new program, the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, or WAAC. "It was apparent that everyone was going to be doing something towards the World War II effort," she says. "I thought I might as well try out something new and unknown—women serving in the military." Most of the men she knew were being drafted or commissioned from college R.O.T.C., so Mrs. Evans took a dare from two other high school teachers and completed an application for Officers Candidate School.

She caused quite a stir at home with her decision. "One night at dinner I announced that I had applied for this new thing that had just been created by Congress—the WAAC. My mother jumped up from the dining room table and screamed, 'You'll be killed! You'll be killed!' I don't recall any comments from my dad as he was too busy calming my mother."

After being accepted for WAAC officers training, Mrs. Evans was assigned as an instructor of food service management classes. She later helped to establish the Fifth WAC Training Center, where she organized a school for cooks and bakers.

Following training at the Inspector Generals School, Helen was assigned to the Office of the Quartermaster General. Her job: to inspect all WAC mess halls in the United States. Using research that documented the inappropriateness of the current Army menus for women, Helen helped to develop a master menu that reduced the amount of food issued to WAC units.

Helen was then sent to Quartermaster General Headquarters in Paris, France, and traveled throughout Europe with inspection teams. Part of her job was to feed German prisoners of war—but one day that job became a little more complicated. "I was quickly summoned to a group of women prisoners in from the Rhine Valley. The lieutenant in charge didn't know what to do—a woman had just had a baby. I didn't know what to do either, but we improvised quickly."

Mrs. Evans left the Army on January 1946, shortly after she found out about D-Day. "I was in a remote part of Germany when the war ended and we didn't receive the information until well after the fact. We later celebrated with captured wines from the wall of our billet."

Mrs. Evans has continued her life of service through membership in the DAR. A member of the Captain John Waller Chapter, Lexington, Ky., she was the first member appointed to the new committee position of National Vice Chairman for Women Veterans under the DAR Service for Veterans Committee. She also served as the Kentucky coordinator for the Women in Military Service to America Memorial and is a member of the Kentucky Military History Museum Advisory Board.
Seeing the World

Lucy Estelle Hall Taft grew up on a farm in the Beaverdam area of Cumberland County, N.C. She followed her brother’s advice and received nurse’s training in Charlotte, N.C., and went to work for a surgeon in Greenville, N.C. When World War II broke out, she volunteered for the American Red Cross because she “felt it was the patriotic thing to do.”

Although she had been told she was too small to be accepted into active duty military service, in March 1942 she received a letter from the War Department asking if there was any reason she could not serve. She promptly joined the Army Nurse Corps in Charlotte. She was assigned to the operating room in the hospital at Camp Monroe, N.C., then was transferred to a station hospital in Charlotte, where she was in charge of the nurses in the operating room. In those days, Army nurses did not attend boot camp or receive basic training, but she remembers being given about four hours of marching practice. She recalls one of the corpsman in the operating room helping her perfect her “about face.”

In 1945, she and several other nurses were ordered to prepare for an overseas assignment but were not told their destination. They traveled via train to San Francisco and boarded a ship that ultimately took them to Bombay, India. The nurses were then put onto an Indian troop train and traveled with the British Army on a five-day trek to Karachi. There was no food on the train so they had to eat what the hawkers sold to them when the train stopped at stations along the way. When they finally arrived at a camp, they were fed powdered eggs. At that point, she recalls, “they tasted pretty darn good!” Two weeks later the nurses were sent to Agra, the home of the Taj Mahal.

For more than two years she worked in the 97th Station hospital at Agra, which served U.S. Air Force personnel within a 200-mile radius. Although Agra was a 100-bed hospital, only eight to 10 nurses were assigned there at any one time. The military nurses’ assignment was to train Indian nurses how to care for sick children. Because of such a high patient-nurse ratio, both Army and Indian nurses also had to train families how to care for their own children.

Ms. Taft’s busy work schedule did allow for a few off-duty hours, which she often spent riding her bicycle two miles to the Taj Mahal. “The grounds were a peaceful, beautiful place to relax and meditate,” she says.

