American Spirit
Daughters of the American Revolution

September/October 2008

UNCOMMON THREADS
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Washington Irving’s Retreats

America’s Campaign for Canada

Born Brave: Young Patriots

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American Spirit
Piecing Together History
Discover the colorful history of quilts at the 2008 Houston International Quilt Festival, featuring treasures from the DAR Museum collection.

BY NANCY MANN JACKSON

Born Brave
Children as young as 10 years old served their country during the Revolutionary War. Their tasks varied, but their bravery was constant.

BYlena Anthony

America’s Campaign for Canada
At the dawn of the Revolution, America set her sights on making Canada the 14th Colony.

BY BILL HUDGINS

A Bedtime Story
Uneven sleep intervals and the nightly discomforts of Colonial life contributed to the sleeplessness of early Americans.

BY GIN PHILLIPS
Contents

Departments

4 Today’s Daughters
Wired for Service
Forget free time. Susie Glover says she’s even busier now that she’s retired, working as a full-time volunteer for the disabled.

BY LENA ANTHONY

6 National Treasures
Burning Bright
An embellished oil lamp represents the height of technology in the late 18th century.

FROM THE DAR MUSEUM COLLECTION

8 Class Act
An American Tale
Even in high school, story time is a requisite for Jim Dennis, a history teacher in Parkersburg, W.Va.

BY MEGAN PACELLA

18 Spirited Adventures
Big Town
Well-known for its modern flair, Houston also boasts a well-preserved historical past.

BY AMY CATES

40 Historic Homes
From Spain to Sunnyside
Washington Irving’s travels through Europe and his ambassadorship in Spain influenced the design of his estate in Tarrytown, N.Y.

BY SHARON MCDONNELL

3 President General’s Message
10 Whatnot
16 Bookshelf

ABOUT THE COVER
SUNBURST STAR AND PURITAN STAR QUILT FROM THE DAR MUSEUM COLLECTION © MARK CULEZIAN/QUICKSILVER
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National Society Daughters of the American Revolution
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From the President General

If you want to learn more about early Americans and their lives, all you have to do is glimpse one of their quilts. Not only did these quilts keep colonists warm through frigid winters, they also served as a canvas of expression. Each quilt pieces together a story about the political and cultural fabric of our nation and its people during that era. Our cover feature offers a sneak peek into a display of 20 quilts from the DAR Museum quilt collection, which is headed to Houston this fall for the International Quilt Festival, an event expected to draw thousands to the city on October 30—November 2. The exhibit, “The DAR Presents: Quilts of a Young Country,” will mark a rare appearance of such a large number of the quilts outside of Washington, D.C.

Our Spirited Adventures department also journeys to Houston for a look at its rich history and culture. Before it became the industrial and technological hub it is famous for today, it was an enterprising port city abundant in land and natural resources. Drawn to its promise of adventure and opportunity, settlers flocked to the area in the mid-1800s. But despite its rapid growth, this progressive city hasn’t forgotten its roots; its citizens are passionate about preservation, and visitors don’t have to venture far to find shrines to Houston’s past.

We also revisit the revolutionary role Canada played in America’s fight for independence. When hopes of persuading our northern neighbor to join the rebellion against Great Britain failed, Congress embarked on a campaign to invade Canada and make it the 14th Colony. The Patriots hoped their plan would not only prevent American Indian allies of the Redcoats from raiding and harassing northern settlements, but also neutralize the threat of an attack from the north that could divide the rebellion. Though the strategy failed, the events that followed eventually shaped the outcome of the Revolution and the independent relationship Canada has with Great Britain today.

In our feature on young Patriots, we tell the story of brave young fighters like 15-year-old Ebenezer Fox, whose adventurous war career included three tours of duty and a prison escape. It’s surprising to learn just how many children were part of America’s fight for independence—and how varied and courageous their roles were.

We illuminate our country’s literary past with a visit to Washington Irving’s home, Sunnyside, in Tarrytown, N.Y. A carefully restored house museum on the Hudson River, the 18th-century stone cottage is filled with mementoes of the writer’s travels and the 21 years he lived in Europe.

Finally, I’m proud to report that American Spirit was honored recently with a Grand Award of Excellence from the APEX Awards organization for the sixth consecutive year. Thanks to our loyal readers for their support.

Linda Gist Calvin

© JAMES KEGLEY

American Spirit • September/October 2008
When Susie Glover retired from the United States Postal Service in 2004, she didn’t know what to do with herself. She had worked hard for the past 35 years, finishing out a career with the Postal Service in a senior-level public relations position. Besides her family and close friends, work was Mrs. Glover’s top priority.

“I hardly even knew my neighbors, even though we had lived on the same street for years; that’s how busy I was with work,” says the longtime resident of Granite Bay, Calif.

But the same ambition and work ethic that helped Mrs. Glover climb the ranks of the Postal Service soon kicked in, and she found a new purpose. She joined the local Rotary Club and got involved with A Touch of Understanding, a community service organization that provides disability awareness programs to Sacramento-area elementary schools.

“We set up hands-on stations to teach children what it’s like to be blind, have a prosthesis or be in a wheelchair,” she says. “We also bring in people who have disabilities to speak to the children about what they do and how they do it. It makes a really big impression on kids and helps them realize that people with disabilities are just like they are.”

In addition to helping A Touch of Understanding with in-school presentations, Mrs. Glover also serves as the organization’s assistant director—and she has big plans for the next few years.

“We’re trying to make the program go statewide,” she says. To make that happen, Mrs. Glover uses the PR skills she learned at the Postal Service to spread the word about the program. She also organized the inaugural Taste of Granite Bay fundraiser benefitting A Touch of Understanding last October, and she has plans for three more fundraisers in the next two years.

“I’m busier now that I’m retired,” she says. “But it’s great, because it’s such fulfilling work. Success is about being fulfilled in life. I don’t think there is any greater feeling than looking back on your life knowing that you made a positive difference on others.”

Mrs. Glover is also involved in the Gold Trail Chapter, Roseville, Calif. After organizing a book signing for an author at the DAR Continental Congress in Washington, D.C., in 2005, Mrs. Glover was so impressed with the DAR that she wanted to join.

“When I got home I called the local chapter,” Mrs. Glover says. “It turned out that my neighbor was really involved. Now she’s our Regent and one of my best friends.”

Mrs. Glover handles public relations for the chapter and helps with fundraising. When she joined the DAR, the chapter raised about $2,000 a year. Now, it averages $10,000, which helps fund more scholarships and programs like sports leagues for disabled veterans.

“DAR is such a big part of my life now,” she says. “I honestly don’t know how I lived without it.”

Mrs. Glover learned the importance of giving back at a young age. “My parents were always involved in the community,” she says. “My dad was a logger, and even though he worked long hours every day, he still made time for community service. And he got me involved, too. He knew how important it is to learn the power of giving. We may not have had a lot of money, but we had ourselves to give.”

Mrs. Glover is trying to instill that same sense of giving in her grandson, Nicholas, who is 6 years old. “He’s a great help,” she says. “When I’m doing a mailing or putting together programs for an event, he’s really good at gluing and putting stickers on things.”

When the tasks are done, Mrs. Glover, her husband, Jim, and Nicholas focus on fun activities—like walking and riding bikes. “Anything my husband and I do with him is fun,” she says. “He’s the light of our lives.”

To nominate a Daughter for a future issue, e-mail a description to americanspirit@dar.org.
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The American Philatelic Society
America’s Stamp Club
Take a step inside the DAR Museum for a closer look at its fascinating collection.

Burning Bright

The Argand lamp was the height of lighting technology when new more than 200 years ago. In the 1780s, Swiss inventor Francois-Pierre-Ami Argand patented a new method of lighting using a cylindrical wick that resulted in a flame much brighter than candles. His version burned whale oil and could produce the light of up to 10 candles—a vast improvement on previous oil lamps. The Argand was the lamp of choice until it was superseded by the kerosene lamp in 1850.

Made in Sheffield, England, around 1800, this example features a Wedgwood jasperware base.
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For more information, please contact the NSDAR Office of Development at (800) 449–1776 or giftplanning@dar.org.
or students in Jim Dennis’ classroom at Parkersburg South High School in Parkersburg, W. Va., American history class feels more like story hour than a typical lesson. Rather than rely on traditional teaching methods like lecturing and teaching from textbooks, Dennis constantly seeks new ways to break the monotony in his classroom—and that means telling tales that grab students’ interest. “I like to tell stories,” Dennis says. “People like to hear stories, so I try to turn my history lessons into stories my students can absorb.”

Dennis believes spinning a yarn is the best way to combat students’ preconception that history is irrelevant. “At the beginning of the year, I have students write down their opinions of history,” he says. “So many of them write words like ‘boring,’ ‘dull’ and ‘useless.’ ”

Getting students to change their minds about history isn’t easy, Dennis says, but he battles their biases by making learning entertaining. If you step inside Dennis’ classroom, you’ll rarely find him giving a dry lecture laden with dates and events. Instead you might discover the entire class singing classic folk songs like “Davy Crockett,” watching clips from historical movies such as 1776 or The Legend of Sleepy Hollow, or reading letters written by American soldiers.

Bringing history to life
Dennis believes talking to people who actually lived through history is the best way for students to grasp difficult concepts. Every time he introduces a new decade, he asks students to interview someone who lived through that era to learn about their lives and the challenges they faced. “At first, students might whine and groan when I assign this project, but to many, this becomes one of their most cherished assignments,” Dennis says. “For the first time in their lives, most students actually sit down with a grandparent or parent and find out what they had to deal with during the Great Depression or the Vietnam War. The feedback from students and parents has been amazing.”

Unfortunately, Dennis’ living history assignment can extend only as far back as about the 1920s. When teaching the Colonial era, he uses primary documents to give students a feel for what life was like for early Americans. But painting a picture of Colonial history goes beyond old letters and written accounts of what colonists experienced—even though those documents are helpful, Dennis says. To supplement those sources, he invites experts into his classroom to talk to students about history. “When we study the Civil War, a re-enactor comes in to show his props and tell the students what it was like to live during that pivotal time,” says Dennis, who has also invited a guest speaker from a Hopi reservation to speak about the history of American Indians. “I want them to feel what it was like to be there when our nation was being born.”

Dennis’ first priority is giving his students an understanding of the importance of American history to take with them when they leave his classroom. “At the end of the year I give my students the opportunity to evaluate my class,” he says. “Some of the most gratifying moments of my career have come when they say history is their favorite subject.”

