A Marquee Preservation
Reviving Historic American Movie Theaters

TAPPING FOR Maple's Sweet Gold

REVOLUTIONARY MARTYRS: The Story of the Prison Ships

THE WOMEN OF THE RATCLIFFE-ALLISON HOUSE

American Spirit
Daughters of the American Revolution
March/April 2007
DO YOU HAVE A Revolutionary Patriot IN YOUR FAMILY TREE?

Consider membership in the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR), a volunteer women’s service organization that honors and preserves the legacy of our Patriot ancestors. More than 200 years ago, American Patriots fought and sacrificed for the freedoms we enjoy today. As a member of DAR, you can continue this legacy by actively promoting patriotism, preserving American history and securing America’s future through better education for children.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR MEMBERSHIP?
Any woman 18 years or older, regardless of race, religion or ethnic background, who can prove lineal descent from a Patriot of the American Revolution is eligible for membership. DAR volunteers are willing to provide guidance and assistance with your first step into the world of genealogy.

HOW IS PATRIOT DEFINED?
DAR recognizes Patriots not only as soldiers, but as anyone who contributed to the cause of American freedom. To find out if your ancestor is recognized by the DAR as a Revolutionary Patriot, a request form is available online at www.dar.org by clicking on “Membership.”

HOW MANY MEMBERS DOES THE NATIONAL SOCIETY HAVE?
DAR has 168,000 members in nearly 3,000 chapters worldwide, including chapters in 11 foreign countries. Since its founding in 1890, DAR has admitted more than 800,000 members.

HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE?
Go to www.dar.org and click on “Membership.” There you’ll find helpful instructions, advice on finding your lineage and a Prospective Member Information Request Form. Or call (202) 879–3224 for more information on joining the work of this vital, service-minded organization.

Preserving the American Spirit | www.dar.org | (202) 879–3224
Maple’s Sweet Gold 20
Every spring, Americans embrace a ritual that started centuries ago: tapping maples for sap and transforming it into syrup. Learn about the roots of this tasty tradition and how to harvest a bottle of sweet gold for yourself.

BY JESSICA STONE

Colonial ‘Junk Food’ 26
Though the concept of junk food evolved after Colonial times, early Americans did enjoy many of the snacks we crave today, including doughnuts, French fries and ice cream.

BY NANCY MANN JACKSON

Recipe for Revolution 30
In our Q&A with historian John McWilliams, discover how eating habits, the rise of regional cuisine and the thirst for beer in Colonial America paved the way to the Revolution.

BY PAULETTE BEETE

Reviving an American Classic 34
Since their premiere nearly a century ago, movie theaters have captured the imagination of millions of Americans. Now some communities are rescuing the earliest ones from ruin.

BY EMILY McMACKEIN

Prison Ship Martyrs 43
The sacrifice of thousands of patriots who died on British prison ships during the Revolution has largely been forgotten, but some hope to save a monument to them from neglect.

BY SHARON MCDONNELL

ABOUT THE COVER: THE FOX THEATRE IN ATLANTA. PHOTO BY MICHAEL PORTMAN, COURTESY OF THE FOX THEATRE.
Today's Daughters

A Real Trooper 5
As an Air Force wife and volunteer nurse in Kaiserslautern, Germany, Janice Speer goes above the call of duty to help military families adjust and America's wounded warriors recover.

BY LENA BASHA

National Treasures

Serving Supper 11
A striking tureen from the 1820s reveals the mood and menu of a typical Colonial supper.

FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE DAR MUSEUM

Bookshelf

Fighting Spirit 12
A historical novel explores the feisty resolve of the Scots-Irish and their legacy in America and the military; a compilation of letters from soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan offers an intimate look at service.

BY HARVEY KING AND JAMIE ROBERTS

Historic Homes

Passion to Preserve 14
Visit the oldest surviving house in Fairfax, Va., and hear stories of the remarkable women who saved it for future generations, including Dr. Kate Waller Barrett, a longtime DAR member whose efforts as a social activist and preservationist touched many lives.

BY RACHEL HAYNIE

Plus

President General’s Message 3
Whatnot 6
Letters to the Editor 10
From the President General

Promoting historic preservation is one of the primary objectives of NSDAR, and many Daughters know firsthand the challenge of protecting important American sites for generations to come. American Spirit often honors those who take on the challenge of restoring and reviving historic treasures. In this issue, we shine the spotlight on one of the country’s most endangered sites: historic movie theaters. These larger-than-life, grand palaces played a central role in early 20th-century life; but many have gone dark and are in danger of succumbing to the wrecking ball. Some communities are rediscovering their value and looking for ways not only to preserve them, but also to give them an encore by turning them into event venues, cultural centers and engines for downtown revitalization.

Our Historic Homes department focuses on three women who became passionate about the preservation of the Ratcliffe—Allison House in Fairfax, Va. The town’s oldest surviving house was once the home of Dr. Kate Waller Barrett, a social activist, preservationist, DAR leader and one of America’s first female physicians. Today, the home pays tribute to Dr. Barrett and two other female residents who were all ahead of the times in which they lived.

The ongoing restoration of the Prison Ship Martyrs’ Monument at the summit of Fort Greene Park in Brooklyn, N.Y., is yet another project where our members have taken a lead in honoring American sacrifice. The monument overlooks Wallabout Bay, the site where more than 11,500 American prisoners of war were held captive and died on 16 British prison ships between 1776 and 1783. The prison ship martyrs represent one of the most tragic chapters in our nation’s early history—yet one of its least-known.

Among these nourishing lessons of history, our issue also aims to satisfy your sweet tooth with three stories that explore the origins of early American food. We investigate the roots of maple tapping, a springtime ritual that Native Americans were perfecting long before the Pilgrims arrived. The centuries-old process of turning sap into maple syrup has advanced technologically, but the simple and miraculous act of tapping trees for their sweet gold is still a cause for celebration in the regions where it takes place.

In a feature on Colonial sweets and treats, readers might be surprised to learn that their ancestors enjoyed familiar indulgence foods, such as French fries, doughnuts and ice cream, though certainly not as frequently as today. The sugar, fats and refined flour of favorite junk foods could be hard to come by for early Americans; but holidays and special occasions did include some decadent treats. Interested in trying what those luxuries might have tasted like? Try our modern updates of old cookie recipes.

Culinary history is also on the table in American Spirit’s Q&A with historian James E. McWilliams, Ph.D., whose recent book, A Revolution in Eating, examines how Colonial eating habits shaped the Revolutionary views of new Americans.

I hope you enjoy this issue of American Spirit which will both satisfy your appetite for knowledge and stimulate your appetite for some of your favorite treats.

Presley Merritt Wagoner
Save 24% off the cover price on gift subscriptions to *American Spirit* magazine.

DON’T MISS EVEN ONE ISSUE OF THIS GREAT PUBLICATION. DISCOVER NEW WAYS TO RECONNECT WITH YOUR PAST, LEARN ABOUT GREAT DESTINATIONS ACROSS THE COUNTRY, AND READ ABOUT FELLOW AMERICANS WHO SHARE YOUR VALUES OF HERITAGE, HISTORY AND FAMILY.

Three Easy Ways to Begin Receiving *American Spirit* Magazine:

1. Subscribe online at [http://www.dar.org/americanspirit](http://www.dar.org/americanspirit)
3. Credit Card # ___________________________ Security Code #: ______________________
   Exp. Date: ___________________________ MC  VISA  AMEX  DISCOVER  *All payments must be in U.S. funds.*

Save 24% off the cover price of $3.95/issue. Please allow 4-6 weeks to receive subscription.

Canada and Mexico, $23/yr., $44/2yrs. or $63/3yrs. Other international subscriptions, $30/yr., $58/2yrs. or $84/3yrs.

First Class Air Mail add $20/yr., $40/2yrs. or $60/3yrs.
Married to an Air Force major for the past 20 years, Janice Speer is an expert at moving. But nothing could have prepared her for relocating to Germany almost three years ago.

“There is no culture shock like moving to Europe,” she says. “It’s very challenging to get set up here.”

When she first moved to Kaiserslautern, Germany, with her husband, Major Larry Speer, and son, Nolan, Mrs. Speer couldn’t figure out the German drain system or why wires under the neighborhood cars were mysteriously cut. Moles, it turned out, caused the latter, but no one had prepared her.

“If someone doesn’t tell you, you may never figure it out on your own,” she says. “We’re the only Americans on our street, and not everyone speaks English. It can be isolating—and intimidating. I didn’t want anyone else to be faced with that challenge.”

Mrs. Speer acted fast to make sure the families who followed her wouldn’t be as in the dark as she was. She created a welcome committee for her husband’s unit, the 76th Airlift Squadron. The committee assembled welcome packets with answers on everything from where to send your kids to school to where to get an oil change—and warnings about those pesky moles.

As soon as she figured out the nuances of life in Europe, Mrs. Speer started volunteering weekly as a critical-care nurse at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, the first point of care for combat-related injuries to soldiers fighting the War on Terror.

What she’s most known for around Ramstein Air Force Base, though, is chairing the 2006 Ramstein Officer’s Spouses Club Welfare Bazaar, which is the most successful military fund-raising event in Europe. After nine months of planning, the annual bazaar brought 137 vendors from all over Europe—and even one from Korea—to the base for a four-day shopping extravaganza. The bazaar raised more than $318,000 for the local American community.

Mrs. Speer’s dedication to her community has not gone unnoticed. In 2006 she was named the Joan Orr Air Force Spouse of the Year for all U.S. Air Forces in Europe, and she has been nominated again to compete for the 2007 award.

“All of the ladies who were nominated were extraordinary, so to be chosen was absolutely thrilling,” she says.

She was honored more recently with a visit from DAR President General Presley Merritt Wagoner, who toured Landstuhl Regional Medical Center last November and presented a $25,000 check to the Landstuhl Wounded Warriors Project, which provides new clothes and other needed items to injured soldiers who arrive at the hospital for treatment.

A member of the Palatinate Chapter, Ramstein, Germany, Mrs. Speer chairs her chapter’s DAR Project Patriot Committee, which helps collect needed items and funds for the Wounded Warriors Project.

“As chairwoman, I get in touch with the organizers and ask them what they need the most. I also make the deliveries—in some cases, directly to the ICU. I always try to take pictures to show everyone how helpful their donations are.”

Her husband will retire from the Air Force in May, when she and her family will move back to the United States. They haven’t decided where yet, but Mrs. Speer knows what she’ll be doing as soon as she returns.

“Talking to Mrs. Wagoner, I got so excited about getting more involved in the DAR,” she says. “What an amazing group of ladies they are.”
Take a Stroll Through History

There’s no better time to visit historic Charleston, S.C., than during its annual Festival of Houses and Gardens, kicking off March 15 and running through the middle of April. Charleston is home to some of the nation’s most storied historic homes and gardens, and both will be open to the public for the duration of the festival—which happens to be just in time for blooming season in Charleston.

Festivalgoers can get a rare look inside the homes and gardens of nearly 150 historic houses in 12 of Charleston’s distinctive Colonial and antebellum neighborhoods. Estates on display range from the modest harbor homes of 18th-century merchants to 19th-century mansions and town houses once belonging to some of the city’s most distinguished residents.

The tours, which are offered daily, highlight the architectural styles that have influenced Charleston since its founding in 1670, including homes built in the Georgian, Greek revival and early Victorian fashion. The Church Street tour is truly a history buff’s dream as it presents an exclusive glimpse at the street that the workplaces of George Washington, John C. Calhoun and Robert E. Lee once occupied.

The festival, in its 60th year, kicks off with a weekend-long international antiques show featuring 30 of the nation’s leading antique dealers, who will be selling goods dating back to the 17th century.