She also remembers a coveted assignment in the summertime: Taking the train up into the Himalayas to work with the British doctors and nurses at the British Cantonment. Although the two-week break from the heat of Agra was a welcome respite, the British rations, consisting of three-meals-per-day of dehydrated peas and carrots, were not. “My mama’s good Southern cooking was the thing I missed the most being away from home,” she says, “but it was my philosophy not to complain about things beyond my control.”

She arrived in India as a 1st lieutenant and was promoted to 2nd lieutenant by the time she returned to the United States in Spring 1948. After more than 10 years of service, Ms. Taft resigned as a major and returned to her parents’ home at Beaverdam. She went to work at the Veteran’s Hospital in Fayetteville and became active with the Richard Clinton Chapter, Clinton, N.C. Today she still lives on her family’s 50-acre farm, and her son lives next door.

“I always liked people and I enjoyed helping others,” she says. “I look back and feel satisfied with my life and the things I have done and the places I was able to go. For a little farm girl from North Carolina, I saw an awful lot of the world!”
Two hundred years ago this November, near present-day Astoria, Ore., an African-American man did an extraordinary thing: He voted. The man was York, the slave of William Clark, who as part of the Corps of Discovery had just crossed the continent through unnumbered perils and hardships. There in the wilderness, his vote counted equally with those of his companions, a unique moment of recognition for that time—and for decades thereafter.
This year marks the bicentennial of that moment, as well as the 40th anniversary of the 1965 Voting Rights Act that secured legal, if not immediately actual, protection of the franchise for all eligible citizens. That a slave was allowed to vote would alone earn York a place in the history books. He occupies other places as well—as the only African-American among the Corps, and as the first African-American to cross what would become the United States of America to the Pacific Ocean.

AN OBSCURE PLACE IN HISTORY

Despite being an exceptional man for his time, York’s place in history was obscure and often distorted until the late Robert B. Betts published In Search of York in 1985 (University Press of Colorado and the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation). Through a careful examination of existing records, Betts sought to dispel a number of myths about York. Betts believed that these distortions were propagated by writers who either ignored or misread the historical record, or who imposed their own cultural or personal biases and agendas. He describes York as “a man of whom more nonsense has been written than has been written of any other member of the group, including Sacagawea.”

Part of the difficulty in reconstructing York’s life is that there are relatively few sources of information, and even those offer scant details. Lewis, Clark and other members of the Corps who kept journals refer to him on a number of occasions, but the references are usually brief and lack details that put flesh on a figure two centuries later. We have almost no direct information about his personality or how his companions regarded him. No one knows for sure when he was born, nor the cause, date or place of his death.

York left no journal or diary of his own—few slaves could read or write, and many states strictly forbade teaching these skills. Apparently, no one thought it worthwhile to interview this member of the expedition upon his return; there are a few anecdotes about him, but nothing recorded in an objective or systematic fashion.
Two major sources of information about the expedition, Nicholas Biddle and Washington Irving, interviewed Clark and others years later. Their accounts add some details, but time, nostalgia and fading memories leave unanswered questions. Some of the information came from people who heard it second or third-hand or from letters between friends and acquaintances of those involved.

One such source is Persimmon Hill by William Clark Kennerly, who was Clark’s nephew by marriage. Kennerly’s book, published in 1948, comprises his recollection of stories he heard as a child from his uncle. Betts notes that Kennerly’s memories conflict with other records, and that Kennerly may have romanticized parts of his account.

That seemed to be the extent of our knowledge about York until a few years ago, when a collection of letters from William Clark to his brother, Jonathan, was discovered in a trunk in Louisville, Ky. These letters included previously unknown details about York, especially regarding the rift that developed between him and Clark sometime after their return to the East. The letters were edited by James J. Holmberg, Curator of Special Collections at the Filson Historical Society in Louisville, Ky., and published as Dear Brother: Letters of William Clark to Jonathan Clark (Yale University Press, 2002).

Lewis and Clark needed tough outdoorsmen for their journey, and York had acquired those traits as Clark’s companion.

A STEADFAST COMPANION
York’s trail begins sometime in the 1770s with his birth in Caroline County, Va. Slaves like York were usually about the same age as their masters, so Betts estimates he was born within a few years of Clark, who was born in 1770.