Storytelling holds a prominent place in this history teacher’s classroom

BY MEGAN PACELLA | PHOTO BY JEFF BAUGHAN

An American Tale

Peek inside America’s classrooms to discover ingenious ways of teaching history.

Daughters of the American Revolution

{Class Act}
Texas Society Daughters of the American Revolution welcomes you to the Houston International Quilt Festival

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Quilts From a Young Country

UNDERWRITERS:
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This project is funded in part by a grant from the City of Houston's City's Initiative Program through the Houston Arts Alliance.

www.tsdar.org
Searching For Treasure

Looking for a new way to experience Central Park in New York City, the Old South Meeting House in Boston or Independence Hall in Philadelphia? Instead of booking a traditional bus tour, try a Watson Scavenger Hunt to find the hidden treasures in some of America’s most interesting cities. Offering public scavenger hunts in Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., Watson Adventures uses witty questions and fast-paced games to introduce you to museums, historic neighborhoods, parks and other attractions in a way you’ve never experienced before.

Looking for a kid-friendly adventure? Try the Bonkers in Boston Family Hunt, where you'll step back in time to 1776 to search for treasure in Quincy Hall and explore Ben Franklin’s old stomping grounds. Or maybe you want to experience the “other side” of Philadelphia on the Haunted Philadelphia Hunt, which will take you through ghost-plagued buildings and eerie cemeteries as you learn about the city’s most haunted dwellings.

For a list of upcoming scavenger hunts, visit www.watsonadventures.com/schedule or call (877) 9–GO HUNT.
On This Day In History

(SOURCES INCLUDE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS’ “AMERICAN MEMORY” HTTP://MEMORY.LOC.GOV)

SEPTEMBER 10, 1608: Explorer, adventurer, writer and cartographer John Smith assumes the presidency of the Jamestown settlement.

SEPTEMBER 13, 1814: Francis Scott Key composes “The Star-Spangled Banner” during the Battle of Fort McHenry in Baltimore.

SEPTEMBER 17, 1787: Members of the Constitutional Convention sign the final draft of the Constitution.

SEPTEMBER 21, 1784: The nation’s first daily newspaper, The Pennsylvania Packet and Daily Advertiser, begins publication.

SEPTEMBER 26, 1777: British troops march into Philadelphia and occupy the city, forcing the Continental Congress to flee to the interior of Pennsylvania.

OCTOBER 9, 1701: The Colonial legislature of Connecticut charters the school that would become Yale University.

OCTOBER 13, 1792: The cornerstone of the White House is laid.

OCTOBER 16, 1859: Abolitionist John Brown and 21 armed men seize 60 hostages and the federal arsenal at Harper’s Ferry in what is now West Virginia.

OCTOBER 19, 1781: British troops surrender at Yorktown, solidifying their defeat in the Revolutionary War.

OCTOBER 20, 1803: The Senate ratifies the Louisiana Purchase Treaty by a vote of 24–7.

Remembering John Adams…

One of America’s most admired and revered presidents, John Adams has long been a fascinating subject for historians and ordinary citizens alike. Check out the latest ways to pay homage to this accomplished Patriot.

On Film

To capture the legacy of America’s second president on film, executive producers Tom Hanks and Gary Goetzman produced “John Adams,” a seven-part miniseries that aired on HBO in March and April. Based on David McCullough’s Pulitzer Prize-winning biography, the film tells the story of our nation’s birth through the eyes of Adams and his wife, Abigail, giving Americans a unique look at the life of this great Patriot and the dramatic first years of the new Republic.

The “John Adams” series, which enjoyed great reviews for its skillful blending of accurate historical depictions and gripping entertainment, is now available on DVD for $60. For more information or to order a copy, visit www.hbo.com/films/johnadams.

At Colonial Williamsburg

Bringing the American Revolution to life, Colonial Williamsburg offers The Revolutionary City, a daily two-hour, interactive street presentation that takes place in the same places where HBO’s “John Adams” series was filmed. Guests can secure lodging in taverns and Colonial houses in the historic area and experience firsthand the transformation of colonists from royal subjects of Great Britain to citizens of a newly formed nation.

The presentation gives guests a taste of Colonial life, allowing them to explore the culinary styles of the period, experience the same types of entertainment that Patriots such as Thomas Jefferson, George Washington and Patrick Henry enjoyed; and discover the crafts and trades of 18th-century workers.

To learn more, visit www.historyisfun.org or call (800) HISTORY.
View From the White House

**AN UNPRECEDENTED GLIMPSE** through the windows of the president’s home can be found in the recently released *Our White House* (Candlewick Press, 2008), a collection of essays, illustrations, short stories and presidential letters compiled by more than 100 renowned authors and artists.

The book highlights the history of our 43 presidents and their families, offering little-known facts about each resident of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. For example, do you know which president never took a vacation from the White House? Or who was the first president to swim in the White House swimming pool? How about which president locked himself out of the house while walking his dog late at night? *Our White House* answers all these questions and more with a humorous, informative tone. The beautifully illustrated book is particularly useful for teaching children the history of the White House, but readers of any age will enjoy its revelations of everyday life for the leader of the free world.

Remembering The Alamo

**AN ICONIC AMERICAN** landmark, the Alamo in San Antonio, Texas, has a rich history that dates back to the 18th century, when the site served as a home to missionaries and their American Indian converts for nearly 70 years. In the 1830s, the Alamo played a critical role in the Texas Revolution when just a few Texans forced Mexican troops out of the city against seemingly impossible odds, securing Texas’ independence.

Today, the Alamo is hallowed ground not just for Texans but for all Americans. The site represents the sacrifices Americans have made throughout history to secure our nation’s freedom, attracting 2.5 million visitors every year. Unfortunately, years of erosion and wear and tear have left the Alamo in need of a major preservation effort to repair its two oldest structures. In 2007, the Daughters of the Republic of Texas (DRT), the group who maintains the monument, launched the Alamo Capital Campaign to raise $60 million to finance this much-needed preservation project.

Work on the Shrine building and the Long Barrack Museum is ongoing, and the organization has already started using early contributions to fund this effort. The Alamo Capital Campaign has raised more than $1 million so far, and soon will begin work on the renovation of the gift shop and museum. While the DRT has done a remarkable job of maintaining the Alamo without financial help from the state, the group needs help from other organizations to reach its financial goals.

Donations for the Alamo Capital Campaign should be made payable to the Alamo Capital Campaign and addressed to Alamo Capital Campaign, P.O. Box 1401, San Antonio, TX 78295–1401.
Washington’s Boyhood Home Uncovered

IN JULY, archaeologists working at Ferry Farm, George Washington’s boyhood home in Fredericksburg, Va., uncovered the house where the father of our country was raised. After seven seasons of excavation, archaeologists uncovered the remains of the wood structure that once housed the Washington family. Years of erosion have left only the foundation and cellars of the original house behind, but excavating the cellars has produced thousands of precious artifacts, including pieces of the house’s ceiling, painted walls and hearth, bone toothbrush handles, wig curlers, and knives and forks.

The Ferry Farm house was George Washington’s home for most of his childhood, even though the family owned several other farms. Washington was only 11 when his father, Augustine, died in 1743, leaving him the home, farm and 10 slaves. When he become of age, Washington farmed tobacco, wheat and corn on the property, and also learned to survey land.

Funds for the ongoing excavation are provided by the commonwealth of Virginia, The Dominion Foundation, the National Geographic Society, the Mary Morton Parsons Foundation and many individuals. Now that the original home has been discovered, the George Washington Foundation plans to recreate the structures as they stood in the 1740s for educational purposes. For more information on Ferry Farm and Washington’s boyhood home, visit www.kenmore.org.

The Jonas Babcock Chapter, Mead, Wash., is named for the brave Patriot who first served as a private in the Revolutionary War when he was 15 years old. Born in Stonington, Conn., in May 1764, Babcock served three terms in the war before being discharged as a sergeant in 1784. His father and a brother also served.

Babcock was a deacon in the Congregational Church in Westford, N.Y., for 42 years. In his journal, which is still in existence, he wrote, “May peace forever remain between the United States and all other powers if possible. If not, may America subdue them and bring them peace again.” Babcock died in 1847, at the age of 83.

The Eunice Farnsworth Chapter, Skowhegan, Maine, honors the first white woman to settle in Somerset County, Maine. Eunice and her husband, Joseph, had nine children and settled in Maine in 1772, after relocating from Concord, Mass. In 1775, Joseph volunteered to aid the Arnold Expedition as it traveled to Quebec while skirting the Skowhegan and Norridgewock Falls (see page 33). During the journey, Joseph Farnsworth died of exposure and hardship at 43, leaving Eunice behind to care for their large family. She managed well for the family and married Major John Moor, a Revolutionary War officer, in 1779.

What’s in a Name? Discover the meanings behind some of the DAR chapters’ interesting names.

The namesake of the John Lynch Chapter, Lynchburg, Va., established a ferry service on the James River, making it possible for Colonial villages in Northern Virginia to access the important trading center of New London. The ferry service remained profitable for many years, and by the end of the American Revolution, the village at Lynch’s Ferry had become an important center of trade. By the 1780s, bateaux were transporting tobacco down the James River to Richmond, and Lynch’s Ferry had expanded to include a tobacco warehouse, a tavern and a mill. In late 1784, Lynch petitioned the General Assembly of Virginia for a town charter. In October 1786, the charter was granted, and the town of Lynchburg was founded.

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Does your chapter name have an unusual story behind it? E-mail a description to americanspirit@dar.org.
The Half Had Not Been Told Me: African Americans on Lafayette Square
Decatur House on Lafayette Square, Washington, D.C., through March 1, 2009
This groundbreaking exploration of African-American history on Lafayette Square features never-before-displayed relics such as Frederick Douglass’ cane, an Elizabeth Keckley quilt fashioned from scraps of dresses she made for Mary Todd Lincoln and a portrait of African-American opera star Lillian Evanti. The exhibit includes an audio tour of the Decatur House, as well as its slave quarters. For more information, visit www.decaturhouse.org.

Headed to the White House
National Constitution Center, Philadelphia, Pa., through January 1, 2009
In November, Americans will have the opportunity to vote in a historic presidential election—but have you ever wondered what goes on behind the scenes during a candidate’s long, often bumpy road to the White House? The “Headed to the White House” exhibit uses interactive presentations to introduce visitors to the 2008 candidates, the electoral process, the history of presidential elections and more. For more information, visit www.constitutioncenter.org.