Proceeds from the festival go toward the Historic Charleston Foundation, allowing the group to carry out its goal of preserving cultural and historical integrity within the city.

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit www.historiccharleston.org.
Believe it or not, food has played an essential role in shaping America’s history ever since the founding of Jamestown 400 years ago. The impact of food on America’s development from colonization to the Civil War will be the focus of a weekend-long symposium in Blacksburg, Va., April 20–21.

Participants of the “Cooking up 400 Years of Culinary History in Virginia” symposium will spend the weekend attending lectures on the influence of food in American history as renowned culinary historians share their knowledge on methods of hearth cooking, malnutrition in early Jamestown, Thomas Jefferson’s affinity for French cuisine and much more. The festivities culminate with a five-course banquet dinner complete with a menu based on historical foods and Virginia’s celebrated wines.

The conference will take place in Owens Hall at Virginia Tech, just a walk away from the school’s Newman Library, home of the Southeast’s largest collection of historic cookbooks. While in Blacksburg, don’t miss a drive or hike through the Blue Ridge Mountains in spring bloom. Also make time to tour the historic Smithfield Plantation, circa 1774, adjacent to Virginia Tech’s campus.

To learn more about the symposium and register, visit www.cpe.vt.edu/culinary-va.

Rediscovering the Trail of Tears

Thanks to the passage of the Trail of Tears Study Act in December, the National Park Service will be able to expand the current Trail of Tears to incorporate additional routes once used by the Cherokee Indians. Congressman Zach Wamp of Tennessee authored the bill that calls for the inclusion of two unrecognized primary Trail of Tears routes—the Benge and the Bell paths—as well as numerous water routes and emigration depots. “The Trail of Tears Study Act is necessary because the human side of Cherokee removal must still be told,” says Wamp. “This development will show the courage and the character of the Cherokee.” The extension of the Trail of Tears will also give the public access to previously inaccessible sites where original Cherokee villages were established, hopefully increasing knowledge of the Cherokee history.

{QuickQuiz}

JUNK FOOD

1. What was America’s first packaged candy?

2. Doing what to sugar made for a delectable treat in Colonial America?

3. Who is the Baby Ruth candy bar named after?

4. What food item is ordered more than any other at restaurants nationwide?

5. What is a chocolate crispie?

Answers on page 9.
ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY
(Sources include Library of Congress’ “American Memory” http://memory.loc.gov)

March 3, 1931: “The Star-Spangled Banner” officially becomes the national anthem of the United States.

March 7, 1965: Civil rights demonstrators begin a march for voting rights from Selma to Montgomery, Ala., on what would later be known as “Bloody Sunday.”

March 8, 1884: Susan B. Anthony argues for women’s right to vote before the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives.

March 22, 1765: Parliament passes the Stamp Act requiring colonists to pay a tax on every piece of printed paper they use.

April 1, 1789: The U.S. House of Representatives holds its first quorum in New York City and elects Frederick Muhlenberg Speaker of the House.

April 14, 1865: Abraham Lincoln is shot and killed by John Wilkes Booth at Ford’s Theatre.

April 15, 1783: The Continental Congress ratifies the preliminary articles of peace, ending the Revolutionary War.

April 30, 1789: George Washington delivers the first-ever inaugural address in the nation’s new capitol, New York City.

The One-Dollar Coin underwent a major makeover last month. Replacing the Sacagawea Golden Dollar, the new series features the faces of U.S. presidents. The U.S. Mint will release four each year, in the order that the presidents served their terms, until 2016. Coins donning the likenesses of Presidents George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison were released in February.

Government officials are hoping that the success from the 50-state quarters program, which has generated $5 billion since 1999, will carry over to the new line of coins. The collection is an attempt to invigorate the design of U.S. coins, as each one will feature a larger and more dramatic portrait of the presidents than seen on current coinage. Each new coin will also include a depiction of the Statue of Liberty on the reverse side, as well as edge-incised inscriptions of the familiar maxims “E Pluribus Unum” and “In God We Trust.”

The presidential coins’ debut will coincide with the release of collectible 24-karat First Spouse coins worth $10 each.

This Old House—and Barn

Love your old house, but hate the upkeep? Visit the New Hampshire Old House and Barn Expo, taking place March 24–25 in Manchester, N.H. The trade show aims to provide homeowners with tips and inexpensive techniques for upkeep and preservation. Knowledgeable suppliers of repair and restoration products and services will be on hand all weekend to assist homeowners with every aspect of restoration from window repair to timber framing.

Thanks to the organizational efforts of the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance, owners of old houses will be able to cherish and care for their homes for years to come. To learn more about the expo and find helpful tips, visit nhpreservation.org.

Roots to Richmond

Richmond, Va., will be the ideal setting for the family historian this May as the city plays host to the 29th Annual Conference and Family History Fair. The conference marks 400 years of American family history and will be a great opportunity for enthusiasts and beginners alike to trace their genealogy with the help of the Virginia Genealogical Society and other local genealogy organizations. Visitors will have access to Virginia tax and land records as well as National Archives records. The four-day conference will include informational sessions on topics ranging from early Virginia migration patterns to the growing applications of technology in genealogy. Hands-on workshops on handwriting and genealogy mapping, among other topics, will also be offered. The conference is open to the public and will be held at the Greater Richmond Convention Center and the neighboring Marriott Hotel in downtown Richmond. To register online, visit www.ngsgenealogy.org.
Beyond Treason

What’s the first word that pops into your head when you think of Benedict Arnold? If you said “traitor,” you’re not alone. Once an accomplished Revolutionary War general, Arnold is remembered mainly by his act against the American Republic. But an upcoming documentary by Talon Films is trying to change that: “American General: Benedict Arnold” delves into the paradox of Benedict Arnold’s illustrious career as a victorious Revolutionary War general and his infamous status as one of history’s greatest villains.

“It attempts to unravel the historical conundrum suggested by some scholars that, despite his ultimate betrayal, there might not have been an independent United States of America without Benedict Arnold,” says Dr. Karl Felsen, a proponent of the film.

The two-hour documentary, which draws heavily on James Kirby Martin’s critically acclaimed book Benedict Arnold, Revolutionary Hero: An American Warrior Reconsidered (NYU Press, 2000), features re-enactments of Arnold’s greatest battles, including his surprise capture of Fort Ticonderoga, and interviews with renowned Revolutionary scholars.

The first half of the film will highlight Arnold’s great military accomplishments that have been eclipsed by the subject of the latter half of the film: Arnold’s betrayal.

“If Arnold had died from his wounds at the Battle of Saratoga, he would today not only be considered one of America’s greatest heroes, in all likelihood we would have a holiday to celebrate his birth,” says film director Chris Stearns.

The film is set to air on PBS this fall or in spring 2008. For more information and to watch the film’s trailer, visit www.talonfilms.com.

On the Battlefield

To commemorate the 225th anniversary of the Battle of Green Springs, Lionheart Filmworks has released a DVD of the first-ever re-enactment of this important American Revolution battle. Depicting the largest stand-up fight of the Revolution in Virginia, the film also features a documentary about the original battle and the recent effort to save the battlefield lands from development.

Another film by Lionheart Filmworks, “Yorktown: Battle for Victory,” will be released this spring. Shot by camera crews last October, the film follows the battles and events of the 225th anniversary re-enactment of the combat and siege of Yorktown. For more information and to buy the DVDs, visit www.lionheart-filmworks.com.

{QuickQuiz}

Answers to quiz on page 7: 1. The first packaged box of Whitman’s Chocolates made its debut in 1854. 2. Boiling it. 3. While many assume it’s named after baseball player Babe Ruth, the candy bar, which first arrived in 1920, was actually named for President Grover Cleveland’s daughter. 4. French fries are served with 22 percent of all restaurant meals. 5. The original name for the chocolate-chip cookie, invented in 1930 by Ruth Wakefield of Massachusetts.
**WOMAN OF STEEL**

I thoroughly enjoyed reading every feature article in your latest issue (January/February 2007), but what a wonderful surprise to find that one article, “Iron Maiden” on Rebecca Lukens, connects to two branches of my family tree. My maternal grandmother was a Lukens, a distant cousin of Rebecca’s husband, Charles Lukens, and both were descendants of Jan Lukens/Luckens who settled Germantown, Pa., in 1683. My maternal grandfather is a direct descendant of Moses Coates whose family founded Coatesville, Pa., the location of the Lukens Steel Co. Now I’ll make sure I renew my subscription so I don’t miss any other articles that hit close to home.

Barbara A. Welch
Henry Clay Chapter
Annandale, Va.

**VIGO’S BELL**

I enjoyed the article on Francis Vigo in the November/December 2006 issue. Our county is named for him, and his estate paid for the bell in our courthouse. I believe he indicated in his will that when the funds he had loaned were repaid, he wished to provide funds for a courthouse bell.

LaVonne Waldron, National Chairman, Women’s Issues Committee
Fort Harrison Chapter
Terre Haute, Ind.

**THE MAYFLOWER EXPERIENCE**

I was delighted to see the review of Nathaniel Philbrick’s *Mayflower* in the November/December 2006 issue. It’s a well-researched and beautifully written account of the *Mayflower* experience. The Historian General’s Office gave this book to our Outstanding Teacher of American History runners-up for 2006. Philbrick is an excellent writer/historian, and I’m glad you included the review of this outstanding book of early American history.

Cindy Segraves Phillips, Historian General
Rebecca Cravat Chapter
Jackson, Miss.

**AMERICA’S FIRST FEMALE DIPLOMAT**

I was disappointed that the September/October 2006 article on Jamestown skipped over what is not only one of the most enduring stories about the nascent Colonial America, but also one with profoundly positive diplomatic consequences.

I refer to Matoaka, a woman better known by her nickname at the time, Pocahontas. In April 1614 she wed John Rolfe, a widower. Two years later, Rolfe, his Indian bride and their new son, Thomas Smith Rolfe, sailed to England to raise support for the Colonies. During her brief stay in London, Pocahontas was presented not only to King James, but also to the Bishop of London. Having accomplished what Rolfe felt was a successful campaign, he and his family again sailed for the New World. Sadly, shortly after they left London on the River Thames, Pocahontas became ill. She and her family disembarked at Gravesend in Kent, where she died. According to Rolfe, her last words were, “All must die. ‘Tis enough that the child liveth.”

My husband and I spent 20 years living in London and escorted American friends and family to St. George’s Church, Gravesend, where Pocahontas was buried. (A 1727 fire razed the original church; the current building is a complete restoration.) Church records of her burial on March 21, 1617, remain, and a life-sized bronze statue in honor of America’s first female diplomat still stands in St. George’s churchyard.

Amy Arnold Brown
Mission Hills Chapter
Mission Hills, Kan.

*Editor’s Note: To learn more, the March/April 2005 *American Spirit* features a story on Pocahontas, and future issues will spotlight events commemorating Jamestown’s 400th anniversary.*

**A COMPLEX ISSUE**

I was particularly offended by the article “Unlikely Abolitionists” in the January/February 2007 issue. While it discussed two prominent Northerners who were anti-slavery, it laid slavery at the feet of the South, neglecting Southern abolitionists, Southern abolition movements and the involvement of the North in that peculiar institution. As a Southerner, I am incensed at the repeated implication of Southern evil where this issue is concerned. I think it is time the truth, the whole truth, were told, then maybe we could move on.