At a fairly young age—Betts says 12 was typical—York was chosen to serve as Clark’s body servant, the pinnacle of the slave hierarchy. Body servants closely attended their masters and mistresses, so they were spared field labor. Betts notes that they generally ate much better and dressed better as they had to accompany their owners into social and business situations and probably learned more of the manners and customs of the white society. They helped their
owners bathe and dress, attended them at meals and social functions, and assisted them when they were ill.

Kennerly says Clark recalled how he and York as children hunted, fished and explored the wilderness together. This would explain how York learned the vital outdoor skills that helped him and his companions survive the trek west. This is especially true when it came to hunting: slaves were typically not taught to use firearms.

Lewis and Clark wanted tough, reliable, seasoned outdoorsmen, and York would have acquired those traits as Clark’s companion. He was also described in the journals as being of unusually large size and strength, yet agile and quick—with one exception. During a hot day early in the journey, Clark describes York as being “nearly existed with heat thurst and fatigue, he being fat and un accustomed to walk as fast” as his master.

‘BIG MEDISON’

York’s strength, outdoor skills and steadiness were critical throughout the expedition, but his color proved to be perhaps his most valuable contribution to its success.

When the expedition arrived in present-day South Dakota, they began to encounter tribes who had never seen a black man. In succession, the Arikaras, Mandans and Hidatsas were awed by this large, strange figure. They called him “Big Medison,” signifying an inexplicable and powerful force. York embellished on his singularity, telling the Arikaras that he had been a wild creature captured and tamed by Clark.

The Indians were sure that he was a white man who had painted his skin, and they put it to the test. This moment forms the subject of one of the best-known artistic depictions of the expedition: Charles M. Russell’s painting “York in the Camp of the Mandans.” York stands shirtless in the center of a domed Mandan hut as a mystified chief spits on his finger and tries to wipe away the blackness.

The scene repeated itself as the Corps moved westward and met other tribes who were awed by the black man. This frequently served as an icebreaker with tribes from whom the expedition needed information, food and other supplies. It was critical in late 1805 when a party led by Lewis at last found the Shoshonis from whom they needed to get horses for the push across the Bitterroot Range.

The Indians were skittish and suspicious. Lewis had to work hard to keep them from leaving before Clark arrived with the rest of the party, which included Sacagawea. However, when the Shoshoni heard about York, “this had excited their curiosity very much, and they seemed quite as anxious to see this monster as they were[e] the merchandize we had to barter for their horses,” Lewis wrote. York’s arrival with Clark and others created a stir, as usual, and helped mollify the Shoshoni. (The real cement for this relationship was, of course, the incredible coincidence that the Shoshonis’ Chief Cameahwait was Sacagawea’s brother, whom she had not seen since being kidnapped years earlier.)

A HISTORIC VOTE

Even with horses, the party came close to starvation before leaving the Bitterroots. They reached the Columbia River on October 16 and came to its estuary on November 7. A few days later, York accompanied Clark and some of the rest of the party to the ocean.

With winter coming on again, the Corps found that game was scarce on the north side of the Columbia River. They heard from the local tribes there was more game on the south side, and the captains took the unusual move of allowing the expedition members, including York and Sacagawea, to vote on whether to stay or go south.

The vote was almost unanimous; only Private John Shields voted to stay on the north side of the Columbia River. The party crossed the river, found game more plentiful and erected the tiny stockade they called Fort Clatsop after the local tribe. The spent a miserable, damp winter during which a number of the expedition fell ill, including York. Much of the time was spent preparing for the return trip by making clothes and shoes and trading with the local tribes for needed items.

They left Fort Clatsop on March 23, 1806, eager to make the return journey as rapidly as possible. With few trade goods left to barter for food, horses and other items, Lewis and Clark had to be canny bargainers. At one point, they sent York to haggle with a band of Nez Perces, and he succeeded in swapping a few buttons and trinkets for a substantial amount of roots. It was, Betts says, another indication that the captains had as high a regard for York’s abilities as they did for the other men—greater, in fact, than they had for some.

Betts notes that York last appears in the expedition’s journals on August 3, 1806, when Clark identifies him as a passenger in one of the canoes. About six weeks later, on September 23, the Corps of Discovery arrived back in St. Louis to a heroes’ welcome. For York, it was also a return to the abject state of slavery.