Yorktown Victory Celebration
Yorktown Victory Center, Williamsburg, Va., October 18–19, 2008
To honor the 227th anniversary of the pivotal Revolutionary War victory at Yorktown, Va., on Oct. 19, 1781, the Yorktown Victory Center will hold a weekend of military life and artillery demonstrations. Visitors can enroll in “A School for the Soldier” to experience life in the Continental Army firsthand, try on uniforms and learn to use wooden muskets in addition to other hands-on military activities. The National Park Service also will hold special programs at Yorktown Battlefield. For more information, visit www.historyisfun.org.

Answers to the quiz on page 10.
1. The record for the longest period without sleep is 18 days, 21 hours and 40 minutes, according to the National Sleep Research Project. 2. Approximately 70 million Americans suffer from sleeping problems. 3. Most experts say seven to nine hours of sleep are required for optimum performance. 4. Before the lightbulb was invented in 1879, people slept an average of 10 hours per night. 5. Today, Americans average 6.9 hours of sleep per night.
The TSDAR Stitching for Scholarships Project invites Texas chapters to contribute quilt squares that portray their unique area of the state. The squares will be pieced together to form beautiful quilts that will be voiced off to Texas members and residents for educational scholarships.

www.tsdar.org
A new history reveals the intrigue behind the building of the nation’s capital.

L’Enfant’s Vision

Anyone familiar with the sprawling megalopolis known as Northern Virginia knows that it grew like kudzu over farms and woods from the seat of power, Washington, D.C. The District of Columbia, a 10-mile by 10-square-mile diamond, is the butt of late-night TV show jokes and a target of talk radio outrage, where it is more often known as “Inside the Beltway.”

It’s hard to imagine that this was once all forests and fields, streams and springs—a rural, almost wild spot chosen more than 200 years ago for the noble capital of a revolutionary experiment in government.

Les Standiford’s new book, Washington Burning: How a Frenchman’s Vision for Our Nation’s Capital Survived Congress, the Founding Fathers, and the Invading British Army (Random House, 2008), traces the fascinating history behind selecting the site and designing the plan for America’s capital, and how the vision of its architect, Pierre L’Enfant, survived even after the British burned the city to the ground in 1814—an act Standiford describes as the first major international terrorist attack on U.S. soil.

Washington Burning is a good argument for teaching the stories that constitute history, not just the facts. More than two centuries of mythmaking have put a dull patina of solemn nobility and rectitude on the popular image of our early history. Books such as this go beyond the surface and reveal the blemishes and brilliance of real people in real situations.

The battle over where to locate the permanent capital and what it was to look like is itself almost a book. It seems hard to believe now, but the issue threatened to divide the shaky new nation into northern, southern and western factions. Various proponents fought for and against locations from Virginia to New England. Standiford explains how the issue collided with equally divisive issues such as federal assumption of war debts and the creation of a national bank. The combination forced President George Washington to engage in delicate political compromise to hold the nation together.

Washington’s patronage made him the natural choice for designing the new permanent capital.

But L’Enfant’s ego and artistic temperament repeatedly caused problems that drove his supporters and colleagues beyond the edge of patience. L’Enfant regarded Washington as his patron, and he tended to disregard or deflect orders from middlemen such as the presidential commission appointed to oversee design and construction of the capital.

Ultimately, L’Enfant’s insistence on doing things his way led to a showdown with Washington, Thomas Jefferson and the project’s oversight commission that led to his resignation in 1792.

A number of architects and builders succeeded L’Enfant, basing their work on his original grand design. Most came into conflict with the commissioners or other officials and left in a huff, while construction continued at a slow pace. Money was always a problem; chronic cost overruns plagued the project and inspired familiar rhetoric about waste, fraud, cost cutting and new taxes.

When the War of 1812 erupted, the Capitol building remained unfinished. James and Dolley Madison occupied the President’s House. Washington City was still a rawbowned place to live, and it was thought, held no strategic importance for the British Army. Standiford compares the attack on Washington City to the World Trade Center terrorist attack of September 11, 2001—the assault was meant to terrify and punish the upstart nation.

It did, but it also hardened American resolve and, Standiford argues, created a fondness for the city that had been largely absent before. As a result, although the vote was close, Congress rejected proposals to relocate the capital, and much of L’Enfant’s vision eventually became reality.

The author also unveils a complicated web of lobbying on the part of local boosters of various sites that forced Washington to act “like a real estate developer” hoping to play competing interests against each other to get a good price on land. One booster went so far as to publicly urge members of Congress to buy land in his favored tract, to encourage others to buy land and coincidentally make a tidy profit.

The star of the project—and Standiford’s book—was the French architect L’Enfant. Having matured at the Court of Versailles, he embraced America and its Revolution and became a protégé of Washington’s. A man of immense talent, a consuming vision and a large ego, L’Enfant renovated Federal Hall in New York City as the United States’ first Capitol building. That success and...
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In the 1830s, people from the East migrated West in search of adventure and new possibilities. In the region now known as Texas, Americans outnumbered Mexicans—a significant advantage for Anglo-Americans preparing to go to war with Mexico. The rebellion began in 1835.

On April 21, 1836, at the Battle of San Jacinto, General Sam Houston’s Texas army won independence from the Mexican Army led by Santa Anna. Only four months later, a pair of brothers from New York, real estate promoters Augustus C. and John K. Allen, paid $1.40 per acre for 6,642 acres near the headwaters of Buffalo Bayou. Their plan was to create a city where government and commerce would thrive. The city of Houston was founded.

The following year, Gen. Houston, the first president of the Republic of Texas, signed an act authorizing Houston to incorporate. The city remained the capital of the Republic until 1840. Texas earned statehood in 1846.

Throughout the next century, Houston grew and progressed. Industries multiplied and population skyrocketed. When oil was found at Spindletop in 1901, Houston’s path widened, paving the way for the city eventually to sit at the center of the oil industry.

Larger than Maryland, Houston is blessed with generous geography and natural resources that led to fast growth and formed an industrial and technological hub that just happens to be rich in history and culture. Early settlers came to the area for adventure and opportunity—opportunity, in fact, was the seed from which this port city grew more than 160 years ago.

“It’s a very modern city,” says Wallace Saage, curator of the Heritage Society, an organization dedicated to Houston’s historical preservation. “Europeans come in expecting cowboys and cactus, and they’re amazed by its culture.”
The Kellum-Noble House is a National Register property and a recorded Texas Historic Landmark. A massive restoration is in the works, but a slow, careful analysis must be completed before the full preservation plan can be put into place. The Nichols-Rice-Cherry House was the first house to be moved into the park in 1959. Originally built around 1850, the Greek Revival house was once owned by William Marsh Rice, who helped found Rice Institute (now Rice University). The San Felipe House was built at the southwestern edge of Houston in 1868 by German immigrants. Added to the park in 1962, it has been restored as a typical Texas cottage of the 1870s and serves as a major repository of furniture manufactured in Houston.

The Pillot family donated the mid-Victorian Pillot House to the Heritage Society in 1965. It showcases what is believed to be one of the first attached kitchens in Houston. German farmers built the St. John Church in 1891. The congregation donated the building to the Heritage Society in 1968, and it still has the original altar/pulpit and cedar-plank pews. The Old Place is a modest cabin and may be the oldest remaining structure in Harris County. The 17-room Staiti House was first owned by oil pioneer Henry T. Staiti and featured electricity and professional landscaping. It underwent a redesign in 1915 and was moved to Sam Houston Park in 1986. The Yates House is named for freed slave Jack Yates, who built the home in 1870. The home became a part of the Heritage Society collection in 1965. It showcases what is believed to be one of the first attached kitchens in Houston. German farmers built the St. John Church in 1891. The congregation donated the building to the Heritage Society in 1968, and it still has the original altar/pulpit and cedar-plank pews. The Old Place is a modest cabin and may be the oldest remaining structure in Harris County. The 17-room Staiti House was first owned by oil pioneer Henry T. Staiti and featured electricity and professional landscaping. It underwent a redesign in 1915 and was moved to Sam Houston Park in 1986. The Yates House is named for freed slave Jack Yates, who built the home in 1870. The home became a part of the Heritage Society collection in 1965.

Just a few years before NASA’s Manned Spacecraft Center moved to Houston in 1962, the Kellum-Noble House, which sits on its original site in downtown Houston, was threatened with demolition. Built in 1847, the house became a symbol of the city’s past—an odd sight in a growing and thriving urban area. Local citizens came together to fight its demise, and the Heritage Society was formed. In 1958, the house opened as a museum whose purpose is to honor and celebrate Houston’s past as it works to preserve the city for the future.

**PRESERVING THE PAST**

The Heritage Society Museum, part of the Heritage Society campus in Sam Houston Park, was created to preserve Houston’s history. Exhibits include paintings, early and rare Texas furniture and a permanent exhibit of American cut glass. Also on site is Duncan General Store, an exact replica of the area. Local citizens came together to fight its demise, and the Heritage Society was formed. In 1958, the house opened as a museum whose purpose is to honor and celebrate Houston’s past as it works to preserve the city for the future.

Among the museum’s special programs during the International Quilt Festival (see story on page 22) will be 17 quilts from the permanent collection on view in the bedrooms of seven of the historic structures in Sam Houston Park. The quilts are primarily patchwork and crazy quilts from the 19th century.

Throughout the year, the Heritage Museum houses mostly rotating exhibits. “We do tours, but if a larger group wants a private tour, it needs to make reservations,” Saage says.

The Heritage Society also oversees a popular collection of historic structures that rest on the expansive green space of Sam Houston Park. “They cover all ethnicities,” Saage says, explaining that each house represents a period in Houston’s history.

**EXPLORING HOUSTON’S MUSEUM DISTRICT**

Houston’s Museum District is home to a collection of 18 diverse museums. The Buffalo Soldiers National Museum honors African-American soldiers and their accomplishments from the Revolutionary War to the present day. Holocaust victims and survivors are remembered and honored at the Holocaust Museum Houston.

At the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, more than 45,000 pieces make up one of the largest collections in the country. The campus includes two museum buildings, two art schools, two decorative arts centers and a sculpture garden. The
Bayou Bend Collection features a furniture exhibit of pieces by John Townsend, John and Thomas Seymour, John Henry Belter and Benjamin Latrobe. Works by John James Audubon and Nathaniel Currier are also showcased, as are paintings by John Singleton Copley, Charles Willson Peale, Gilbert Stuart and Thomas Sully. Tucker porcelain from the 19th century highlights the ceramics exhibit.