Mary E. Roan
Nacogdoches Chapter
Nacogdoches, Texas

*Editor’s Note: Sometimes readers are disappointed in what our stories don’t cover; but in a magazine format with limited space and 200-plus years of history to cover, we have to make editorial choices. Slavery in the early United States is a broad and complex subject, and not one that can be covered in the space of one article. We chose to limit our scope and explore the participation of two of our Founding Fathers, John Jay and Alexander Hamilton, in the New York Manumission Society, an organization that worked to protect and educate free blacks and abolish slavery in the state. We do not deny the existence of other anti-slavery groups and abolitionist efforts across the country, but the purpose of our article was to focus on the roles played by Hamilton and Jay.*

Send letters to the editor to americanspirit@dar.org.
Supper is Served

English potter Josiah Spode II made this tureen around 1820 as part of a large supper set that included four covered serving dishes and 17 plates. Such sets, sometimes nestled in a mahogany tray, were placed on a sideboard or table and used to serve supper.

Families sat down to supper—a light meal often consisting of leftovers from the noontime dinner—between 8 and 9 p.m. In the 19th century, supper became even more elaborate, and in wealthier households, it consisted of delicacies such as egg dishes and oatmeal. Diners would serve themselves from the various trays that surrounded the central tureen.

The tureen also has two alternate drop-in sections. The pierced stand and its divided container were used for boiled eggs and salt and pepper. The bowl and cover kept selected supper contents hot.
A statesman explores his heritage, and a collection of letters takes readers to the front lines of war

Honoring the Fighting Spirit of the Scots-Irish

First published in 2004, the national best-selling *Born Fighting: How the Scots-Irish Shaped America* (Broadway) took decades of research to complete, according to author James H. (Jim) Webb. It’s worth noting that during those decades, Webb did plenty besides researching the book, including serving as one of the most highly decorated Marine officers in the Vietnam War, earning a law degree from Georgetown University, serving stints as Assistant Secretary of Defense and Secretary of the Navy, authoring six best-selling novels and producing a blockbuster movie. With the success of *Born Fighting* under his belt, what has the author been up to lately? Making some history of his own: Last November, in an election so close it took days to officially call, Webb was elected to represent Virginia in the U.S. Senate.

As historian is rarely on the résumé of newly elected U.S. senators, it’s worth looking anew at *Born Fighting*. Webb’s book is a thorough exploration of the impact on the United States of several 18th-century waves of immigrants from the Ulster plantation of Ireland, a region heavily populated by lowland Scots who migrated there during the 17th century. Despite the wide historic sweep, Webb’s skills as a novelist provide him the storytelling talent to weave together a fluid narrative from a frayed and fragmented set of historical threads. As with any book involving Scottish history, Webb’s challenge is to pull together many historical twists and ever-changing characters dating back centuries. Before following this band of hearty souls to the New World, the reader must grasp the nuanced conflicts among Catholics and Protestants during the Reformation, the lines of competing claimants to the English and Scottish thrones, the cultural gap between lowland and highland Scots and the different paths of Protestantism of the Calvinist-Presbyterian Church of Scotland and the Anglican Church of England.

Webb’s solution is to use a broad brush in painting the picture of Scottish history and a delicate fine brush in tracing the story of Scots-Irish immigration to the New World. *Born Fighting* is at times an intimate family history in which he explores his own Scots-Irish roots. (He uses the “ethnically proper” term Scots-Irish, but notes how others, including certain groups of immigrants, have used the term Scotch-Irish.) On another level, it is a sweeping look at U.S. history through the prism of a population segment that Webb argues effectively has been misunderstood, mischaracterized, often maligned—and greatly underappreciated.

One reason for the lack of appreciation, Webb asserts, is that most modern-day Americans who can trace their lineage to the Ulster Scots (and others who could yet have no knowledge of their ancestry) don’t think of themselves in terms of any ethnicity but “American.” And throughout much of past century, the term “Scots-Irish” has been one of derision rather than a self-proclaimed definition of national origin. Used with contempt in the manner of the words “redneck” and “cracker,” the designation of “Scots-Irish” was intended to ridicule those who settled throughout the pioneering regions of the 18th century, notably Appalachia. Yet just as Jeff Foxworthy has turned “redneck” into a term of endearment and a valuable business franchise, Webb has recast the term “Scots-Irish” into a designation worthy of Marine-styled pride.

Indeed, as the title of the book indicates, there were several factors and characteristics of Colonial-era Scots-Irish...
immigrants that led them to be among the earliest Marines and other military defenders of the rebel cause in the American Revolution. One factor was religion, Webb says: “Although the trained minds of New England’s Puritan culture and Virginia’s Cavalier aristocracy had shaped the finer intellectual points of the argument for political disunion, the true passion for individual rights emanated from the radical individualism of the Presbyterians, and, increasingly, Baptist pulpits.”

Another factor dated back to historic clashes between lowland Scots and the English. Webb, quoting the English historian James Anthony Froude, says, “England had no fiercer enemies than the grandparents and great-grandsons of the Presbyterians who had held Ulster against Tyrconnel.”

Perhaps most significant to their contribution to the Colonial cause was the special skill Scots-Irish immigrants had developed through generations of fighting homeland conflicts—the ability to “combine family homesteads with military expertise and to adapt to a battlefield on which they and their families actually lived,” Webb explains. “Many of them were indeed great soldiers, but unlike in most other scenarios, their family unit itself had become a part of a warrior culture as well.”

The Revolutionary War-era Scots-Irish immigrant “expected to fight,” and every able-bodied man was automatically a member of the local militia, Webb writes. Such a spirit and tradition has survived throughout the nation’s history, he explains in both a broad and personal way. Such a legacy, the reader assumes, is what led its author to attend the Naval Academy and serve bravely in the U.S. Marines.

And perhaps it was such legacy—along with the wisdom that comes from spending decades researching one’s family history—that led Webb, against the conventional “expert” opinions of most political pundits, to seek election to the U.S. Senate against a popular incumbent, and win.

HARVEY KING

In Their Own Words: Voices From the Battle Zones

A compilation of letters, e-mails and blogs written from U.S. service members to family and friends, *Letters From the Front Lines: Iraq and Afghanistan* by Rear Admiral Stuart Franklin Platt, USN Ret., with Duffrey Sigurdson (Granville Island Publishing, 2006), makes the impersonal and abstract news headlines of war more personal and immediate by giving readers the unvarnished, honest perspectives of America’s fighting men and women.

Platt’s messages from soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, coast guard personnel—even a civilian mom—bring readers close to the combat zones. The regular drills and occasional boredom of deployment are mixed with the hectic, action-filled days of mortar attacks, sniper fire, suicide bombers and searches for insurgents. Sometimes the minutiae of day-to-day life, inside jokes among family members or reflections on the cultural differences that soldiers encounter comprise the entire subject of a letter. Other times—on those terrible days when improvised explosive devices kill unsuspecting troops or insurgents detonate car bombs at a funeral procession—the writer expresses his sadness, despair and incredulity at the brutal conditions, and the grim business of war is placed in sharp relief.

The book doesn’t shrink from the complexities of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the letter writers often voice their frustration with the far-off political battles that seem far removed from the hard realities of the war on the ground. Others complain about media coverage that seems to negate the work that they do. Although the troop members’ loneliness and longing for home is palpable, the letters and blog entries are also full of pride in the job they’re doing. Just as evident—sometimes even more so—is the fierce loyalty these men and women feel for those who fight beside them.

This book isn’t for readers who are looking for deep insights about war or the polished analysis of battle strategists. These service members obviously aren’t writing for posterity—they’re simply talking to their loved ones and trying to maintain a sense of normalcy in the midst of chaos. Yet, for readers who want to go beyond the detachment of a news anchor’s view of war, this collection of hastily written missives in a variety of voices and experiences offers a viscerally powerful alternative.

Take Note: The Daughters of the American Revolution is given special mention in *Letters From The Front Lines* for the support its Hollywood Chapter, Hollywood, Calif., has given to military personnel. The chapter donated 100 pounds of supplies for a local Marine unit deployed to Afghanistan in 2001. As a result of those contacts, Honorary Regent Nancy Daniels and others in her chapter adopted several Marines through the “Adopt-a-Platoon” program, a non-profit managed by volunteer mothers whose purpose is to give U.S. service members a better quality of life during deployment, lift morale and assist military families. Mrs. Daniels’ support of Marine Corporal Tim Stidham is recognized in the letters between Tim and his mother Karey Keel-Stidham.

“The Adopt-A-Platoon Program is a marvelous program,” Mrs. Daniels says, “but it needs even more people to support it. The book is proof that the work that DAR members across the country do for our fighting troops is being talked about and appreciated by our servicemen and women overseas, as well as by their families.”

JAMIE ROBERTS
Three women of foresight save the Ratcliffe-Allison House for future generations

By RACHEL HAYNIE | Photography By JAMES KEGLEY
Compared with nearby Mount Vernon, the Ratcliffe-Allison House in Fairfax, Va., is small and architecturally inconspicuous. Although its original single room, completed in 1812, is the oldest in-town residence in this northern Virginia county seat, it does not offer contemporaries a virtual walk through past plantation life. Yet one-time Virginia State Regent and lifelong social activist Dr. Kate Waller Barrett recognized the importance of the vernacular-style house for its example of early city life. It had been a live-work space for a 19th-century shoemaker and numerous other merchants and professionals who contributed to the growth of Fairfax from its Main Street address.
In the early 1920s, Barrett saved the now two-story brick dwelling, including its additions and outbuildings, from destruction. Operated today by the city of Fairfax's Office of Historic Resources, the early residence became a museum in 1998 at the urging of the Woman's Club of Fairfax, a civic organization, and others, including Historic Fairfax City Inc., a preservation organization. The club helped furnish the home with antiques that interpret significant periods of its history. Dr. Randolph Lytton, a history professor at nearby George Mason University, acquired and donated the shoemaker tools that help interpret the years that shoemaker Henry Logan lived and worked there. Other antiques comprising the interior design are from the collections of Barrett's daughter, Kitty Barrett Pozer, who lived there for more than half a century following her mother's death in 1925.

**Allison's Vision**

Although the house's builder was entrepreneur Richard Ratcliffe, who intended it to be a rental property, the Ratcliffe-Allison house today is generally considered a woman's home. Its first female resident, Nancy Allison, descended from the Gunnell line, a family whose home, 1840s-era Gunnell Hall, is another Fairfax County landmark. Allison's husband Gordon and brother-in-law Robert purchased it in 1820, and although it passed out of the family's ownership in 1837, Allison bought it back in 1842.

During her residence she divided the first floor of the west wing into two rooms, made other interior changes and probably added the porch visitors use today. Her inventory, which has guided the work of 20th-century curators and historians, listed the house as having six rooms, four of which were likely added in 1823. During an era in which home and kitchen were usually kept separate, bringing the kitchen facilities inside and setting up a cookstove along the west wall is an example of her progressiveness.

Allison was forward-thinking in many ways (she even had a prenuptial agreement in place, unheard of at the time). Her keen mind for business enabled her to double the value of her real estate between the 1840s and 1872, the year she died from typhoid fever, according to Ted McCord, who lived in, researched and led tours through the home during his 14-year residency. A George Mason University history professor, McCord is credited with sustaining civic interest in the home's preservation.
Progressiveness also characterized a later owner of the home, Dr. Barrett, the namesake of the Kate Waller Barrett Chapter, Alexandria, Va. She graduated from Atlanta’s Women’s Medical College as a physician in 1892. Shortly after, she distinguished herself by becoming a member of the Board of Visitors of the College of William and Mary and receiving an honorary doctor of science degree. She was named honorary president of the National Council of Women, and in 1924, she became the first woman to address the Democratic National Convention. Her speech was so moving that the crowd cheered for her placement on the vice-presidential ticket, McCord says.