DISPELLING MYTHS

One of the popular misconceptions Betts seeks to dispel was that Clark freed him soon after the expedition returned. Betts notes there is no evidence when York was freed, and the only evidence that he was ever freed came from Washington Irving’s notes of his interview with Clark in 1832. Clark either did not give, or Irving did not record, the date of emancipation.

A few years after the Corps’ return, a serious rift developed between Clark and York, a split so intense that they apparently never reconciled. William Clark’s letters to Jonathan indicate that the split began over York’s longing for his wife. No records
have been found that say who she was, how they met, when they married or if they had children. It is known that she was owned by someone living near Louisville, where Clark had spent some time in early 1808 before returning to his post in St. Louis.

By November 1808, William Clark told Jonathan that York had irritated him by begging to return to Louisville to be near his wife, even if it meant being sold to another master. Eventually, Clark angrily agreed to send York back. He instructed Jonathan that if York tried to escape or failed to measure up as a slave, "I wish him Sent to New Orleans and Sold, or hired out to Some Sevare Master until he thinks better of Such Conduct..."

The letters say that York was hired out—in a sense, he was rented—to a master in Louisville who treated him badly. However, there were rumors that York did not die such a miserable, lonely death. Several tales claimed that he went back west to live among Indian tribes, where he was still regarded as "Big Medison." A trapper reported seeing an old black man who claimed to be York living with a band of Crow Indians in Wyoming. Neither Betts nor Holmberg believed York could have been this figure, but ultimately no hard evidence exists one way or the other.

Despite his participation in one of the seminal events of U.S. history, York's life mirrored many of the typical cruelties of slavery. He had no say in any aspect of his life. Clark could have taken him west regardless of his suitability for such a journey or could have left him at home. Betts argues that as a slave owner, Clark was profoundly outraged over York's desire to be near his wife. Such behavior was not to be tolerated in slaves. As punishment, Clark cast York down from servant to rental property—it was an astonishing and agonizing fall for York, who had spent a lifetime in close companionship with Clark who had survived perils to see the Pacific Ocean, who had spoken as an equal with white men in choosing their 1806 winter camp. Such a fall from grace makes us want to believe that maybe he did return to a life of honor and dignity among the Indians who had regarded him with awe.

Bill Hudgins is a contributing editor. His last feature was on the history of whaling for the July/August issue.
In the *New York Tribune* of Friday, July 6, 1855, a small advertisement notified readers that Walt Whitman's new book of poetry, *Leaves of Grass*, could be purchased for $2 at bookstores in Manhattan and Brooklyn. While copies of the book may have been available earlier that summer, the fact that their first public introduction took place so close to Independence Day and the country's celebration of its Founding Fathers and the Patriots who fought for its freedom shows significance. Whitman saw his poems as the greatest expression of American democracy and envisioned himself fundamentally as an American poet, possessing the voice of freedom and brotherhood that helped create the nation.

A firm grounding in American history and a great regard for the generation that fought the Revolution enabled Whitman to offer his readers a groundbreaking work of poetry—so original in its form and style—that paid homage to his country's history and encouraged his audience to be full participants in democracy. Drawing on his own family history and the history of New York's Revolutionary battles, Whitman enriched his poetry with the sacrifices of a revered generation.

**A FAMILY NAMED FOR HEROES**

Born in 1819 at the family farm in West Hills, Long Island, Walt Whitman was the second son of eight surviving children. His older brother, Jesse, was named for the boys' paternal grandfather, a militiaman during the Revolutionary War. Three of Walt's younger brothers—George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson Whitman—were named after great heroes and statesmen. From the beginning of his life, national and family history intertwined.

As a boy, Whitman would listen to his grandmother's stories about his patriotic ancestors, how the relatives on his mother's and father's sides supported the Americans, as well as how they had helped protect the family homesteads while the British held Long Island for the war's entirety. His grandmother would tell him about "the most horrible excesses" committed by the British, "enough to make one's blood boil," wrote David Reynolds in *Walt Whitman's America: A Cultural Biography* (Vintage, 1995). Learning about the Revolution firsthand from that older generation and remembering their strength and sacrifice was a constant presence to Whitman.