The Byzantine Fresco Chapel Museum invites visitors to tour a display of the only intact Byzantine frescoes in the Western Hemisphere, both from the 13th century. Considered one of the most important private collections of the 20th century, the Menil Collection brings together 15,000 paintings, sculptures, drawings and rare books. The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston showcases local to international art from the past 40 years.

At the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, visitors can explore exhibits of fiber, glass, clay, metal and wood crafts. Houston is also home to Rice University Art Gallery, the only university museum in the country devoted to installation art. At the Children’s Museum of Houston, young visitors can participate in hands-on activities in 14 galleries.

The cultures of Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia and Silesia are celebrated at the Czech Cultural Center Houston. Religion, art and architecture come together at Rothko Chapel, an ecumenical chapel, museum and forum.

The Houston Museum of Natural Science includes the Burke Baker Planetarium and the Cockrell Butterfly Center, as well as permanent and traveling exhibitions. The Weather Research Center established the Weather Museum, which educates visitors about weather, its history and public safety. The work of noted psychologist Carl Jung is continued at the Jung Center of Houston, a hub of educational programs and community services. An art gallery and bookstore are on site. Houston is also home to the Health Museum—the most visited health museum in the country that features interactive exhibits.

For more information on things to do in Houston during the International Quilt Festival and year-round, explore www.visithoustontexas.com or call (800) 4–HOUSTON.

Amy Cates is a freelance writer based in Birmingham, Ala.
No other art form is quite as feminine, or historically quite so necessary for survival, as the art of quilting. This fall at the Houston International Quilt Festival, the Daughters of the American Revolution will showcase a number of quilts that kept early American families warm in the winter—and to this day display an authentic artistic heritage.

By Nancy Mann Jackson
Photography by Mark Gulezian
Family history suggests this quilt was made by Betsey Harper and friends in Lynchburg, Va., after the death of Andrew Jackson in 1845. The inscribed date of 1815 celebrates his victory that year at the Battle of New Orleans.
“Quilts represent both an artistic and a cultural heritage from our foremothers,” says Nancy O’Bryant, executive vice president of Quilts Inc., which produces the festival. “In Colonial America, textiles were critically important in daily life.”

The fact that Colonial homes were poorly heated or, in many cases, unheated, meant that warm bedcovers were vital for warmth and comfort, and the large families of the day meant a large amount of bedcovers were required, according to O’Bryant.

“Many women turned quilting into a means of beautifying their homes and artistic expression,” she continues. “By exhibiting both the finest examples of antique and contemporary quilt art at our shows, we are providing tangible evidence of the link between generations of quilters—the link between our past and our future through an art form that has largely been the province of women.”

When members of the Texas State Society DAR asked representatives of Quilts Inc. if they’d be interested in showcasing the DAR quilts at the festival, the idea seemed like a natural fit. The two organizations share common goals that will be addressed through this joint exhibit. “The DAR quilt exhibit perfectly embodies the three goals of DAR: historic preservation, education and patriotism,” says Lynn Young, Texas State Regent.

“I’m excited because the DAR quilt exhibit promotes the preservation of a part of our American heritage that is very connected to our families and is connected generationally,” says Jill Brooks, exhibit co-chair for the Texas State Society. “Perhaps because it’s tactile, there seems to be something special about quilting and the fact that it’s passed down through generations. There’s a comfort factor involved.”

“The DAR Presents: Quilts of a Young Country,” will mark a rare appearance of a large number of such quilts from the DAR collection outside of Washington, D.C. The exhibit will make its debut at the world’s largest quilting event, which draws about 55,000 visitors each year.

Mary Rooker Norris sewed this genealogy framed medallion quilt for her granddaughter and namesake in 1846. • Floral vines grow from each corner of this framed medallion appliqué quilt made by Eliza McKee in 1836. • Crafted by Lucy Kemper West around 1850, this appliqué quilt displays pomegranates, carnations and cockscobs, popular quilt motifs of the time period. • This mid-19th century album quilt was made for Thomas Sykes, a Quaker, by his friends and family, many of whom signed the quilt.
Wholecloth Quilt

This quilt was sewn by a member of the Vedder family of upstate New York in 1750–1775. The pheasant and pomegranate indigo-resist print shown here has survived in a number of quilts and fragments.
The Quilts

The “comfort factor” is evident, even though the quilts have been stored in the DAR Museum for years. When displayed, they still evoke a sense of warmth and home, in addition to unique artistry and history. The DAR collection includes more than 300 quilts and counterpanes—more than half dating to before 1850. For the Houston quilt festival, curators chose 20 of the collection’s “finest examples of many different techniques and design styles seen in American quilting in the early years of our country,” says Alden O’Brien, the DAR Museum’s curator of costumes and textiles. Among the quilts chosen for the exhibit is one made in Texas that will be “coming home for the festival,” she says. Made by Mary Deloach Sneed of Waco, it dates to about 1860 and features a design of 12 fruit baskets filled with oranges and apples.

The earliest quilt in the exhibit is also the earliest in the DAR collection, made in the mid-18th century by a member of the Vedder family in upstate New York. The unique feature of this quilt is its fabric, which is a resist-printed indigo in two shades of blue. “The fabric could have been printed in America, as indigo dyeing was being done in New York at this time,” O’Brien says.

The exhibit includes five early 19th-century “framed medallion” appliqué quilts, one of which was made by Mary Taylor Lloyd Key, the wife of Francis Scott Key. Houstonians have a special place in their hearts for Key, not only because he composed “The Star-Spangled Banner,” but also because he once represented the city’s namesake, Sam Houston, in court. The quilt dates to about 1840 and includes hundreds of tiny triangles and five complex mariner’s compass patterns—a design that “will impress any viewer, regardless of its notable maker,” O’Brien says.

One “album quilt” included in the exhibit was made to commemorate Andrew Jackson’s 1815 victory at the Battle of New Orleans. “It contains floral wreaths, baskets and the typical red-and-green-dominated color scheme characteristic of the Baltimore album style,” O’Brien says. “Several signatures of Baltimore residents are found on it, although it was probably made in Virginia. One square quotes Jackson’s egalitarian statement: ‘The blessing of government, like the dews of heaven, should be equally dispersed on the rich and the poor.’ ”

Other quilts in the exhibit hail from Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, New Jersey and Ohio.

The Festival

While the DAR quilt exhibit offers plenty to appreciate and learn, the Quilt Festival also includes a number of other exhibits, classes, lectures and special events. Visitors will be able to shop at more than 1,100 booths with more than 2,200 quilts, dolls and pieces of wearable art, and choose from more than 390 hands-on classes and 32 lectures.

Beginner to advanced quilters can learn from a faculty of 148 experienced teachers about every aspect of quilting, as well as other subjects including: wearable art; original cloth doll making; fabric dyeing, painting and printing; fusing; foiling; edge finishing; home décor; needle felting; bead embroidery; hands-on longarm machine classes; crazy quilting; basket weaving; rotary cutting; color; digital photography; and hand and machine embroidery.

DAR Involvement

Bringing the DAR quilt collection to Houston for the International Quilt Festival is not an easy feat, and DAR members from across the state of Texas have partnered to make it happen. The exhibit, which involves expensive caretaking and transportation for the preserved quilts, will be entirely funded by the Texas State Society, which has elicited donations and received grants from a variety of sources. In addition, members from across the state have volunteered to serve as docents for the exhibit.

Texas Chapters have also collaborated to produce the exhibit’s companion Stitching for Scholarships project. Through this project, chapter members from around the state are contributing quilt squares that portray their own areas of the state. The squares will be pieced together to form quilts that will be
voiced off to Texas members and residents for educational scholarships.

“Each of the nearly 200 chapters in Texas has been invited to make a quilt square as part of the Stitching for Scholarships program,” Mrs. Young says. “Working together to design and make a quilt square indicative of their area has reinvigorated many of our chapters.”

In fact, participation has been so great that organizers predict the program will produce five quilts. “This program is bringing together our membership in ways we never anticipated,” Mrs. Brooks says.

**Community Involvement**

Members of the Texas State Society are understandably excited about the exhibit, but they’re not the only ones. In fact, the entire Houston community has joined together to help promote the event.

For instance, the Clayton Library Center for Genealogical Research, one of the top genealogy research libraries in the United States, is partnering with Houston-area embroiderers, quilters and fiber artists and local DAR chapters to present a fiberwork exhibit, “The Threads of Families,” which will be available for viewing throughout October at the Clayton Library Center. The pieces on display will be contemporary fiberworks that reflect family history, such as a family sampler with dates on it, a quilt with an appliquéd family tree or other fiber pieces that represent the generations in some form. The library will also offer a lecture, “Passing on Family History Through Threads—Fiberwork Heirlooms,” during October.

The Heritage Society at Sam Houston Park, which includes the Heritage Society Museum and a variety of historic homes and structures, has also designed special programs to coincide with the DAR International Quilt Festival debut. Seventeen quilts from the museum’s permanent collection will be displayed in the bedrooms of seven historic structures in the park, and the Heritage Society is creating a brochure about the quilts and their locations for festival attendees.

Community support for the event also extends into city government. “I have recently had the opportunity to become better acquainted with the Daughters of the American Revolution and have a great appreciation for their historic preservation work,” says Houston Mayor Bill White. “I like that they are very interested in history, but they are not living in the past. They are very much today’s DAR. Their exhibit at the International Quilt Festival is a perfect example, combining the very threads of our past with the fabric of a dynamic, highly spirited organization of doers.”

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*Poppy Quilt*

Crafted by Lucy Howland Bassett Thatcher of Lee, Mass., around 1820, this quilt’s linen binding creates a diamond effect through a series of folds.

*Key Quilt*

This intricately designed quilt was sewn by Mary Tayloe Lloyd Key, wife of Francis Scott Key.
Young Patriots in the American Revolution

by Lena Anthony

EBENEZER FOX was one of the thousands of colonists who fought for the Patriot cause in the Revolutionary War. He enlisted in the Continental Army in 1778 and served three tours—the last one ending after the Treaty of Paris was signed in 1783. He was detained as a prisoner once. Escaping prison, he voluntarily enlisted in the British Army and worked as a barber for British officers in Jamaica until defecting and re-enlisting in the Continental Army. It was an adventurous war career, for sure, but certainly not notable—until you consider he was only 15.

Born in 1763, Fox was among the youngest Patriots fighting for freedom. During the Revolutionary War, many boys and girls—some as young as 11 and 12—played important roles in America’s fight for independence. Some were messengers or spies, covertly conveying important information to their Patriot leaders. Others were merely witnesses to war, cooking and cleaning for soldiers at war camps. Their tasks varied, but their bravery was constant.