Rather than practice politics or medicine, however, she worked toward social reform her entire life. Exposed early in her marriage to the plight of “friendless and outcast” young women, Dr. Barrett persuaded her husband, an Episcopal clergyman, to start a mission to help them. First in Kentucky, and then in Atlanta, she provided care and training for unwed mothers.

After her husband died, Dr. Barrett moved their six children to Richmond, Va. In 1915, she founded Ivakota Farm in the nearby hamlet of Clifton where unwed mothers and troubled women lived and worked. In the early 1920s, the landmark Ratcliffe-Allison home became part of her vision for these women.

Her $1,000 purchase of the house from Miller Kielsgard Sr., manager of the Virginia Rapid Transit Company, curtailed his plans to reclaim the site as a bus garage. What Kielsgard described as “weather-beaten,” Barrett saw as charming and worth preserving. She planned to use the home, located within close proximity to the county courthouse on the town square, as a convenient meeting place for civic groups and a temporary lodging for women awaiting trial. She also envisioned the house as a venue for selling crafts and goods made at Ivakota. She believed that these products could be sold in Fairfax on busy court days to help defray costs of keeping the farm running smoothly.

Before she could bring all her dreams for the home to fruition, Dr. Barrett died suddenly on January 23, 1925, only two days after the Arlington Chapter had held its organizational meeting in her home. The day she died, the flag over Richmond was lowered to half-staff. She was the first woman so honored. The Arlington Chapter responded to the doctor’s untimely death by petitioning to change its name to the Kate Waller Barrett Chapter.
Pozer’s Blossoming Legacy

The home’s next owner was Dr. Barrett’s daughter, Kitty Pozer, who spent most of her career as a garden writer for "The Washington Post." Of the six Barrett children, Kitty Barrett Pozer left the most indelible mark on the Ratcliffe-Allison House. The youngest sibling, Pozer purchased the house in Fairfax from the family-run Ivakota Farm Association for $3,500 and lived there for more than half a century, longer than anyone else had or has since. Although Pozer built the addition in the back and collected many of the antique pieces that express the home’s decorative statement, it is in the garden that her influence still blooms. In particular, her love of roses is abundantly apparent both inside and out. One interpretive interior panel is titled “Kitty of the Roses: Selections from Kitty Pozer’s Literary Garden.”

Before her death in 1981, Pozer bequeathed her home to the city to operate as a historic house museum. Later the city purchased her adjacent garden and named it the Pozer Garden.

Rachel Haynie is a member of the University Chapter, Columbia, S.C.
Centuries before the Virginia Assembly created Fairfax County from the northern part of Prince William County, the area was a historic crossroads. The town, laid out in neatly ordered blocks, is as much of a crossroads today.

Roads and rivers that led as many as 18 different Native American societies to game and trade now take visitors into nearby Washington, D.C. Today those well-traveled byways include a mass transit system, enabling travelers to avoid traffic looping around the capital city's beltways.

A backward glance into the city's multi-layered past can be made on foot. The 35 acres of Fairfax's National Historic District covers only six blocks square. Presidents William Howard Taft and Franklin Roosevelt trod along dirt streets that today are known as Old Town Fairfax.

The Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center began as the county's first two-story brick schoolhouse. Another tribute to education that has become important to the northern Virginia town was the establishment of George Mason University in the early 1960s.

Fairfax is home to the country's only national park for the performing arts, Wolf Trap. Battlefields and plantations, including Mount Vernon, are nearby, and the National Firearms Museum along with Meadowlark Botanical Gardens are popular stops for visitors.

Annual events such as Chocolate Lovers Festival near Valentine’s Day punctuate the city's calendar. While Fairfax puts visitors in the midst of history, it is also in close proximity to Virginia's wine country as well as the scenic Blue Ridge Parkway and Luray Caverns.

Many of the home’s antiques are from the collections of Kitty Barrett Pozer. Authentic shoemaker tools were donated to interpret the years that shoemaker Henry Logan lived and worked there, and volunteers have donated other furnishings to further illuminate the lives of the home’s three famous female residents.
A SPRINGTIME RITUAL:
In early spring, as the maple trees start their new growth spurts, the sap within them that remained frozen for months begins to thaw. This is what sugar makers wait for all year long. It's the beginning of the maple harvest season, when sugar houses across New England and Canada are busy tapping maple trees of their sap—a clear, slightly sweet liquid that is boiled down to a sweet syrup.

The details of when, where and by whom the first maple was tapped are debatable. But one thing is certain: Maple syrup has become one of America's culinary treasures—and a cultural celebration for the select few regions worldwide where sugar making takes place.
Before maple syrup came maple sugar, which did not spoil when stored. Journals kept by early explorers reveal that by the time the Pilgrims landed in Plymouth Rock in 1620, Native American Indians had been sugaring—tapping maple trees and cooking the sap over an open fire until it became syrup and eventually a nonperishable sugar—for more than a decade. In fact, the Sugar Moon is linked to the month of March in the Native American calendar when many tribes celebrated the first sugar with a spirited festival that included a Maple Dance intended to set the pace for a bountiful season.

As Janet Eagleson, co-author of *The Maple Syrup Book* (Boston Mills Press, 2006) explains, “The medicine man would often mix a small amount of last year’s harvest with the first harvest of the year to extend the blessing and good luck of the season. It was a fantastic party that involved everyone in the tribe, and the better the party, the better the maple season.” Today, major maple syrup-producing regions continue the tradition with events like Quebec’s annual sugaring-off festival at Sucrerie de la Montagne.

New England explorers recorded three kinds of maple sugar produced by Native Americans: grain sugar, similar to today’s brown sugar; cake sugar, which could be poured into wooden molds for easy storing and shaving throughout the year; and wax sugar, made by coating snow with extra-thick syrup. Maple sugar soon became a regular stand-in for the expensive cane sugar from the West Indies and turned into a valuable trading commodity. One early champion of locally produced sugar was Thomas Jefferson, who transplanted young sugar maples from Vermont—the second largest maple syrup producer worldwide—to his plantation in Monticello, Va. Unfortunately, the southern climate was unsuitable for sap production, and Jefferson was left with thriving trees but no syrup.
According to Native American folklore, the discovery of maple syrup as its own delicacy, and not just another step in the sugar-making process, was a serendipitous one. Legend has it that Chief Woksis, the great Iroquois hunter, tipped his axe into the trunk of a maple one late winter evening before going to bed. He removed his weapon the next morning and took it with him on a long hunt. The days turned warmer while he was away, and the tree’s sap dripped into a container the hunter had left behind. His industrious wife happened upon it, assumed it was frozen water and set about boiling meat with it. As her recipe bubbled away over the fire, the sweetness of the sap deepened, and when Woksis returned, he devoured the dish.

Still, boiling sap down to crystallized sugar was a more valuable commodity to early Americans than turning it into syrup.

As winter thawed into spring, Native American families—and later New England settlers—would set up sugar camps among the maple trees. There they would slash notches into the trunks and collect the sap in clay or bark vessels, boiling the water away by dropping heated rocks into the containers.

With experience comes experimentation, and the settlers started to look for ways to industrialize the production of their coveted maple syrup. A drill and spile, which is a spout used to draw off sap, replaced the axe, while copper and iron kettles were put to work over open fires. Early spiles were fashioned out of hollowed-out softwood twigs and inserted into the drilled hole in maple trees. Sap spilled out into bark containers placed below where it was then boiled down before being transferred into a succession of smaller and smaller vessels. When the syrup sufficiently thickened, it was stirred to speed

Making the Grade

There are four grades of maple syrup according to color and flavor: Grade A Light Amber, Grade A Medium Amber, Grade A Dark Amber and Grade B, which is the darkest of all. The deeper the color, the stronger the flavor. Like wine, the characteristics of the local soil are reflected in its resulting syrup, so you must taste to find your favorite. Vermont and Ontario produce the sweetest syrups. Grade B is the rarest and also the best for cooking since it can hold its own among other flavors in dish. Try it simmered in baked beans, or as part of a marinade for meat or fish, like Chief Woksis’ wife did. Lighter syrups are best poured over ice cream, fresh-cut fruit and, of course, a lofty stack of pancakes.
up the formation of sugar crystals and then, finally, poured into molds. It was an assembly-line process, albeit a slow one, and the variety of tasks involved served to bring pioneer families together. As the adults worked the bubbling pots—each one filled with syrup at a different stage of the thickening process—their children, still bundled from the cold, watched excitedly as a newly drilled tree cried its first sweet tears.

Through the next century, maple-sugar production became more controlled, cleaner and complex. As metal spouts were introduced, sugar makers substituted metal buckets and shallow, flat-bottomed pans for the early wooden models. The flat pans were suspended in an arch above the fire, and tents were also built over the pans to create sheltered “sugar houses.”

By the late 1800s, makers used a purpose-built device called an “evaporator.” (A patent wasn’t registered until 1884.) Designed by a Vermont sugar maker, it consisted of a flat pan built with separate channels and compartments that would allow fresh sap to flow in one end while finished syrup could be drawn out the other. Ridges at the bottom of the pan further increased the surface area for heating, greatly accelerating the boiling of sap into syrup. Maple sugar production had never been so efficient.

Then something unexpected happened. Officials removed the import tax on cane sugar, and the new kid on the block knocked maple sugar out of popularity. This wasn’t a problem for the New England sugar makers, who cunningly capitalized on the trend...
by rebranding their business into syrup. The old sugar molds gave way to bottles and cans filled with the signature amber liquid, and sweet success hasn’t stopped flowing since.

Reverse-osmosis reduction, steam-and-oil powered evaporation, vacuum systems and computerization are some of the technological advances that have sped up the production of maple syrup, but the basic evaporator design hasn’t changed much since the late 1900s. Still, just as the original model was conceived in Vermont, syrup researchers and makers there are at the forefront of maple-syrup production, constantly striving for more efficient, cost-effective ways to produce their precious commodity. Recent innovations include smaller spouts and replaceable “spout insertions,” allowing syrup makers to start each season with a brand new spout, thus reducing the chances of outside bacterial contamination. These sustainable initiatives, aside from affording syrup makers the possibility of higher yields, also result in less damage to maples during the tapping process.

Learning to Tap

It’s easy to see why Chief Woksis’ wife thought the pot at the base of that old tree was full of water: Maple sap drips clear, is only about 2 to 3 percent sugar and is only slightly sweet on the tongue. Maple sap usually has a higher sugar content in springtime than at any other time of the year, which means it takes less time and energy to turn it into precious syrup.

But trying to tap at the right time of year didn’t—and still doesn’t—guarantee success. If you’re thinking about tapping your own trees, you need to grow the right kind (13 native maple species grow in North America) in the right environment, factors found together only in parts of Canada, New England and the upper Midwest. You also need patience. You’ll need about 10 gallons of sap to create just one quart of syrup. When trees grow to about a foot in diameter, they are ready to be tapped. Sugar maples take between 40 to 60 years to reach this stage, and most trees can take only one or two tappings per season.

At a basic level, tapping maple trees requires a drill bit, a tapper, such as a battery-powered drill or gasoline-powered tapper, spouts or spiles, a small mallet and a clean bucket. Making your own maple syrup can be rewarding, and many commercial producers hold open houses during springtime so you can learn the tricks of the trade.

The production of sap is a marvelous manifestation of the relationship between earth and air, and it helps to understand what’s going on in your maples before you take a tapper to trunk. During late summer and fall when temperatures start to drop, maple trees enter a period of declined growth and begin to store the excess starches throughout the sapwood. As soon as the wood warms to 40°F, the stored starch turns into sugars and infuses the sap.