**A LONG FAREWELL**

One of Whitman's earliest memories—a story he told often throughout his life—was of the Marquis de Lafayette's visit to Brooklyn on July 4, 1825, as part of his tour of the country. Whitman, then 6 years old, recalled seeing one of the gathered local children Lafayette lifted and kissed on the cheek. Whitman's recollection of the event often differed during his retelling of it, but the basic story stayed the same: For a moment, a small New York boy found himself in the presence of a national hero. As he aged and the heroes and soldiers of the Revolution passed away, Whitman was living through what biographer Justin Kaplan called "a long farewell salute to the receding world of the founders." In his Whitman compilation *Poetry and Prose* (Library of America, 1996), Kaplan wrote: "When the last soldier of the Sacred Army was gone, and then in turn the post-Revolutionary generation ... how would the faith of the founders be transmitted?" As Whitman grew and began to see himself not only as a student of American history, but also as an active participant, his early memories of Revolutionary heroes filtered into his poetry, creating what would ultimately become representative of the very best of America. Through his poetry, their legacy continued.

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1. During the last 20 years of his life, Walt Whitman lived in this modest house in Camden, N.J. 2. The short poem "To Old Age" was part of the *Leaves of Grass* collection. Whitman, 68 in this 1887 portrait, died in 1892. 3. Whitman was a student of American history and his early memories of Revolutionary heroes filtered into his poetry. 4. Whitman often celebrated his country and its brave leaders in poems such as "O Captain, My Captain," written upon Abraham Lincoln's death. 5. This engraving by Samuel Hollyer served as the frontispiece to Whitman's first edition of *Leaves of Grass*, 1855.

© BETTMAN/CORBIS. 2, 5, © THE GRANGER COLLECTION.
LEAVES OF GRASS, 1855

When Walt Whitman offered his book of poems to the world in the summer of 1855, he saw himself as not just another American verse maker, but as the true bard of his country, the singer of a thriving, robust democracy. In the book’s preface, he set out his mission and publicly took for himself the title of Poet. He wrote, in the effusive style that permeated the book, “The Americans of all nations at any time upon the earth have probably the fullest poetical nature. The United States themselves are essentially the greatest poem.” Whitman gave himself the task of celebrating his country and himself as proud citizen. Poets are, he wrote, “the voice and exposition of liberty.”

The 1855 edition of Leaves of Grass was not the immediate success Whitman hoped it would be. Throughout his life, he would continue to add poems to it, revise and reshape the collection, until the final publication of what came to be known as the deathbed edition in 1892. Most contemporary readers are familiar with this last edition, and it offers the widest range of Whitman’s work, spanning some 40 years. But that first edition, that uncontrollable, indomitable 1855 Leaves of Grass, shows us Whitman at his initial burst of genius. He would later disassemble the preface, where he first named his vocation as America’s poet and use it to create other newer poems. But, in its original form, the preface serves as Whitman’s poetic promise to the future of America as he acknowledges his debt to its past.

Whitman wrote: “The great poet forms the consistence of what is to be from what has been and is. He drags the dead out of their coffins and stands them again on their feet... he says to the past, Rise and walk before me that I may realize you. He learns the lesson... He places himself where the future becomes present.” Whitman knew that to be the true American poet he must pay homage to the nation’s founders, and that his book must carry within it the spirit of the men and women who fought to free the country from tyranny.

TRIBUTE TO HEROES

The heroes of the Revolution are everywhere in this book. In the poem that would eventually be called “The Sleepers,” Whitman reconstructs the scene of George Washington at the war’s first major battle, the Battle of Brooklyn. As a child growing up in Brooklyn and Long Island, the remnants of this fight surrounded Whitman constantly. Now, in this poem, Whitman’s Washington stands on the battlefield amidst his soldiers and officers and weeps for the dead and for their defeat. Whitman writes:

His face is cold and damp... he cannot repres the weeping drops... he lifts the glass perpetually to his eyes... the color is blanched from his cheeks.

He sees the slaughter of the southern braves confided to him by their parents.