Thirst for Excitement

By the time that Fox joined the Continental Army in 1778, he had already had his fair share of adventures. In 1775, revolution was in the air, and it was rubbing off on 12-year-old Fox, who had been away from home working as a farmhand since the age of 7. He was ready for a change, and what better time to make that change than on the brink of war?

“We made a direct application of the doctrines we daily heard, in relation to the oppression of our mother country, to our own circumstances,” Fox later recalled in his memoir, *The Adventures of Ebenezer Fox in the Revolutionary War* (1847). “I thought that I was doing myself great injustice by remaining in bondage, when I ought to go free; and that the time was come, when I should liberate myself from the thrall-dom of others, and set up a government of my own.”

So on April 18, 1775, the eve of the Battles of Lexington and Concord, Fox and a friend ran away from Roxbury, Mass. Their destination was Providence, R.I., where they planned to find work as sailors. Of course, at the moment, they didn’t realize their unfortunate timing. “As we were too young to be very well informed in regard to coming events, and we were ignorant of the great plans in agitation, our fears induced us to think that the uncommon commotion that appeared to prevail must have some connexion with our escape, and that the moving multitudes we saw were in pursuit of us,” Fox wrote.

Once in Providence, Fox immediately found work as a cabin boy aboard a ship headed to the Caribbean. When the ship returned to Providence, the young sailor found himself in the midst of war. As Fox’s ship approached the bay, the British intercepted it. Most of the crew jumped ship immediately, but Fox stalled briefly as he considered an order from his captain. “Supposing that I should be unable to reach the shore by swimming, [he] kindly advised me to remain on board with him and be taken prisoner,” Fox wrote. “I hesitated a short time about taking his advice, but finally concluded to run the risk of being drowned.”

Fox made it to shore safely, and, undeterred, set out to sea again—this time avoiding any confrontations with the British. He eventually moved to Boston, where he settled into the life of a barber’s apprentice. But his thirst for excitement came back. “The spirit of adventure had been suppressed, but not destroyed, within me,” Fox wrote. “The monotonous duties of the shop grew irksome; and I longed for some employment productive of variety.”

So when the barber was reluctantly drafted into the Continental Army in 1778, Fox, then 15 years old and technically too young to fight, offered to go in his place.

Motives for Enlisting

It’s unclear how many American boys enlisted in the army, but the number was likely high, according to Ray Raphael in *A People’s History of the American Revolution* (New Press, 2001). “Military recruiters took who they could get,” he writes. “In those days, with roughly 50 percent of the population under 16 and most of the
men over 20 already supporting families, teenagers constituted a disproportionate share of the available males."

Boys under 16 weren’t allowed to enlist in the army, but that didn’t stop these underage boys from trying—or preclude recruiters from looking the other way. “Eager to accept any stout lad who was willing to bend the truth, recruiters rarely asked for proof of age,” Raphael writes.

The young boys’ motives for joining were varied. Some joined because they were poor and needed the money—anyone who would enlist for three years received “$20, a new suit of clothes and 100 acres of land throughout the duration of the war,” Raphael writes.

Some joined because they were wildly patriotic or simply sought adventure—whether in war or not. Like Fox, Jeremiah Greenman of Newport, R.I., was looking for excitement when he joined the state militia in 1775. But the 17-year-old didn’t exactly find what he was looking for. Instead, according to Raphael, “Jeremiah Greenman, George Washington, and thousands of other boys and men would spend the summer of 1775 camped on the outskirts of Boston, where they demonstrated their determination to fight for their rights.”

"Never having beheld such a sight before, I felt very much frightened and would have given the world if I had not enlisted as a soldier."

John Greenwood wrote of the aftermath of Bunker Hill

Greenman kept a journal throughout his war career, but Raphael notes that he "wrote nothing about his time around Boston—perhaps because there was little to say. It was a time of waiting... With armed combats sparse, few soldiers had any 'hair-breadth 'scapes' to report to their friends. Deaths were accidental, not heroic."

For others, joining the Continental Army was just the thing to do. Fifteen-year-old Joseph Plumb Martin of Becket, Mass., enlisted in 1775. "He was a young male in Revolutionary America," Raphael writes. "It was peer pressure pure and simple."

That’s also what pushed John Greenwood, who was 15 when he enlisted, into the Continental Army. In April 1775, Greenwood was living with an uncle in Maine, while his family was in Boston. When word arrived of the Battles of

John Greenwood was a 15-year-old soldier when he witnessed the bloody Battle of Bunker Hill, June 17, 1775. Lithograph by Nathaniel Currier.
Lexington and Concord and the escalating war, Greenwood became worried about his family’s safety and wanted to see them. Despite his uncle’s forbiddance, he set off to Boston by himself. Poor and hungry, Greenwood stopped in taverns along the way to play his fife—which he had learned to play when he was 8 or 9 years old—in exchange for food and a place to sleep. The plan worked. Greenwood made it all the way to Charlestown, Mass., just across the river from Boston, but couldn’t take another step. “The Americans would not allow him to go any farther,” writes Jack Coggins in *Boys in the Revolution* (Stackpole Books, 1967). “The British had already been penned up inside the city and the siege of Boston was beginning. After spending a few days with the American army, which was not yet a regular, organized military force, John enlisted for eight months as a fifer.”

For Betsy Drowdy, doing her part—as a spy in 1780 and 1781—was a product of revenge, writes Kendall Haven in *Voices of the American Revolution* (Libraries Unlimited, 2000). The 15-year-old North Carolina farm girl’s brother died during the Battle of Waxhaws—and Drowdy blamed the British. “Betsy was devastated and swore revenge against the British,” Haven writes. “Two of her distant uncles joined the Tory militia. Betsy was able to talk—lie—her way into a housekeeping job at Cornwallis’ winter home by using their names as references and pretending that they were close relatives of hers and that she was a loyal Tory.”

**The Reality of War**

For the young Patriots who found themselves on the front lines, the promise of adventure and excitement quickly turned into the reality of war, which included near starvation, blistered feet and real danger.

Take the military career of Israel Trask, for example. Trask first volunteered for military service at age 10. He served two tours with the Massachusetts militia and then enlisted as a privateer in 1775 at age 12. “Before the war was over, he had made 10 voyages on privateers and naval vessels,” writes John C. Dann in *The Revolution Remembered* (University of Chicago Press, 1980). “He participated in the

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**IN HIS FOOTSTEPS**

**FOR THE PAST** 40 Octobers, American history buffs in Gloucester County, N.J., have laced up their running shoes for the annual Jonas Cattell Run, which commemorates the almost 10-mile trek 18-year-old Jonas Cattell took October 22, 1777, to warn American troops at Fort Mercer of an impending attack by the Hessians.

The commemorative run, which takes place October 26 this year, starts in Haddonfield, N.J., where Cattell had been working in a blacksmith’s shop the night of the attack, and ends at Red Bank Battlefield National Park at the site of Fort Mercer. Last year, for her New Jersey Society Children of the American Revolution state president’s project, Jacquelyn Castarino of Haddonfield raised more than $3,000 and worked with the New Jersey Department of Transportation to design and place permanent markers along Cattell’s path. The process took 10 months, and the markers were unveiled at the 2007 Jonas Cattell Run. The DAR Junior American Citizens Committee awarded Miss Castarino’s project first in the nation for community service. Miss Castarino chose the project not just to bring attention to a local hero, but also to remind today’s youth that they’re capable of making a difference. “Everyone thinks history is just about the greats like George Washington, but it’s also the little people like Jonas Cattell who keep us free,” she says. “He was a teenager just like me and his bravery saved a lot of lives.”
disastrous Penobscot Expedition [the largest naval expedition of the war], was captured three times, impressed into the British service once, and exchanged twice. In 1782 he and some companions managed to escape from a prison ship.

But it’s possible that no young Patriot knows more about real danger than Ebenezer Fox, who, in December 1779, was sent to the Jersey, the notorious British prison ship anchored off Long Island that was nicknamed “Hell” by its inhabitants.

In February 1779, while on his second tour, Fox signed on with the naval ship the Protector. His expeditions aboard the ship had been either calm or victorious. But one August day, the Protector ran out of luck when two British frigates that had been tracking the American ship finally caught up. The British came aboard, robbing everyone before deciding what to do with them.

Some were recruited to fight or work for the British. The others, including Fox, were shipped to the Jersey.

Life on the prison ship was a physical and mental challenge for Fox. Space was dark, cramped and musty, and the food was scarce, not to mention rotten.

“The bread was mouldy, and filled with worms,” Fox wrote, adding, “All the filth that accumulated among upwards of a thousand men was daily thrown overboard, and would remain there till carried away by the tide. The impurity of the water may be easily conceived; and in this water our meat was boiled.”

Fox managed to escape his inevitable death on the Jersey by enlisting in the British service. “There was a hope,” Fox wrote, “that, by voluntarily enlisting, we should obtain a degree of confidence, which would result in affording us an opportunity of deserting, and thereby regaining our liberty.”

Later, Fox fled Kingston, Jamaica, where his British regiment was located, traveling at night with a group of fellow deserters to reach the north shore of the island, where they could escape to Cuba. From Cuba, they went to Haiti, where they joined an American frigate bound for France. “With mingled feelings of happiness, gratitude and pride, I entered into the service of my country once more,” Fox recalled.

**Young Patriots’ Legacies**

After the Treaty of Paris ended the war, Fox went back to what he knew best—cutting hair—and opened his own barbershop at the age of 21. Today, he is best known not for his role in the Revolutionary War, but for being the father of modern dentistry.

These young Patriots may have lacked experience, but they had enough foresight to realize the significance of their roles in the founding of America. In 1809, 1830 and 1847 respectively, John Greenwood, Joseph Plumb Martin and Ebenezer Fox published firsthand accounts of their adventures, offering today’s readers a unique perspective on the war, as well as a reminder that even though these Patriots were brave, they were still just innocent children.

Dunn writes of Israel Trask, whose pension application in 1845 included a description of his service: “He was a normal 10-year-old boy, excited by army life, and he noticed and records the sorts of things that would impress anyone of his age—not only the military events of the siege itself, but a great snowball fight between frontiersmen and New England sailors, and the imprisonment and public disgrace of two deserters. Washington seemed to him almost supernatural.”