As Brian Stowe, sugaring operations manager at the Proctor Maple Research Center at the University of Vermont explains, “It’s up to the whim of the weather.” During a warm day, the tree thaws out, and the sap starts flowing. Then, as the evening turns cooler and the tree begins to freeze, the dissolved gases in the tree create a negative pressure that allows it to draw water from the soil. Sugar concentration in the sap can vary day to day, hour by hour. Tapping the tree decreases the pressure inside it and frees the sap. While the incision may technically be a wound, it is one that does no damage if the maples are healthy and if we, in turn, continue to cherish, celebrate and respect the trees as the Native Americans did.

Jessica Stone is a freelance food writer.
Sweets and Treats

Indulgence Foods

in
Colonial America
Accessibility and Availability

In addition to holidays, special snacks and treats were sometimes available to colonists when visiting towns to trade, says Mark Zanger, author of *The American History Cookbook* (Greenwood Press, 2003).

“Native Americans who were not living alongside towns would only have access to sweets when trading furs, perhaps annually. Slaves might taste white-flour cookies, then called cakes, or fruitcake at Christmas. Poor farmers might not see candy more than a few times a year when they went to the store in town.”

While many of the special foods of the day were seen universally as indulgences, “the exceptions were snack foods vended on the street, typically by mixed-race or marginalized people,” Zanger continues. “[These included] spruce beer, hot chocolate, molasses cookies and peanut brittle. These were cheap enough for some children and adolescents who had time for something like ice-skating.”

Street vendors were especially popular on special days, such as Election Day and Militia Day.

Although it was a luxury, for those who lived near cities or had the means, satisfying a sweet tooth was one of the pleasures of the New World, as sugar, “the root of much of junk food’s appeal,” was much more accessible in America than in Europe, Fitzgerald says.

“In the 17th century, those emigrating to the Colonies were advised to postpone their sugar purchases until they arrived because sugar was cheaper here than in England,” she adds. “The slave sugar plantations of the West Indies [were] the reason for the precipitous decline in sugar prices in America and the subsequent rise in consumption.”

According to *America’s Founding Food*, in the 1720s in Boston, the estimated per capita consumption was 10 pounds of crystallized sugar (loaf sugar and brown sugar) and a gallon of molasses. By the 1770s, per capita consumption of sugar and molasses in the American Colonies almost doubled that of England. And in 1855, annual American per capita sugar consumption was close to 30 pounds.

“In England, sugar was a status food, but in Pennsylvania, even servant girls earned enough money to buy a pound of sugar for their own use,” says Clarissa Dillon, Ph.D., historian, author, presenter on 18th-century housewifery and president of Past Masters in Early American Domestic Arts.

Colonial ‘Junk Food’

While Colonial Americans certainly enjoyed their treats, the connotations of such foods were completely different from today. “Nowadays, [junk food] is food you shouldn’t eat,” Dillon says. “But
if you’re living in a cold house and doing physical work, the only way to keep warm is to eat enough calories.”

Many Colonial methods for consuming needed calories might not appeal to the modern palette, but other recipes for treats and snacks seem strikingly similar to—and are forebears of—many of the treats Americans enjoy today.

**Cookies.** Cookies are ubiquitous now, says Sandra Oliver, editor of the Web site FoodHistoryNews.com. “But [in Colonial America], they were a seasonal thing, usually associated with a particular holiday such as Christmas or New Year’s. The most common sorts of cookies were gingerbread and sugar cookies. Another most common sorts of cookies were gingerbread and sugar cookies. Another cookie that has disappeared from the American scene is seed cakes, a wonderful little treat made with caraway seeds.”

Gingerbread, according to America’s Founding Food, originated in aristocratic banquets of the Middle Ages and the courts of early modern Europe, and these associations carried it into Colonial America. Fitzgerald and co-author Keith Stavey list several appearances of the treat in early American documents. “In 1720, Massachusetts Judge Samuel Sewell was served ‘Ginger-Bread’ at the home of the governor of Massachusetts,” Fitzgerald says. “Gingerbread was also sold on the sidelines at Colonial musters. And gingerbread was nibbled by Ben Franklin as he walked along from Boston to Philadelphia as a boy.”

**Doughnuts.** “We look at deep-fried food now and say it’s awful for us, and it is, because we sit all day,” Oliver says. “But deep-fried food was an exceptional treat until up to 100 years ago. Doughnut-like fritters have been found in a lot of cultures, and this country was exceptionally prosperous, so even an ordinary household could afford to blow a lot of oil or drippings on such a treat.”

One of the tools widely used by Colonial cooks was the doughnut kettle, a shallow, cast-iron pot with a bail to be hung over the fire, according to The Open Hearth Cookbook by Suzanne Goldenson and Doris Simpson (Alan C. Hood & Company, 2005). The Pilgrims, who were in Holland from 1607 to 1620, learned to make doughnuts there and brought them to New England. “The Pennsylvania Dutch were probably the first to make doughnuts with holes in their centers, a perfect shape for dunking in coffee, which has become a standard method of eating doughnuts for Americans,” writes John F. Mariani in The Encyclopedia of American Food and Drink (Lebhar-Friedman Books, 1999).

In her culinary research, Oliver located a reference to doughnuts by a very ordinary family in southern Connecticut. “In the 1820s, the children were recalling their childhood, and they said their mother fried up a pan of doughnuts every week and they took them to school for lunch,” she says. “This family saved some of their wheat flour for that. We take doughnuts for granted now; this was a time when doughnuts were very special.”

**Salty snacks.** Potatoes were introduced in New England in the 1720s and before long early Americans had applied their frying techniques to the root vegetables, resulting in early French fries. In her 1803 book, Frugal Colonial Housewife, Susannah Carter included these instructions for frying potatoes: “Cut them into thin slices, as big as a crown piece, fry them brown, lay them in the plate or dish, pour melted butter, and sack and sugar over them. These are a pretty dinner plate.”

In addition to fried potatoes, early Americans snacked on the nuts they found in the trees and on the ground. “The snackiest foods you’ll find among those [Colonial Americans] who weren’t elite are things like nuts,” Oliver says. “There was a lot of sitting around the fire, cracking nuts; walnuts and pecans in the South and hickory nuts further north. Those were fun foods of the time, along with roasted apples over a very hot fire.”

**Ice cream.** While ice cream was first recorded in England around 1640, one of the first mentions of the delicacy in the American Colonies was at the home of the Maryland governor in 1744. While the treat wasn’t available to most people until the development of the ice business in the 1820s, ice cream was popular among many elite circles during Colonial and post-Revolution days.

According to the Encyclopedia of Cookery, President George Washington owned two pewter ice-cream pots, presumably for making ice cream at Mount Vernon. He was introduced to ice cream in 1789 by Mrs. Alexander Hamilton, the wife of the Secretary of the Treasury. Thomas Jefferson, the third president, learned recipes for ice-cream dishes while in France. Guests at his state dinners were sometimes served such luxuries as meringue glacée and baked Alaska.

**Health Ramifications.**

While modern Americans’ addiction to sweets and treats is blamed for a number of illnesses, the indulgences of early Americans weren’t necessarily culprits. “Their everyday food wasn’t healthful either,” Zanger says. “Butter was their favorite sauce, and saturated fat was good food; much of their winter food was partially spoiled in various ways. Their life expectancies were generally shorter, although white [American] soldiers were notably taller and healthier by far than their British forbears.” “Nobody was fully comfortable or well,” Dillon adds. “In winter, if you

*You didn’t have to be among the elite of the Colonies to enjoy salty snacks like fried potatoes and nuts.*
Scratched yourself, it didn’t heal because diets were starchy and fatty. If you bruised, it didn’t heal quickly. If you broke a bone, you might be crippled for life. And people had major teeth problems.”

Although general dietary deficiencies were the rule, even early junk foods, such as gingerbread cookies, had critics. Rhode Island memoirist Thomas Robinson Hazard complained of the “vile stuff now sold at bakers’ and restaurants ... made of sour flour, rancid grease butter and spoiled lard, disguised with a thousand poisonous compounds, and only half baked at that!” record Fitzgerald and Stavely in America’s Founding Food.

However, the critics were rare, so the American sweet tooth continued to flourish. Because most people didn’t have access to snack foods in quantities large enough to harm them, these indulgence foods remained, for many happy years, some of the simple pleasures of Colonial life.

Nancy Mann Jackson wrote the January/February 2007 article on the NSDAR preservation of two historic homes in Illinois.

**Sweet Recipes**

**Caraway Cakes (Seed Cakes)**

Take one pound of flour, three quarters of a pound of sugar, half a pound of butter, a glass of rosewater, four eggs, and half a tea-cup of caraway seed—the materials well rubbed together and beat up. Drop them from a spoon on tin sheets and bake them brown in a rather slow oven. Twenty minutes, or half an hour, is enough to bake them.

—From American Frugal Housewife, by Lydia Maria Child, 1833, page 73.

Modern version by Sandra Oliver, Editor, FoodHistoryNews.com:

When an old recipe goes by the name of cakes, plural, it almost always means the small baked item we now call cookies. The word cookie is derived from the Dutch word “koekie,” and the first American cookie recipe by name can be found in Amelia Simmons’ American Cookery, published in 1796. Both the old-fashioned word, cakes, and newer word, cookies, were used at the same time until the late 1800s when “cookies” finally won out.

Cakes and cookies were special-occasion foods and more common among the gentry than other classes. If many were to be baked, the oven would have had to be reheated, and even a slow or slack oven might need a boost.

Modern people may be surprised at the presence of caraway seed in a sweet cookie, but poppy and coriander seeds were both used as well in little cakes. The following recipe halves the original, but if you want more cookies, it is easily doubled.

1 3/4 cups flour
3/4 cup sugar
1/2 cup butter (one stick)
2 1/2 tablespoons caraway seeds
2 eggs
5 to 6 tablespoons of rosewater

*Preheat the oven to 325 F, and grease two cookie sheets. Mix together the flour and sugar and rub the butter into them using the tips of your fingers. Work the mixture until there are no large pieces of butter. Toss in the caraway seeds and mix, then beat in the eggs. Add the rosewater a tablespoon at a time and beat until you have a dough just soft enough to drop from a spoon, with a little nudge from a rubber spatula.

Drop them by teaspoonfuls on the cookie sheets allowing room for them to spread. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes or until they are browned on the edges. Remove to a rack to cool.

Makes about 48 2-inch cookies.

---

**Gingerbread**

The following recipe, based on the recipe for gingerbread in Amelia Simmons’ American Cookery (Hartford, 1796), was adapted and modernized by Keith Stavely and Kathleen Fitzgerald in America’s Founding Food: The Story of New England Cooking.

3 cups sugar
10-11 large eggs
1 pound butter
8 cups flour
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 oz. ground ginger

Preheat oven to 350 F. Cream sugar and butter. Stir in vanilla. Add eggs one at a time, beating after each addition. Sift together flour and ginger. Fold flour into the sugar, butter and egg mixture just until all ingredients are blended. Do not overmix. The dough will be quite stiff. Spread in a greased half-sheet pan (18”x13”x1”) and bake about 25 minutes, until very lightly browned and a knife inserted in the middle comes out clean. Cool on rack and cut into squares.

©TH FOTO / STOCKFOOD
©LESER / STOCKFOOD

Gingerbread spice

Caraway seeds
HOW DID A food “fit for swine” become a staple of the Colonial diet? Why do Colonial kitchens suggest that the colonists were reluctant revolutionaries? How did Colonial America’s thirst for beer pave the way to the Declaration of Independence? Historian James E. McWilliams answers these questions and more in *A Revolution in Eating: How the Quest for Food Shaped America* (Columbia University, 2005), a lively investigation of Colonial eating habits and how they shaped the revolutionary views of the new Americans.