In the next stanza, after the war has been won and peace declared, Washington stands in a tavern as his “well-beloved” soldiers pass through and his “officers speechless and slow draw near in their turn.” One by one, the father of the country shakes the hands of his men and kisses their cheeks as he “bids goodbye to the army.”

This moving tribute is beautiful in how it humanizes such a mythic, powerful figure. The George Washington that Whitman gives readers is a man who cries at the loss of his soldiers (not just nameless troops to him, but boys lent by their parents in order to create a free nation) and disbands his winning army one man at a time. Whitman here allows this nearly untouchable man a few stanzas of simple humanity.

In “The Sleepers,” he takes his readers back in time to the war, yet in the collection’s first and most famous poem, eventually titled “Song of Myself,” Whitman fuses time to show that the war has never truly left him. It is as constant in his thoughts as daily life; the Patriots who built this country are a part of him still:

What stills the traveler come to the vault at Mount Vernon,
What sober the Brooklyn boy as he looks down the shores of the Wallabout and remembers the prison ships,
What burnt the guns of the redcoats at Saratoga when he surrendered his brigades,
These become mine and me and every one, and they are but little,
I become as much more as I like.

Eve Rosenbaum is pursuing her Ph.D. in writing at the University of Iowa.
Now get FREE new and improved Bulbs for Life!

A floor lamp that spreads sunshine all over a room, and pays for itself!

The Balanced Spectrum® floor lamp combines the benefits of natural daylight indoors with a savings of $77 over the life of one bulb!

Ever since the first human went into a dark cave and built a fire, people have realized the importance of proper indoor lighting. Unfortunately, since Edison invented the light bulb, lighting technology has remained relatively prehistoric. Modern light fixtures do little to combat many symptoms of improper lighting, such as eyestrain, dryness or burning. As more and more of us spend longer hours in front of a computer monitor, the results are compounded. And the effects of indoor lighting are not necessarily limited to physical well-being. Many people believe that the quantity and quality of light can play a part in one's mood and work performance. Now there's a better way to bring the positive benefits of natural sunlight indoors.

The Balanced Spectrum® floor lamp will change the way you see and feel about your living or work spaces. Studies show that sunshine can lift your mood and your energy levels. But as we all know the sun, unfortunately, does not always shine. So to bring the benefits of natural daylight indoors, use the floor lamp that simulates the full spectrum of daylight. You will see with more clarity and enjoyment as this lamp provides sharp visibility for close tasks and reduces eyestrain.

Its 27-watt compact bulb is the equivalent to a 150-watt ordinary light bulb. This makes it perfect for activities such as reading, writing, sewing, needlepoint, and especially for aging eyes.

We've looked at lots of lights, but this one offers the benefit of dual light levels of 27 and 18 watts of power equivalent to 150- and 100-watt incandescent bulbs. This lamp has a flexible gooseneck design for maximum efficiency, with an "Instant On" switch that is flicker-free. The high-tech electronics, user-friendly design, and bulb that lasts 10 times longer than an ordinary bulb make this lamp a must-have.

SAVE $77 over the life of one Balanced Spectrum® bulb!

A 150-watt incandescent bulb uses $0.013 per hour in energy cost. The Balanced Spectrum® bulb uses an average of 70% less energy which saves you $0.009 per hour. Based on 8,000 hours bulb life, the Balanced Spectrum® bulb will save $72 in energy cost. Plus, because the Balanced Spectrum® bulb lasts 10 times longer than an incandescent bulb priced at an average of $0.50, an additional $5 savings is realized.

**Source: "Lighting the Way to Energy Savings"; 1999

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- 8,000 hours bulb life
- Energy efficient
- Shows true colors

Heights shown: 50*

As soon as I turned on the lamp and began to read the newspaper I could see the wonderful difference. This lamp is just what I needed. Thank you so much.”

Donna E.
Scranton, PA

Try the Balanced Spectrum® floor lamp for the best value ever! Now more than ever is the time to add sunshine to every room in your home at this fantastic low price! The Balanced Spectrum® floor lamp comes with a 1-year manufacturer's limited warranty and firstSTREET's exclusive guarantee. Try this product for 90 days and return it for the product purchase price if not completely satisfied.

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