*Lena Anthony is a contributing editor.*
On the eve of the American Revolution, with the powder smoke from Lexington and Concord wafting rebellion across the American Colonies, the first Continental Congress embarked on an audacious plan to make Canada the 14th Colony.

By Bill Hudgins
Whether by diplomacy or arms, Congress hoped to neutralize the threat of an invasion from the north that could divide troublesome New England from the rest of the Colonies and also to prevent American Indian allies of the British from harassing and raiding northern settlements. The plan failed and provoked a counterthrust that nearly realized Congress’ worst nightmares. Ultimately, though, the aftermath of the campaign triggered events that enabled the Colonies to win their independence and helped Canada become an independent member of the future British Commonwealth.

When Congress looked at the invasion of Canada, it was looking for leverage to force Great Britain to cave in. If we took Canada, the British might decide they had bitten off more than they could chew.”

Dr. John Ferling

When word of the act reached America, it touched off vehement protests. Furor erupted over the sanctioning of Catholicism (which provoked anger in England, as well), and also over what the Americans saw as a land grab designed to keep them bottled up. Although not a part of the Coercive (Intolerable) Acts passed after the Boston Tea Party—intended to punish Massachusetts for its truculent behavior and to quash rebellion in the other Colonies—the Quebec Act became associated with them and thus helped fuel the Revolution.

In 1774, believing that dissatisfaction with the act could be fanned into rebellion, the first Continental Congress invited “the oppressed inhabitants of the province of Quebec” to send delegates to the Congress, MacLeod wrote. Congress sent 2,000 copies of a propaganda pamphlet to a sympathetic merchant in Montreal, Thomas Walker, who tried to drum up interest among both the French and English. These pamphlets were making the rounds in Montreal when the Battles of Lexington and Concord raised the stakes far higher.

Preparing for Battle

At that time, most of Canada’s population lived in what are now the provinces of Quebec and Montreal. Great Britain had only a small defensive force stationed in Canada, and it would take weeks to summon reinforcements. If the Americans could field a sizable army, they stood a chance of subduing Canada.

Congress probably did not intend to make Canada a permanent part of an independent America, says Dr. John Ferling, a professor of history at the University of West Georgia.
“When Congress looked at the invasion of Canada, it was looking for leverage to force Great Britain to cave in,” Ferling says. “If we took Canada, the British might decide they had bitten off more than they could chew.”

“Beyond that, Congress was trying to close the back door” to invasion down Lake Champlain into the heart of New England. British, American Indian and Canadian fighters could also swing west to harass frontier settlements and disrupt trade. There was a long history of the French arming their American Indian allies to attack the frontiers. Taking Canada would help neutralize that threat, Ferling says.

A Window of Opportunity

The Americans needed to take Quebec before Canada’s brutal winter caught them in the open. If they could secure the capital in time, the St. Lawrence River would freeze until late the next spring. That would delay Britain’s reinforcing her small army, and give the Americans time to prepare to fight reinforcements when they did arrive.

Congress gave command of the invasion army to General Phillip Schuyler, who was to take the “Northern Army” up Lake Champlain and on to Quebec. But when he arrived at Ticonderoga to take charge, he found many of the 2,500 men unfit for duty. They lacked food, ammunition and clothing—nor did they have boats to take them north.

Schuyler was talented in logistics and administration; he soon had men building boats, and supplies and recruits on the way. For weeks he delayed the invasion with excuses of needing more provisions as well as of ill health, but his time ran out when Washington, who was besieging Boston, delivered the order for the reluctant general to get moving.

Washington also detached about 1,000 men from his siege army to proceed toward Quebec through Maine under the command of then-Colonel Benedict Arnold.

Schuyler’s army got under way in late August, but under General Richard Montgomery. Second-in-command to Schuyler, Montgomery chafed under the delays and realized their chances of success were dwindling. As ill-equipped as they were, the American forces nevertheless outnumbered the British and captured Montreal and many British soldiers. By late fall, they had “reduced the territory controlled by the British to a tiny patch of land inside the walls of Quebec. Yet the American siege was in trouble before it began,” MacLeod notes.

Winter was coming, supplies were low and the men were sick and exhausted from their trek. However, Ferling notes, the “torments they had endured paled against those that Arnold’s army had suffered” in reaching Quebec in mid-November.

Arnold’s force had lost much of its food and other supplies due to the men’s lack of experience with bateaux—the narrow, flat-bottomed boats that became the logistical workhorses of Revolutionary armies. Maine was a rugged, densely forested wilderness whose river rapids battered the bateaux and the men, and whose terrain made portages a living hell.

A battalion of 450 men under Lieutenant Colonel Roger Enos defected in the middle of the trek, taking half of the meager supply of food. Men boiled candles with whatever they could forage or hunt to ease their hunger, according to Arthur S. Lefkowitz in Benedict Arnold’s Army: The 1775 American Invasion of Canada during the Revolutionary War (Savas Beatie, 2008).

When Montgomery finally rendezvoused with Arnold at Quebec in early December, the two armies amounted to only about a third of the men who had set out. They outnumbered the British force, but the Americans’ situation was grim.

“Quebec was a pretty formidable place to assault,” Ferling says. The American armies numbered fewer than 10 percent of the British force in 1759. And it was certain that the British would not emulate their vanquished French foes and come out to fight in the open.

Top to bottom, Richard Montgomery; Benedict Arnold; Map of the 270-plus-mile route through a Maine wilderness that was followed by Arnold’s army in the unsuccessful American attempt to take Quebec in 1775.
The American force was too small to blockade the city and, Ferling writes, Montgomery guessed correctly that Carleton had enough supplies to last the winter. Many of the American soldiers' enlistments expired on January 1, and it seemed unlikely that they would re-enlist. The Americans had to attack.

A Long, Hard Winter

The assault came early on December 31, in the middle of a snowstorm. The plan was for Arnold to attack from the north and Montgomery from the south. They were to meet in the city and jointly fight their way into its walled section.

Almost nothing went as planned. The city’s defenses were too strong, and the American forces too disorganized, ill equipped and poorly trained. The British lost only 18 men, but the Americans had 60 dead and more than 400 taken prisoner. Montgomery was killed and Arnold severely wounded.

The Americans spent the miserable winter outside the city. Cold, hunger and disease wrought more death among the American troops than British bullets, and chief among these pitiless slayers was smallpox. It’s not clear where the army picked up the contagion, but it was with them at Quebec.

In May, Carleton’s reinforcements from England began arriving, and he immediately attacked, sending the enemy into retreat. The smallpox flared into full fury as they withdrew. Its victims included those who had survived the winter as well as reinforcements being sent north to bolster the faltering campaign. Sick, hungry and exhausted, the troops camped around St. John’s and Fort Chambly, which they had captured the previous fall.

While in command of the army, Arnold had permitted the army’s doctors to inoculate those who wished it. After General John Thomas, who in private life was a doctor from New York, took command in early May, he forbade using the still-new and controversial procedure. Thomas ordered “that it should be death for any person to inoculate,” according to Caroline Cox in A Proper Sense of Honor: Service and Sacrifice in George Washington’s Army.

Army doctors such as Lewis Beebe seethed as they saw men sicken and die. The dead included Thomas, who contracted smallpox and died on June 2, 1776, as Beebe watched helplessly. Smallpox raged on as the army straggled back to American soil, and it remained among the American soldiers captured and held in Canada at Fort Chambly.

Today, American and Canadian historians and veterans groups gather at Fort Chambly each year on June 2 to honor Thomas and 200 of his Dutchess County militia who are buried there.

A British detail discovered Gen. Richard Montgomery’s frozen body the day after the battle, and Gov. Guy Carleton, respecting this foe who had been an officer in the British Army, ordered a proper burial in Quebec.

Montgomery was the first American general officer killed in the war, and he was eulogized on both sides of the Atlantic, writes Hal Shelton in his biography General Richard Montgomery and the American Revolution: From Redcoat to Rebel (1996, NYU Press). When word of his death reached London, Edmund Burke rose in Parliament to offer a eulogy. In Canada, Gen. Benedict Arnold wrote that the loss of Montgomery caused the attempt on Quebec to fail. Gen. Phillip Schuyler, who was Montgomery’s commander, wrote “My feelings on this unhappy occasion are too poignant to admit of expression. May Heaven avert any further evils.”

Montgomery soon became a martyr to the cause of freedom and was invoked to stoke patriotic fervor, according to Shelton. In January 1776, Congress formed a committee that included Benjamin Franklin to determine how best to memorialize him. Subsequently, they commissioned a memorial marker from France. It was installed at St. Paul’s Church in New York City in 1787, as the first U.S. government monument to a fallen Revolutionary soldier. The general’s remains were later moved from Canada to a tomb beside the marker.
A 19th-century American wood engraving of American troops, led by Benedict Arnold, entering Quebec, November 1775.
American representatives include members of the Saranac DAR Chapter, the Montreal DAR Chapter, the Battle of Valcour Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, the Clinton County (N.Y.) Historical Association and the American Legion.

The Turning Point

The invasion had been crushed, but it was not the end of the story. In fact, the defeat proved to be a major turning point of the Revolution, Ferling says. "The most crucial part of the story is not the failure at Quebec in 1775 and 1776, but the delay they forced on the British in 1776," and the subsequent American victory at Saratoga, N.Y., in 1777.

Carleton decided to follow up his success at Quebec by invading New York. New York City had fallen to the British, and he hoped a second invasion would be the coup de grace to the rebellion. He began building a small navy to sail down Lake Champlain to attack Ticonderoga and Crown Point.

At the same time, however, Benedict Arnold persuaded Gen. Schuyler that the Americans should also build ships to defend the lake. There was little chance of victory, but Arnold hoped to delay the British advance to gain more time to defend New York.

It took Carleton until October to launch his attack, while Arnold's much smaller flotilla had already sailed north to await the British. Arnold engaged the larger fleet, battling to a stalemate as night fell. He withdrew into a bay, which Carleton blockaded in order to attack in the morning. Using muffled oars, Arnold's forces escaped during the night and fought another fierce delaying action the next day before abandoning their craft and retreating overland to the fort at Crown Point, N.Y.

The British pursued them and reached Crown Point, where Carleton stopped to await reinforcements instead of pressing on. However, a snowstorm arrived before the reinforcements. When Carleton's intelligence reported that Fort Ticonderoga was better defended and more secure than it actually was, he withdrew to Canada and postponed his attack until 1777.