Food and politics might seem like strange bedfellows, but McWilliams says the link isn’t surprising at all. “Food is central to life, and if a nation cannot fulfill a basic need like its food supply, its independence will be compromised.”

McWilliams says his interest in the nation’s past sprung from an intense interest in the present. “I was living in Washington, D.C., [as an undergraduate at Georgetown] and reading lots of newspapers and getting well versed in current events,” he explains. “It occurred to me that I knew very little about the background to these events. This pulled me into the past, and I started reading history on my own.”

McWilliams collected food-related evidence over several years while working on his graduate degree, eventually amassing enough to write *A Revolution in Eating*. McWilliams cautions, however, that he’s not a culinary historian. “I’m not necessarily a fan or advocate of being a food historian because I think it misses the larger context in which food was produced. You have to understand how and why particular foods were eaten. You have to look at the agricultural situation, the trade situation and intercultural situations.”

The movement of corn into a staple of the Colonial American diet, McWilliams explains, is an example of how an intercultural situation shaped American eating habits. In the 17th century, the English would have thought Indian corn was a crop fed to pigs. However, when these white English settlers found themselves in a new world, they realized how dependent they were on Native Americans for everything—including food. “Everyone was soon eating corn, whether they wanted to or not,” McWilliams says. “Thus the adjustment to eating Indian corn was a huge one, and one that speaks powerfully to the adaptive nature of American food.”

McWilliams is a past winner of the Whitehill Prize in Colonial History, awarded annually by the *New England Quarterly*, in which he has published extensively. His articles on food history have appeared in the *Christian Science Monitor* and the *Texas Observer*. He spoke with *American Spirit* about *A Revolution in Eating* from Texas, where he is an assistant professor of history at Texas State University–San Marcos.

*A Revolution in Eating* illuminates the link between Colonial cuisine and the road to revolution. Why is this connection important?
I don’t argue that food caused the American Revolution. All I’m saying is that food and attention to food and the food supply was a critical factor in the American Revolution. It’s obviously far more inspirational to focus on the revolutionary rhetoric. My question is what had to be in place to even have the luxury of embracing those political ideas? Americans had to be able to feed themselves. They took an enormous amount of pride in the fact that they were dependent on nobody else for food. What were they thinking when they thought about independence? One important aspect of that was material independence; they could provide for themselves.

A troubling element of [the colonists’] material independence, however, is that a great percentage of the food production in the United States was done with slave labor. If food was central to the American Revolution, and if that food was being produced by slaves, it’s hard to avoid the conclusion that slavery was a critical element to the quest for independence.

**How did you go about researching exactly what the colonists were eating prior to the American Revolution?**

I looked at all kinds of documents, such as farmer account books, so I could see what kind of food farmers were bartering. I also looked at a fair number of probate records, which would include the kind of food settlers had in their barn or cellar or kitchen and also the cooking utensils that housewives owned. Any type of travel narrative was also important. At a time when people couldn’t take their food supply for granted, they were diligent about recording what they ate. And since people didn’t travel a lot, they paid a lot of attention to what people ate in different regions. This was critical to my thesis that there wasn’t any one American way of eating. Instead, it was intensely regional. I used quite a bit from letters from Europeans visiting the Colonies because they would remark about the agriculture and different crops they were observing, such as West African crops growing in gardens belonging to slaves.

**Did you discover anything in your research that you found particularly surprising?**

I was definitely surprised by how intense the regional differences in food were. I had not expected to find such clear differences between the lower South and the Chesapeake, and I didn’t expect to find such dramatic differences between the middle colonies and New England. Also, although I was well aware that the colonists drank routinely and, by our standards, quite heavily, I wasn’t prepared for how central alcohol was to the Colonial diet. The emphasis on beer, cider and rum was all encompassing.

“Although I was well aware that the colonists drank routinely and, by our standards, quite heavily, I wasn’t prepared for how central alcohol was to the Colonial diet. The emphasis on beer, cider and rum was all encompassing.”
Wasn’t alcohol a factor in fomenting the colonists’ rebellion?

It would be misleading to say alcohol led to the American Revolution, but it’s interesting to point out that the taste for alcohol led to a public venue—the tavern—where people could talk to each other and make sure they were all on the same page ideologically. It’s important to keep in mind that there weren’t many public venues where people could get together and discuss ideas in the 18th century. During the Revolutionary era, colonists would not only talk politics in taverns, but also read the popular political pamphlets of the day.

Historians traditionally focus on the importance of the triangle trade to the Colonial American economy, but in *A Revolution in Eating*, you point out that inter-Colonial trading of food was equally if not more important to establishing a thriving economy.

As so often happens in historical study, the overemphasis on one side of the story obscures the other side of the story. What’s been completely obscured in this emphasis on transatlantic trade is just the day-in and day-out patterns of local trade. The vast majority of trading that was done in Colonial America—in some estimates 90 percent—was local. For example, people in Massachusetts traded with people in Massachusetts and sometimes with people in Pennsylvania. It was that kind of trade that kept the economy going and supported transatlantic trade.

What do you think future historians will say about our nation in 2007, based on contemporary eating habits?

The way we eat today is quite consistent with the way that colonists ate with respect to the attitude we have about food. The colonists had an incredibly pragmatic attitude about food—they were radically open to eating anything. I think today’s Americans are also incredibly pragmatic, flexible and open-minded about their food.

The difference, and I think really what historians 100 years from now will focus on, is that what has happened in the last 50 years in American cuisine has been a radical disruption between the consumption of food and the production of food. I think historians are really going to seize on that disruption as a critical and a detrimental characteristic of how Americans eat today. The implication of this difference is that it diminishes an important environmental awareness. One reason Americans can be fairly casual about dangerous environmental habits is because we’re fairly ignorant about how the ecosystem around us works because we’re not intimate with it.

Paulette Beete profiled America’s earliest inventors for the May/June 2005 issue.

---

**Catch the American Spirit**

Help others in your community catch the *American Spirit*.

Encourage your local bookstore to carry the premier magazine for history, Americana and genealogy, published by the Daughters of the American Revolution. By making *American Spirit* more widely available in your town, you can help educate readers about the values that make you proud to be a member of the DAR.

Subscribe today by calling toll-free: 1 (866) DAR–MAGA (327–6242) or subscribing online at http://www.dar.org/americanspirit
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
- Life Income Gifts (Charitable Gift Annuities, Living Trusts, Pooled Income Funds)
- Wills and Bequests
- Gifts of Life Insurance or Retirement Plans
- Gifts of Personal Property or Real Estate

Name: ___________________________________________________________
Street Address: _____________________________________________________
City: ___________________ State: __________ Zip: _______________
Telephone: ___________________ Best Time To Call: ___________________
E-mail: __________________________________________________________

S
ince motion pictures premiered on the American scene more than a century ago, the silver screen has captured the imagination of millions of Americans. The more sophisticated and sleek movies became, the more people flocked to downtown theaters where they could find an escape from reality and see their dreams, fantasies and struggles projected and played out on a darkened screen. As glamorous movie stars emerged and Hollywood studios gained clout in the 1920s, storefront nickelodeons gave way to a building boom of elaborate movie palaces, decked in Egyptian, Asian and European motifs and designed to transport moviegoers to faraway lands. The studios often built these theaters themselves, sparing no expense for the finest details and designs.

But like a tragic twist in a dramatic saga, the architectural elements that made these movie palaces so distinctive and successful doomed them as Americans scattered to suburbia, televisions infiltrated households and multi-screen chains began offering more movies to smaller audiences. With high operating costs and dwindling attendance, movie palaces struggled to fill their 1,000-plus seats, making them vulnerable to closure and demolition.

In 2001, the National Trust for Historic Preservation named the historic American movie theater as one of its 11 most endangered places in the United States. Though many of these palatial movie houses have been shuttered or have succumbed to the wrecking ball, some communities are rediscovering their value. By preserving them, they are giving the theaters the encore they deserve as performing arts and cultural centers, event venues and engines for downtown revitalization.

“It’s more expensive than ever to restore these theaters, but there’s more money and willingness out there to restore them than ever before,” says film historian Ross Melnick, author of *Cinema Treasures: A New Look at Classic Movie Theaters* (MBI Publishing, 2004). “A lot of these theaters are in a now-or-never moment.”

**A ROYAL RESCUE**

It was called “the most lavish entertainment temple in New Jersey,” and for working-class, blue-collar Jersey City, it was the pride of the town. When the Loew’s Jersey Theatre opened on September 28, 1929, to a showing of Lionel Barrymore’s “Madame X,” stars Douglas Fairbanks and Clara Bow ruled the silver screen, and Americans were still a month away from the stock market crash that would thrust the country into a long depression.

The $2 million Italian baroque-style building was one of five “Wonder Theaters” constructed by MGM founder Marcus Loew who was known for his saying, “I don’t sell tickets to movies. I sell tickets to theatres.” Its marvels included a terra cotta clock tower topped with a life-size sculpture of St. George set to slay a dragon every hour on the hour, a four-manual pipe organ for accompanying silent films and Vitaphone sound-on-disk projectors—the first successful “talking picture” equipment.

“Going to the movies was far more special back then,” she recalls. “People didn’t have the kind of money that they do today. Many worked six days a week, so going out to one of these places and being able to experience its magic was a real treat.”
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The Loew’s Jersey Theatre’s grand staircase promised moviegoers a magical experience. Architectural details like its sculpted terra cotta clock tower, colorful tapestries and glittering auditorium made the theater look like a palace. While renovating the theater, preservationists found remnants of its past, including old candy wrappers, movie tickets and cigarette boxes.
The theater had a similar effect on other youngsters who came through its brass doors. While watching a movie accompanied by a live performance of Bing Crosby in the darkened auditorium, a young Frank Sinatra decided that he, too, wanted to be a singing sensation. Along with the latest MGM films, the theater hosted elaborate stage shows and the best entertainers of its time, including Duke Ellington, Jean Harlow and Jack Benny.

Though its vaudeville shows stopped in the mid-1930s, its first-run movies continued to draw crowds even in the midst of the Great Depression, World War II and the 1960s, a decade when other movie palaces its size were being shut down and razed.

But as the age of single-screen theaters gave way to multiscreen theaters in shopping mall complexes in the 1970s, the Loew’s Jersey struggled to conform. Its lobby fountain, embellished with a mosaic and mirrors, was replaced with a candy stand, and its auditorium was divided to make room for three screens.

It finally closed in 1986 with a showing of “Friday the 13th.” A local developer purchased it with the intent to put an office complex in its place, until Jersey City residents came to its rescue.

“Across the country, cities were using old theaters as a catalyst for downtown revitalization, and our square needed that,” Giordan says. “It was such a beautiful theater—the kind that can’t be built anymore. Many people had fond memories of that place, and they didn’t want to lose that.”

After six years of speaking out at local government meetings, filing legal motions, mounting displays and circulating petitions, the group finally convinced the city to buy the building a month before its demolition. But the theater needed serious work.

“The architecture was still in place—that was its saving grace,” Giordan says. “It was so intact that we knew we would be able to get it going and utilize it if we could get people in here to see what it was.”

Federal, state and city grants helped fix the roof and stabilize the crumbling façade, but much of the restoration was done by volunteers, including plumbers, engineers and electricians, who gave up Saturdays to fix electrical shorts, polish brass, clean metal-leaf finishes, install lighting and repair leaks, radiators and ornamental plaster.

A volunteer electrician fixed the corroded motors and controls in an elevator lifting the orchestra pit to the stage, saving $200,000; by donating their time and skills, volunteers have saved millions more.

“The money and work we pumped in got it to a point where it could be used again,” says Giordan, whose group helps coordinate weddings, receptions and banquets in the lobby and classic movie screenings, concerts, lectures and movie and photo shoots in the auditorium.