Victory at Saratoga

By the time the British force was ready to renew its thrust in the spring, Carleton's political enemies in England had replaced him with General John Burgoyne. When Burgoyne began his march, he swept south, pushing the rebels back from Crown Point and Ticonderoga. The American forces
looked like easy pickings for the advancing Redcoats. However, they stunned Burgoyne, the British Empire and the Continent by defeating the British at the epic Battle of Saratoga in September and October 1777. The incredible victory buoyed spirits throughout the Colonies and helped persuade France to directly enter the war on the American side more than a year later.

“I see the decision to try to defend the lake as one of the turning points. If the British had successfully invaded upper New York, I don’t see how the Americans could have continued,” Ferling says.

The American defeat in Canada also changed perceptions on both sides that the war would be short. Congress realized that Montgomery’s campaign had been weakened fatally by the limited terms of enlistment originally used in the Continental Army. Shelton quotes a letter written by John Hancock that declares, in part, that the men’s “impatience to return home compelled him [Montgomery] to make the attack contrary to the conviction of his own judgment.” Congress decided to abolish limited enlistments, committing itself and the country to a long war.

But this new, long war for independence would require far more resources than the Colonies possessed. Their only sources of help against Britain were her hereditary foes, France and Spain. Neither stood to gain from reconciliation, but if America won her independence, her allies would strip Great Britain of valuable trade and shift the European balance of power against England, Ferling says. With the Declaration of Independence signed in 1776 and America victorious at Saratoga, the Revolution looked like it could succeed, and France joined the war.

The Canadian campaign also had profound implications for Canada, MacLeod says, with the failure of the invasion allowing that country to remain part of the British Empire. Canada offered haven for British loyalists after the Revolution, leading to a distinct shift in the population.

The Constitutional Act of 1791 split Quebec into Upper and Lower Canada (now Ontario and Quebec), each with an elected assembly and appointed legislative council that replaced the autocratic governorship. Eventually, Canada became a self-governing, independent dominion within the Commonwealth—and one of America’s closest allies.

Bill Hudgins explored George Washington’s distillery at Mt. Vernon for the May/June issue.

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FROM SPAIN TO THE HAVENS OF WASHINGTON IRVING

Sunnyside

THE HAVENS OF WASHINGTON IRVING
Best known today for his stories “Legend of Sleepy Hollow” and “Rip Van Winkle,” Washington Irving was one of the most famous men in the early to mid-19th century in both the United States and Europe. Called the “Father of the American short story,” he was the first American to earn his living as a writer and was a biographer of George Washington, Christopher Columbus and Mohammed.

By Sharon McDonnell

His renaissance man was also a diplomat in Spain and England—the first U.S. ambassador to Spain who spoke Spanish—and the first president of New York’s Astor Library. He also turned down a nomination for mayor of New York from the Tammany Society in 1838 and an offer of a cabinet post from President Martin Van Buren, and served as an honorary member of the Smithsonian Institution, one of a handful in the Smithsonian’s history.


Irving’s legacy also lives on in our English language. The term “Knickerbocker,” which became synonymous for a New Yorker and survives in the name of the New York Knicks basketball team, is derived from Irving’s pen name for his satire about early Dutch settlers, *A History of New York, Diedrich Knickerbocker*. He also dubbed New York City “Gotham” in *Salmagundi*, a satirical magazine he published with friends, and coined the phrases “the Almighty dollar” and “red tape” in a fictional account about Sunnyside, his home in Tarrytown, N.Y.
Considered one of the best examples of Romantic architecture in the United States, Sunnyside became so famous it was often portrayed in paintings and commercial illustrations—from ceramics and cigar boxes to sheet music—and described in written accounts in the 19th century. Ironically, the extremely cosmopolitan Irving, an expatriate who lived in Europe for more than 20 years, helped design the house called “America’s Home,” regarded by famous judge Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes as “the best known and most cherished of all the dwellings in our land” next to Mount Vernon.

Today, the splendidly preserved Sunnyside, which features many original furnishings and possessions from the Irving family, is owned and managed by Historic Hudson Valley.

CHOOSING WRITING OVER A LAW CAREER

Born to Scottish emigrants in 1783 in lower Manhattan as the youngest of 11 children, Irving met George Washington—after whom he was named—at age 5 (an event depicted in a watercolor by George Bernard Butler Jr.). It was in the Hudson River Valley’s Tarrytown, where he was once sent to escape a yellow fever epidemic in New York, that he first heard the Dutch legends that inspired many of his stories. The area’s beauty also inspired his dreams of living there one day.

Irving studied law, but also contributed to magazines and wrote his first book, A History of New-York, which was published when he was 26. This was the year his fiancee, Matilda Hoffman, died, leaving Irving to remain a lifelong bachelor. He went to England to work in his family’s export firm in Liverpool, but after it went bankrupt three years later, he turned to making his living as an author instead. A year later, The Sketch-Book, containing his “Sleepy Hollow” and “Rip Van Winkle” stories, was published in England to great acclaim.

Irving moved to Madrid in 1826, upon an invitation from the U.S. Minister to Spain, Alexander Everett, to help translate a life story of Columbus by a Spanish scholar. There he discovered “a country apart; severed in history, habits, manners and modes of thinking from all the rest of Europe,” and Spain became a subject of lifelong fascination for him.

“ Irving wrote some 3,000 pages and approximately one million words on Spain, amounting to about one-third of his total writings. To understand Irving we must recognize the importance of his interest in Spain,” notes Stanley T. Williams, editor of The Spanish Background of American Literature (Yale University Press, 1955).
The Irving path, designated as a major European cultural route by the European Union, was created by local tourism offices and The Legacy of al-Andalus, a nonprofit foundation, which together published a 200-page guidebook to make it easy to follow in Irving’s footsteps. The guidebook is also generously laced with quotes from Irving’s writings, color photographs and highlights on food, history and traditions.

Irving wrote that the exotic Oriental allure of Seville reminded him of “A Thousand and One Nights.” He researched his biography of Columbus in the Archives of the Indies and in its Cathedral, the world’s largest Gothic church and the only one with a former Muslim minaret, which was later topped with a Renaissance-style bell tower. Irving writes that the Moors, who ruled southern Spain for nearly 700 years, lent “a higher civilization, and a nobler style of thinking, into Gothic Spain.” After Seville’s reconquest by Christians in 1248, the Cathedral was built atop a 12th-century Great Mosque.

The nearby Royal Palace (Alcazar), ordered to be built in Moorish style by Spain’s Christian king, is a masterpiece of lace-like stucco work, multi-colored geometric tiles and patios, which Irving strolled by often.

In Alcalá de Guadaira, a town near Seville crowned by a 12th-century Moorish fortress, Irving, who enjoyed the local bread, took a stab at being a food critic: “The fountains of Alcalá are almost as praiseworthy as its ovens; in fact, the delicacy of the bread is largely due to the clarity, sweetness and purity of its waters.”

But it was in Loja, a town 25 miles from Granada, which Irving described as “wildly picturesque,” that he heard the folktales—like the one about Moorish kings hiding treasure in nearby caves—that so powerfully stirred his imagination.

Granada, where Moorish influence was strongest, utterly captivated Irving. It was the Moors’ last holdout before the army of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella drove them from Spain in 1492. “In the distance was romantic Granada, surmounted by the ruddy towers of the Alhambra, while far above it the snowy summits of the Sierra Nevada shone like silver,” Irving wrote of his first glimpse.

Irving rented rooms in the Palace of Charles V, a Renaissance-style building located within the Alhambra that was added in the 16th century after the Christian reconquest and today houses the Museum of Spanish-Muslim Art and Fine Arts. By day, he diligently did research in the university library and in private libraries for his book, The Conquest of Granada. By night, he swam in the outdoor reflecting pool of the Alhambra’s Courtyard of the Myrtles, in Comares Palace, the exquisite former residence of the sultan.

Of the Alhambra—considered one of the glories of Muslim civilization with its magnificent Courtyard of the Lions—Irving wrote: “To the traveler imbued with a feeling for the historical and poetical ... the Alhambra is as much an object of devotion as is the Caaba in Mecca to all true Muslims. How many legends and traditions ... are associated with this Oriental pile!” Sunset was the best time to visit, Irving noted, because it shed a “melancholy effulgence” on the Alhambra’s towers.

Strolling the Albaicín, the ancient Moorish quarter on a hill across from the Alhambra, Irving noted the lookout at the Church of St. Nicholas offered the “most beautiful sunsets in the world.” Today this town is still a picturesque maze of steep streets, handicraft workshops, taverns, restaurants and lookout points with panoramic views.
Leaving Granada, Irving likened his sadness to that of Boabdil, Spain’s last Moorish king, who after his defeat in 1492 “bade adieu to the paradise he left behind” and lived in exile in Morocco, across from the Straits of Gibraltar. In his farewell, Irving noted, “I paused to take a last look at Granada ... and thus ended one of the pleasantest dreams of a life which the reader perhaps may think has been too much made up of dreams.”

SUNNYSIDE: “A LITTLE PARADISE”

The Alhambra was published in 1832, and when Irving returned to New York that year after living abroad for 17 years, he was heartily welcomed with a testimonial dinner in his honor and an honorary degree from Harvard University as Doctor of Laws. Deciding to make a home in the Hudson Valley, which so charmed him as a child, he bought an 18th-century, two-room Dutch cottage and 10 acres in Tarrytown on the banks of the Hudson River in 1835. “It is a beautiful spot,” he wrote, “capable of being made a little paradise.”

Expanding the house in stages, he added an eclectic assortment of Dutch, Scottish and Spanish architectural elements, such as a stepped-gable roof, windows surrounded by stone toothing and a tower inspired by Spanish monasteries to house four more bedrooms, dubbed the “pagoda” by friends. He aimed to design “a little nookery, somewhat in the Dutch style, quaint, but unpretending,” with the help of landscape painter George Harvey, a neighbor in Hastings-on-Hudson who served as contractor.

Irving also turned his hand to the landscaping to reflect his romantic ideal of art, nature and history. He planted a wisteria vine that still hug Sunnyside, arranged garden paths, trees and viewpoints to admire the Hudson River, and created a pond he dubbed his “Little Mediterranean.” Of the area’s natural beauty, he wrote, “I think it is an invaluable advantage to be born and brought up in the neighborhood of some grand and noble object in nature; a river, a lake or a mountain. We make a friendship with it, we in a manner ally ourselves to it for life. It remains an object of our pride and affections, a rallying point, to call us home again after all our wanderings.”

Sunnyside was no lonely bachelor’s retreat: Irving’s brother, Ebenezer, a widower, and his five daughters lived there from 1841 on. Four of these nieces never married, and these women—whom Irving teasingly called the “petticoat government”—oversaw the household and served as hostesses to entertain Irving’s many guests, including John Jacob Astor (whose fur-trading adventures in the Pacific Northwest were chronicled in Irving’s book, Astoria), poet William Cullen Bryant, Martin Van Buren and the future Napoleon III, Charles Louis Napoleon Bonaparte. Many journalists came to interview Irving at Sunnyside, and others came just to visit, leaving behind descriptions and sketches of rooms and key objects that greatly helped its preservation.

After Irving was appointed ambassador to Spain for four years in 1842 by President John Tyler, he penned affectionate letters home to the residents of his “snuggery.”

Irving wrote what he considered his masterpiece at Sunnyside, his five-volume Life of George Washington, for decades considered the definitive biography of Washington.

When Irving died in 1859, flags in New York City flew at half-staff, and more than 2,000 people attended his funeral.

RESTORATION BY THE ROCKEFELLERS

After two of Irving’s unmarried nieces, Catherine and Sarah, died in 1875, the house was passed on to Alexander Duer Irving. Irving descendants lived seasonally at Sunnyside until 1945, when a philanthropy established by John D. Rockefeller Jr., the Sealantic Fund, purchased it from Louis duPont Irving, opening it up as a house museum in 1947.

Kathleen Johnson, director of collections at Historic Hudson Valley, said the restoration “was a natural fit—driven in part because the Rockefellers lived at Kykuit, only two miles away, [and] Irving was so important to American history, and they already underwrote funding to restore Philipsburg Manor in Sleepy Hollow.”
The nonprofit Historic Hudson Valley operates six historic landmark sites from distinctly different eras—Philipsburg Manor, the home of a Dutch family who owned 90,000 acres in Westchester in the 18th century; Van Cortlandt Manor, the home of a Dutch family, which included the first U.S.-born mayor of New York City; Lyndhurst Castle, railroad baron Jay Gould’s Gothic Revival-style mansion; Montgomery Place, a 19th-century mansion that was to have been the home of General Richard Montgomery, who died in battle in Canada (see related story on page 33); Kykuit, the Rockefeller estate in Pocantico Hills; and Union Church, whose stained-glass windows by Henri Matisse and Marc Chagall were commissioned by the Rockefellers.

Irving’s study at Sunnyside features his oak desk, a gift from G.P. Putnam, publisher of his revised edition of The Alhambra (1851) as well as other works. The room also displays a set of Moorish daggers from Spain, an inkwell bearing the images of famous philosophers, his book collection, his walking stick, an engraving of “A Literary Party at Sir Joshua Reynolds” and a replica of his paisley morning coat. The study, where he received guests and wrote his Washington biography, is “one of the most well-documented period rooms in the United States,” Johnson notes.

The drawing room contains a rosewood-veneered piano Irving purchased for his nieces and volumes of music symbolizing the family’s love of performing music and attending operas and concerts. There is a portrait of Irving at age 26 by notable New York portrait painter John Wesley Jarvis and a print of “Sir Walter Scott and His Literary Friends.” (Irving was a guest at Scott’s home in Scotland.) French doors lead to a side porch facing the Hudson. Irving even designed the two cast-iron benches on either side of the arched porch in Gothic Revival style—one of the first uses of this popular British style in the United States.

“I am never tired of sitting there in my old Voltaire chair, on a long summer morning, with a book in my hand, sometimes reading, sometimes musing on the landscape, and sometimes dozing and mixing all up in a pleasant dream,” Irving wrote, on relaxing on the porch.

The dining room, which offers a beautiful view of the Hudson, contains Irving family possessions like a brass and cut-glass chandelier, a French porcelain dessert service and Gothic Revival chairs and cupboards.

The six bedrooms upstairs include a front guest room inspired by an attic Irving had seen with two arches and a sloped roof covered in striped wallpaper. “I have seen an irregular attic room managed in that way in France with a very pretty effect,” Irving wrote, with an accompanying sketch. “The very irregularity became a source of ornament.” Irving’s bedroom, where he died, contains a Federal-style high-post bedstead circa 1810 and a Grecian-style wardrobe. Ebenezer’s bedroom features a pair of “fancy” wood chairs, covered with Romantic landscapes and other ornamentation.

A large wing added to the house in 1896, which extended beyond the kitchen yard to the icehouse, was demolished shortly before the decision was made to restore the house and its outbuildings to Irving’s time period. As a result, the icehouse, which resembles a church due to its Gothic Revival style and steeple, was rebuilt.

Today, a monument at the entrance to Sunnyside by sculptor Daniel Chester French, who designed the Lincoln Memorial, depicts the twin passions of Irving’s life: Spain and the Hudson Valley. Full-sized figures of both the bearded Rip Van Winkle, “the dreamer of the Kaatskills,” and Boabdil, the last King of Granada, flank a bronze bust of Irving. He is described on the bust as an essayist, poet, historian, traveler, diplomatist, solider and “the first author of our republic.”

Legends live on during a calendar rich in events at Sunnyside. Halloween is marked by storytelling, a puppet show based on “Legend of Sleepy Hollow” and a spooky walk. On July 4, there is old-fashioned ice-cream making, country dancing and vignettes about women’s rights. August brings a child-centered tour featuring games and toys from the 1850s and craft activities, and during Thanksgiving and Christmas, there are even more celebrations.

Sharon McDonnell explored the Colonel James Barrett House for the March/April 2008 issue.

VISITING SUNNYSIDE
Open daily except Tuesdays April to December, and open weekends only in March. For information, go to www.historichudsonvalley.org or call (914) 631–8200.

Traveling the Route of Washington Irving?
For information, go to www.andalucia.org.
“I never go to bed without an hour, or half hour’s previous reading of something moral, whereon to ruminate in the intervals of sleep.”

—Thomas Jefferson
Here’s a certain romantic sense of sweet dreams in times past, of our ancestors sleeping peacefully during calm, silent nights. It’s a picture complete with fresh breezes, sparkling stars and feather-beds plumped and waiting.

In fact, the truth about bedtime is a bit more complex. We may sleep less now than in the past, but our rest is probably more restful than it’s ever been in history. (The same factors of poverty and hygiene and natural threats that made life difficult in previous centuries also made sleep difficult.) And, according to new research, not only has the environment of our sleep changed from that of early Americans, but the patterns of sleep itself have also changed.

We can largely blame these major shifts on the lightbulb. Before the lightbulb, our ancestors were reading or chatting by the light of the fire or the candle at night—socializing or working after the sun went down cost money and effort. So our Founding Fathers and Mothers tended to turn in early, getting up with the sun. Now we’re not regulated by the sun’s schedule—we have alarm clocks and TV programs that set our sleep patterns.

That reliance on electronic cues goes against our natural impulses, notes Craig Lambert in Harvard Magazine. He points out that humans are not nocturnal animals—our night vision is poor, and night has held an array of deadly dangers for us throughout history. (Consider wild animals, criminals and dangerous terrain, for starters.)

But Thomas Edison had a grand plan with his invention of the lightbulb, according to Stanley Coren in Sleep Thieves: An Eye-Opening Exploration Into the Science and Mysteries of Sleep (Free Press, 1997). “Anything which tends to slow work down is a waste,” the inventor wrote in The Diary and Sundry Observations of Thomas Alva Edison, edited by D.D. Runes (1948). “We are always hearing people talk about ‘loss of sleep’ as a calamity. They better call it loss of time, vitality and opportunities.”

Edison’s solution, Coren writes, was to eliminate sleep by adding additional work hours to the day. “This would improve productivity, bring prosperity to all of society and hasten the progress of civilization.” That’s largely what happened. Shift work started, and the night became a time for work, travel and socializing—exactly what day had always been. Of course, the new schedule had a few drawbacks. The National Sleep Foundation has multiple studies showing that we sleep less than we did a century ago. That research has been a source of support for critics saying we are less rested than ever.

But A. Roger Ekirch, professor of early American history at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Va., writes of a different trend in At Day’s Close: Night in Times Past (W.W. Norton, 2005). He paints a portrait of a different kind of sleep, common and accepted in centuries past, but unknown today.

“Until the close of the modern era,” Ekirch writes, “Western Europeans on most evenings experienced two major intervals of sleep bridged by up to an hour or more of quiet wakefulness.”
The first interval of sleep was called “first sleep,” with most people waking before midnight, remaining awake for some period of time, then returning to sleep for roughly the same amount of time in a “second sleep.”

Ekirch has found hundreds of references in personal sources and literary works to segmented sleep, from mentions in The Canterbury Tales to The Odyssey to a wide array of journals. Thomas Jefferson, for one, said, “I never go to bed without an hour, or half hour’s previous reading of something moral, whereon to ruminate in the intervals of sleep.”

But not all the evidence is historical. The National Institute of Mental Health conducted a study showing that when artificial light was withheld from humans at night over several weeks, the test subjects showed the kind of segmented sleep that Ekirch associated with preindustrial communities.

“Without artificial light for up to 14 hours each night subjects first lay awake in bed for two hours, slept for four, awakened again for two or three hours of quiet rest and reflection, and fell back asleep for four hours before finally awakening for good,” Ekirch writes. The periods of consciousness were compared to an almost meditative state.

Those waking hours in the early morning might be a chance to grab a drink of water or head to the privy. Or it might be a chance for a romantic interlude or a quiet chat between a married couple. Others might have chores to finish. The quiet hours would also have been time for prayer and meditation.

The idea of segmented sleep hasn’t been previously explored because no explanations have been found in historical sources, “just as there’s no reason for us to explain things to our contemporaries that we’re all familiar with,” Ekirch says.

The references have always been there, but other historians, Ekirch suspects, “probably thought this was some arcane phrase that did not relate to some broader pattern, much less that it was what I believe was the dominant pattern of sleep or normal human sleep up until the industrial age.”

With The Odyssey, for instance, virtually every 20th-century translator mistranslated Homer’s original Greek reference to first sleep. An 18th-century Englishman was the only person to translate it correctly, according to Ekirch.

With a background in early American history, Ekirch originally intended to focus on early America, but he found British sources to be irresistibly rich and dense with information. He suspects the difficulties people faced in sleep across the Atlantic were very applicable in the Colonies as well.

“There was more exposure to the elements here, more primitive bedding, more disease,” he said. “Although one advantage would be that Americans tended to be healthier than the British by the 18th century, at least in New England.”

Contributing writer Gin Phillips’ first novel, The Well and the Mine, was published in April.
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