“But we hope to get a capital campaign going to get more restoration done. We’re not a wealthy city. We’re a working-class one, so we have to do it little by little.”

A PRICELESS INVESTMENT

Efforts to restore the mammoth Fox Theater in Oakland, Calif., which opened in 1928 and closed in 1965, have been under way for nearly two decades now, and though its roof has been replaced and its marquee and neon blade sign restored, much of its $5 million restoration is just beginning. A couple, who dated at the theater, saved it from its destiny as a parking lot in the 1980s, but it wasn’t until the city bought it a decade later that progress began.

Despite the time and money the project has already cost the city of Oakland, the architectural and cultural investment is priceless, says local developer Phil Tagami, whose firm is handling the renovation.

“These buildings have a level of care and an expression of creativity that you will not find in movie theaters today because it is too cost-prohibitive to create,” he says. “That kind of craftsmanship is a lost art.”

With its mixture of Indian and Mediterranean style and touches of Medieval elements like gargoyles, the building features an exotic mesh of designs mirroring the sense of mystery and adventure that drew early moviegoers to theaters. By the time Tagami visited the Fox for the first time a few years ago, its 3,200 seats had been ripped out, asbestos was everywhere, and the homeless had overtaken it. Still, the building dazzled him. The challenge has been educating Oaklanders who have never been inside the treasure they have in their community.

“The star has been the building,” says Tagami, who speaks about the Fox to local organizations and downtown walking tour participants. “Once we introduce people to it, they fall in love.”

Oakland leaders plan to make the theater viable to a new generation by tying it to downtown revitalization. Federal and state grants will go toward not only restoring the theater’s façade and majestic dome, but also making the storefronts around it compatible in design and restoring a wraparound wing of the building so that the Oakland School of Performing Arts can move in.

Though the city can’t afford to completely renovate the interior yet, planners hope to set up temporary seating and hold concerts and movie screenings in the “ruins” to spark interest in the Fox. Meanwhile Friends of the Fox has kept up the momentum with online campaigns to collect memories and memorabilia.

It’s this type of city and community partnership that makes reviving these theaters possible, says Anthea Hartig, the western regional director of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

“The restorations that we see happen are solid development projects where local leaders and developers are as passionate about the theater coming back as anyone—and applauding in the background is the community that really wants its theater back,” Hartig says.
A LANDMARK THEATER

Across the country, another Fox has been drawing crowds for quite some time. It's the "Fabulous Fox," a 1929-era Atlanta theater that has long been a favorite destination for locals and tourists alike. Originally built to resemble a Middle Eastern mosque and serve as the headquarters for the Shriners of Atlanta, movie mogul William Fox, who agreed to lease out the 5,000-seat auditorium to the group, opened it as a movie theater on Christmas Day 1929. Its design borrowed from mosques of different countries and centuries, and its star-dappled ceiling gave it a whimsical feel to audiences who patronized it until 1974.

By the time it closed, its downtown location had grown dangerous and dilapidated, and the property was set to become a high-rise—until community protests sparked one of the first movie-palace rescues in the country.

"Condos started going up, and restaurants opened," says Molly Fortune, who heads the Fox's restoration department. "Saving the Fox started a slow movement of revitalization downtown."

No longer viable as a single-screen movie theater, its stage has become its salvation, hosting everything from operas and ballets to Broadway shows and rock concerts. Though the entertainment is different, people still come in search of an escape.

"Everything is kept as it was on opening day—even the light bulbs are the same wattage," Fortune says. "People have a chance to literally step back into time. They have the same experience that patrons did back then: They get to step out of their troubles and into a fantasy world."

When a 100-year-old Atlanta woman visited recently, Fortune recalls, she stopped short at the front row of the balcony where she sat as a 12-year-old on opening day. She exclaimed, "This is exactly as I remember it."

Keeping the historical veracity of the theater intact while also incorporating new technology requires constant consideration and compromise—and keeping young patrons interested and driving in from the suburbs takes creative programming.

The theater keeps families coming with a diversity of events, including a classic summer film festival where movies are shown from original slides in a vintage projector, and the gilded theater organ, "The Mighty Mo," leads the audience in a sing-along.

But historic theaters can't sustain themselves on nostalgia alone, Fortune says. They must hold the promise of creating new memories.

"My parents started bringing me to the Fox in the late 1970s to see 'The Nutcracker,'" Fortune says. "Everyone would get all dolled up and go to the Varsity [a local diner] for lunch, then people would flood into the theater, all dressed up and smelling like onions.

"We need to realize that these buildings can be self-sustaining and a driving force for bringing a community back to itself," she says.

CURTAIN CALL

Though the Loew's Jersey Theatre still has a long way to go before it can recapture the wonder that Patricia Giordan remembers from childhood, she has no doubts that it will become the gem of Jersey City once more.

"When people come inside the theater today, their mouths open as their eyes look up," Giordan says. "It's hard to get them to leave because they still want to look around. It would be a shame to lose such a touchstone to a different, more elegant era."

Volunteers have removed walls to make room for one screen again, and the projection booth, which had become a pigeon coop, has been repaired and equipped with state-of-the-art 35-mm projectors as well as a vintage Vitaphone, courtesy of an Academy Award-winning sound engineer interested in the restoration.

Upgrades to stage lighting and sound are still needed, along with new emergency exits, fire escapes and a modern smoke-detection system so the building can be brought up to code.

The work that remains is daunting, but all Giordan has to do to see the value is look at the faces of the children who come inside.

“They have never seen anything like this—it gives me a thrill to watch them feel what I felt when I first came here,” she says.

Emily McMackin is a contributing editor whose last feature explored the history of the New York Manumission Society.
THE FOX TUCSON THEATRE (1930)  
TUCSON, ARIZ.  
* With its Southwestern Art Deco decor and crystal starburst chandelier, this 1,316-seat theater was the crown jewel of downtown Tucson for decades. After shutting down in 1972, it was abandoned, changing hands between developers for years before citizens formed a nonprofit that raised money to buy the deteriorating building. The theater has since been restored to its original look, down to its ticket booth and seat fabric, and it still has soundproofing material designed at the advent of talkies. It now shows classic movies and favorite community flicks and has hosted hundreds of events since its New Year’s Eve 2006 opening, including concerts, beauty pageants, interfaith conferences and a Mexican-American film festival.

THE ROGERS THEATRE (1936)  
SHELBY, N.C.  
* One of Shelby’s Main Street anchors, the Rogers Theatre was known for its entertainment. Will Rogers and the Three Stooges performed on its vaudeville stage, and the theater lured patrons into its premier showing of “Love on the Run” by landing a plane in front of the building. Its original ironwork and ornamental plaster are intact, and its marquee and limestone façade have been restored. Once roof work and interior upgrades are done, the community hopes to use the building as a live performance venue to celebrate its bluegrass heritage.

THE CERRITO THEATER (1937)  
EL CERRITO, CALIF.  
* One of the many “popcorn palaces” that popped up throughout the western United States after the Depression, this 600-seat theater with its etched glass, vibrant colors and fanciful murals offered a diversion for World War II factory workers toiling in nearby Richmond shipyards. After it closed in the 1960s, a furniture store owner transformed it into a warehouse, but left its Art Deco elements intact. When he retired 30 years later, the city bought and refurbished the building, hoping to use it to restore pride in the downtown district. Now a cabaret-style, two-screen movie house with second-run films and a restaurant, the theater attracts all ages, including young parents invited to bring their infants to the movies once a week for “Baby Brigade” night.

THE CAPITOL THEATER (1937)  
BURLINGTON, IOWA  
* With its stately marquee, exposed brick walls and curved staircase, the red-carpeted Capitol was one of the most luxurious theaters in town, providing an escape for Depression-era Burlington residents with its new films and novelty of air conditioning. Its lobby has been restored, and its reit marquee is often rented out. With area movie theaters now lacking film choices, residents aspire to turn this theater back into a movie house and a performance space for church and school groups.

GRAND MOVIE PALACES built during the 1920s were to Americans what opera houses had become to Europeans—temples of entertainment. But once the Great Depression hit, the building boom stopped. By the time theater building resumed in the mid-1930s, Americans were leaving cramped cities for smaller towns and simpler lifestyles—thus the Art Deco neighborhood theater was born. Often independently owned, these theaters traded exoticism for sleek subtlety—except for their marquees, which grew flashier. During World War II, the theaters doubled as recruiting stations and showed newsreels. “These theaters were a source of pride for the neighborhood and a gathering place, especially for children in the age before television,” film historian Ross Melnick says. Learn how some towns are turning them into community centers once again.
EXCLUSIVE FREE BOOK OFFER!

INTERNET GENEALOGY
www.internet-genealogy.com

Subscribe and Receive Our Newest Booklet...FREE!

Internet Genealogy Magazine is your guide to successful genealogical researching using the World Wide Web. We will also tell people what to do if they cannot find the records they need on the 'Net and how to confirm their findings.

Internet Genealogy also covers advanced genealogical methods such as DNA analysis, as well as software and technology reviews, case studies, databases and other Internet-related family history topics.

To celebrate our first fantastic year, we're giving away a free copy of our latest booklet, 101 Best Genealogy Research Tips, with every paid subscription. Simply subscribe for one, two or three years and we'll send you a copy ABSOLUTELY FREE!

Specially prepared by the Editors of Internet Genealogy and author Janice Nickerson, 101 Best Genealogy Research Tips is packed with useful tips and advice. The only way to get this booklet, which isn't available in stores, is to subscribe to Internet Genealogy!

DON'T DELAY, SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

INTERNET GENEALOGY

Don't like forms? With your credit card ready, please call 1-888-326-2476 toll-free during office hours (EST) to order your subscription.

USA Orders
- One year (6 issues) at $28 US
- Two years (12 issues) at $45 US
- Three years (18 issues) at $64 US

Canadian Orders
- One year (6 issues) at $32 CDN + GST*
- Two years (12 issues) at $52 CDN + GST*
- Three years (18 issues) at $76 CDN + GST*
*Residents of BC, AB, & NS add HST instead of GST. Quebec residents add 7.5% QST.

Payment by:  □ Check (enclosed)  □ Charge my Credit Card:  □ Visa  □ MasterCard
PayPal is accepted on our website (internet-genealogy.com).

Card Number:_________________________  Expiry Date____/____

Signature________________________________________

Your credit card charge will appear as Internet Genealogy USA purchasers note: Credit card transactions are processed through our office in Canada, but will appear on your statement in US funds.

Last Name:_________________________  First Name_________________________

Address:_____________________________________________________________

City:_________________________  State/Prov:_________________________  Zip/Postal Code:_________________________

Phone Number:_________________________  Fax:_________________________

Please allow three to six weeks for delivery.

DAR 4
The Prison Ship Martyrs’ Monument in Brooklyn’s Fort Greene Park honors the forgotten victims of the American Revolution—the more than 11,500 Americans held captive on British prison ships who died of disease, starvation, violence and neglect.

BY SHARON MCDONNELL

PHOTO BY CLINTON IRVING JONES.
IMAGES PROVIDED BY ABBY WEISSMAN AND THE FORT GREENE PARK CONSERVANCY
Standing almost 150 feet tall at the summit of Fort Greene Park in Brooklyn, N.Y., and flanked by a granite staircase 100 feet wide, the Prison Ship Martyrs’ Monument overlooks Wallabout Bay, the site where more than 11,500 American prisoners of war were held captive in unspeakable conditions and died on 16 British prison ships between 1776 and 1783. According to government estimates, more than twice as many Americans died on the prison ships than in all the battles of the Revolutionary War. The story of the “prison ship martyrs,” as they are called, represent one of the most tragic chapters in our nation’s early history—yet one of its least known.

‘Turn Out Your Dead!’

In 1776, Fort Greene Park was the site of Fort Putnam, one of the most important defenses built on high land in Brooklyn to protect New York from the British. It was one of several defenses supervised by Colonel Rufus Putnam.

“If New York was the key to the continent, then Long Island was the key to New York, and the key to the defense of Long Island was Brooklyn Heights,” says David McCullough in his book 1776 (Simon & Schuster, 2005). Despite fierce battles waged during the Battle of Brooklyn (also called the Battle of Long

A 19th-century color engraving illustrates the interior of the prison ship, HMS Jersey, anchored off Brooklyn during the British occupation of New York.
Island) under the leadership of Major General Nathanael Greene on August 27, 1776, the greatly outnumbered Continental Army lost. Shortly thereafter, the British took control of New York City and Long Island and occupied them until the war ended.

The British needed space to imprison captured seamen and soldiers, as well as civilians suspected of Revolutionary sympathies, but the churches, the old City Hall and Columbia College (then named King's College) weren’t enough. A fire had destroyed many New York buildings earlier in the year, so the British turned to ships to detain their prisoners. Most prison ships were anchored in Wallabout Bay on the shore of the future Brooklyn Navy Yard, directly across the East River from Manhattan’s Lower East Side. The ships held American prisoners from all over—including seamen imprisoned in Charleston, S.C., after the British occupation in 1780, St. Augustine, Fla., and Halifax, Nova Scotia. They were all eventually transferred to prison ships in New York.

Known to their once-inhabitants as floating horrors, infamous for cattle-like conditions, merciless treatment by British guards and rampant disease, death was a common occurrence on the prison ships.

“Turn out your dead!” British guards yelled each morning, since the deaths were so frequent. Bodies were buried in shallow graves along the shore.

Robert Sheffield of Stonington, Conn., one of 350 men jammed in a small compartment below deck aboard a prison ship, escaped in 1778, telling the Connecticut Gazette:

“Theyir sickley countenances and ghastly looks were truly horrible. Some swearing and blaspheming; some crying, praying, and wringing their hands, and stalking about like ghosts; others delirious, raving, and storming, some groaning and dying—all panting for breath; some dead and corrupting—air so foul at times that a lamp could not be kept burning, by reason of which the boys were not missed till they had been dead 10 days.”

Of the 16 prison ships, the Jersey, which was nicknamed “Hell” by its inhabitants, was the most notorious. A prisoner on the Jersey, who said the deaths were about 10 per day, recalled, “At the time I was on board, there were about 1,100 prisoners, no berths to lie in, or benches to sit on; many were without clothes. Dysentery, fever, pleurisy, and despair prevailed. The scantiness and bad quality of provisions, the brutality of the guards, and the sick pining for comforts they could not obtain, altogether furnished the cruelest scene of horror ever beheld.”

Another Jersey prisoner, Captain Thomas Dring, a 25-year-old from Newport, R.I., survived—though surrounded by men suffering from smallpox—by inoculating himself with a pin. “On looking about me, I soon found a man in the proper stage of the disease, and desired him to favor me with some of the matter for the purpose... The only instrument which I could procure, for the purpose of inoculation, was a common pin...”
The next morning I found that the wound had begun to fester; a sure symptom that the application had taken effect.”

A poem penned by J.M. Scott references both the Jersey and the Scorpion:

Let the dark Scorpion’s bulk narrate  
The dismal tale of English hate  
Her horrid scenes let Jersey tell  
And mock the shadows where demons dwell.  
There shrieks of pain, and the dying groan,  
Unheeded fall on ears of stone.

General George Washington complained about the prison ships in a January 13, 1777, letter to the British commander, General William Howe. “You may call us rebels, and say that we deserve no better treatment. But, remember, my Lord, that supposing us rebels, we still have feelings as keen and sensible as Loyalists, and will, if forced to it, most assuredly retaliate upon those upon whom we look as the unjust invaders of our rights, liberties and properties.”

Prisoners could be released if they renounced the Revolutionary cause and pledged loyalty to King George III. Some bribed their way to freedom; others were exchanged for British prisoners. It’s unknown how many escaped the ships this way. After the war ended in 1783, the remaining prisoners were freed, and the prison ships abandoned.

The Memorial Gains Allies

Long after the war was over, bones and skulls from ship prisoners kept washing up on the shores of Brooklyn. Some were collected and stored in a vault funded by the Tammany Society near the Navy Yard in 1806.

Support grew to honor the ship prisoners with a permanent and more meaningful monument, but it still took a century. Poet Walt Whitman, editor of The Brooklyn Daily Eagle—the biggest daily newspaper in Brooklyn, which was then an independent city—wrote almost daily in 1846 about how Brooklyn needed a public park as a “lung” where its dense population could relax and breathe fresh air. Inspired by the Society of Old Brookenites, he also rallied support in his pages to build a monument to the prison ship martyrs.

The grandson of a militiaman in the Revolutionary War, Whitman heard many stories about the war throughout his childhood. Patriotic heroes permeate
his poems: George Washington weeps for his dead and his defeat at the Battle of Brooklyn in the *Leaves of Grass* poem, “The Sleepers,” and the prison ship martyrs appear in “Song of Myself”:  

*What sovers the Brooklyn boy as he looks down the shores of the Wallabout and rememmers the prison ships.*

Whitman and other supporters of the public park soon got their wish. The City of Brooklyn commissioned Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, fresh from their success designing Manhattan’s Central Park, to design several parks in 1864, one of which was the 30-acre Washington Park, now known as Fort Greene Park. The remains of the prison ship martyrs were temporarily laid to rest in nearby Prospect Park, but were transferred to a brick crypt in Fort Greene Park in 1873.

In 1900, workers digging a cellar for the Brooklyn Navy Yard found at least a dozen skeletons of ship prisoners, a story that made front-page news in *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*. The story noted the bones would be placed “with those of other Revolutionary martyrs” in the crypt.

Bending to the campaign from the Society of Old Brooklynites and the DAR—whose Fort Greene Chapter was formed in 1896 in Brooklyn to erect a “suitable memorial to the memory of martyrs, civilian, military and naval, who perished in the noisome prison ships anchored in the Wallabout Bay during the Revolutionary War”—as well as city, state and federal officials, Congress finally approved funds to build the Prison Ship Martyrs’ Memorial, and the architectural firm McKim, Mead and White won a 1905 competition to design it.

Dedicated in 1908 in a ceremony attended by newly elected President William Howard Taft, the monument was the last public work designed by Stanford White. Featuring an eight-ton bronze urn and four 300-pound bronze eagles, the monument was the world’s tallest freestanding Doric column. A plaza, flanked at each corner by the crowning granite shafts and guarded by two cannons, covered the tomb beneath it. Sculptor Alexander Weinman, best known for his statue of “Civic Fame” that tops the Municipal Building in Manhattan, designed the monument’s two eagles.

**A Neglected Monument**

In the century since it was built, the Prison Ship Martyrs’ Memorial has often been as neglected as the history it commemorates. In the 1930s, the monument fell into disrepair due to lack of funding and community interest. However, the monument may finally win the attention it so sorely deserves: a restoration funded by the New York City Parks and Recreation Department is under way and expected to be completed in fall 2007, and a rededication is anticipated in 2008.

“It’s the largest single crypt of Revolutionary War veterans in the United States,” says Margaret Skinner, Regent of Fort Greene Chapter, Brooklyn, N.Y. “This should be a national shrine, like Valley Forge in Pennsylvania or the Andersonville Civil War Prison Camp in Georgia.”

**Renewing the Interest**

Members of the Daughters of the American Revolution attending their 1939 Continental Congress passed a resolution approving the memorial and Fort Greene Park as a national shrine. “The Battle of Brooklyn was our first major battle after declaring our independence. Bunker Hill gets lots of attention, and during the Bicentennial Philadelphia got most of the attention, but Brooklyn gets neglected,” Skinner says. “Someone said, ‘what they wrote in ink in Philadelphia they wrote in blood in Brooklyn.’”

However, it remains an uphill battle getting the memorial declared a National Historic Site. “Nothing was done because World War II started, and nothing since,” Skinner adds. “Someone has to fight for it. It needs a will to make it a national shrine. Money is not the issue—the work on it has been done.” Skinner wrote to the U.S. Department of the Interior to seek a national designation, but got a letter back that noted that the prisoners didn’t die at the site itself.
During the 1960s and 1970s, it seemed that nobody cared that the Prison Ship Martyrs’ Monument was on the verge of extinction. New York was in the throes of a fiscal crisis—the famous headline “Ford to City: Drop Dead” ran front-page in the New York Daily News on October 30, 1975—and crime rates soared, especially in poorer neighborhoods like Fort Greene. Vandalism often attacked the monument and stole the bronze eagles, which have since been recovered and put in storage for safety. Two now grace the Parks Department headquarters on Fifth Avenue. An elevator and stairs to the top were removed in 1948, and a plaque honoring the prison martyrs—presented by the King of Spain, who attended a Bicentennial celebration—was stolen.

As New York rebounded in the late 1990s and Fort Greene and Clinton Hill, landmarked city Historic Districts filled with 19th-century brownstones that surround Fort Greene Park, became desirable places to live, the Parks Department announced a $3.5 million renovation of the Prison Ship Martyrs’ Memorial in 2004. Today, the monument and granite staircase are being cleaned, the eagles and bronze urn are being replaced (two with replicas), and lighting and landscaping are being improved.

In May 2006, the Fort Greene Park Visitor Center opened next to the monument, where exhibits explain the history of the prison ships and the Battle of Brooklyn and a list of the names of the 8,000 known prison ship martyrs. The list of prisoners, copied from records in the British War Department in 1888 by the Society of Old Brooklynites, can also be found on a Web site maintained by U.S. Merchant Marine veterans (www.usmm.net/revdead.html). The site is on track to be rededicated next year, thus beginning the latest chapter in the prison ship martyrs’ history.

To learn more about the Fort Green Park Conservancy, call (718) 222–1461 or visit www.fortgreenepark.org.

Sharon McDonnell profiled American astronomer Maria Mitchell for the July/August 2006 issue of American Spirit.
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 associated with natural sunlight indoors.

The Balanced Spectrum® floor lamp 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 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.

Experience sunshine indoors at the touch-of-a-switch. This amazing lamp is easy on the eyes and easy on the hands. It features a special “soft-touch, flicker-free” rocker switch that’s easier to use than traditional toggle or twist switches. Its flexible gooseneck design enables you to get light where you need it most. The high-tech electronics, user-friendly design, and bulb that lasts 10 times longer than an incandescent 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

---

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 firstSTREET’s exclusive guarantee. Try this lamp for 90 days and return it for the product purchase price if not completely satisfied.

Balanced Spectrum® floor lamp
Item# BB-3589 was $59.95

Call now for $10 instant savings!

Only $49.95 each + S&H

*Order two Balanced Spectrum® floor lamps and get FREE shipping on both lamps.

*Free shipping within the contiguous 48 states only.

Please mention promotional code 32163.

For fastest service, call toll-free 24 hours a day

1-800-711-8094

We accept all major credit cards, or if you choose, you can pay by check with ClearTran® over the phone.

To order by mail, please call for details.

www.balancedspectrum.com
National Society Daughters Of The American Revolution
Official Insignia

Chapter Regents Blue Enamel with Historic Emblem
Past Chapter Regents and Emblem with Center Diamond
Chapter Bar, Ancestor Bar and Emblem

To order, call us at 800-786-5890 or visit www.jecaldwell.com.