Inauguration Day in America:
HOW WE HAIL THE CHIEF

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From the President General

A presidential inauguration is a chance for our nation to usher in new leadership with great pomp and circumstance. As we will be welcoming Barack Obama as president of the United States of America in just a few days, we thought it fitting that our cover story chart the history of this event that is one part solemn occasion and one part big, festive celebration.

We celebrate another president in our story on Abraham Lincoln’s 200th birthday. While checking in on the numerous historic sites planning commemorative events, like Lincoln’s home in Illinois and his birthplace in Kentucky, we also look back on his legacy as a leader and why his memory still moves us.

We venture near and far for several stories in this issue. First, we take a detour to a famous 18th-century alley in historic Philadelphia. Opened in 1702, Elfreth’s Alley has been home to more than 3,000 Philadelphians over the past 300 years. Thanks to the Elfreth’s Alley Association, visitors can literally walk in the footsteps of the men and women who lived and worked on this street in centuries past.

In Spirited Adventures, we explore the Mississippi Gulf Coast, once home to the Biloxi Indians and later to the French colonists under the leadership of Pierre Le Moyne, Sieur d’Iberville. The area changed hands countless times over the centuries, and with each new flag, a new culture was infused. Today’s visitors can see and touch remnants of the area’s rich Colonial history.

We travel even farther south to Barbados—the only foreign country George Washington visited. The 1719 plantation house where he stayed in 1751 opened in 2007 as a historic house museum, the George Washington House. After a painstaking restoration, the house now holds Georgian-era furnishings, an exhibit about Washington with recordings from the diary he kept during his visit, and information about the links between this British Caribbean island and the future United States.

As many of our savvy members know, researching ancestral military participation is easier now that more records are online. For those still trying to fill out branches of your family tree, take a look at this issue’s success stories in Genealogy Sleuth.

The furniture lovers among us will enjoy our story on crafting a Colonial-era Windsor chair. Writer Rex Hammock spent more than 60 hours building one during his week at the John C. Campbell Folk School in southwest North Carolina. Although the experience didn’t make for the most relaxing vacation, the process of creating something beautiful from raw wood proved to be an inspiring journey.

Linda Gist Calvin
For the first 17 years of her life, Edna Bolling Jacques had her own personal portal into the past. No, she didn’t have a time machine; she had her great-aunt Olive Rebecca Bolling (1847–1953), who shared vivid memories of growing up black in 19th-century Virginia. “Practically every Sunday, Daddy and I would go by to visit Auntie,” Mrs. Jacques says. “She would often just talk about the way things were back then. She’d correct common misconceptions. At a young age, I learned that a lot of people were saying and believing things about the antebellum period that simply were not true. There are many people in this country who still view the antebellum South as either Gone With the Wind or Uncle Tom’s Cabin. But between those extremes, there were slivers of lives that were decidedly different.”

Mrs. Jacques says her great-aunt’s stories—all of which she has been able to confirm through independent research—have dispelled many myths about slave life and the relationships between slaves and their owners. “Common knowledge tells us that blacks were not taught to read or write back then, but this was absolutely not true,” she says. “Virginia law outlawed teaching by free blacks and prohibited whites from teaching them for pay. But it didn’t say anything about slaves teaching anyone—slaves, free blacks or whites—or whites teaching blacks for no pay.”

In recent speaking engagements, Mrs. Jacques has made a point of using her family history to expand people’s understanding of the period. “A lot of the history of the antebellum period was denied, destroyed or never written,” she says. “So present-day historians are now going through and re-examining the written record and trying to put the pieces together.”

She has spoken to numerous groups and has shared family stories with fellow members of the DAR. Last year, Mrs. Jacques spoke at Monticello, where her great-great-grandmother, Betsy Hemmings, was born a slave in 1783. There is speculation that Betsy’s father was Thomas Jefferson, but that’s an inconsequential detail for Mrs. Jacques. “I stay clear of that discussion,” she says. “Whether he was or wasn’t, it made no difference in the life my ancestors lived or in the life I live.”

In contrast, the life of Samuel P. Bolling, her great-grandfather, did make a significant impact on Mrs. Jacques. A descendant of Pocahontas, Samuel Bolling bought his own freedom as well as his wife’s, became one of the wealthiest black businessmen in Virginia after the Civil War and was the last black man to serve in the Virginia General Assembly until the latter part of the 20th century.

Mrs. Jacques followed in her great-grandfather’s pioneering footsteps when she became the first member of a minority to work for IBM in Philadelphia in 1960. She achieved many firsts for women and minorities at the corporation, including becoming the first woman to serve on the company’s corporate marketing staff at IBM’s world headquarters in Armonk, N.Y. She retired from IBM in 1993.

Now Regent of the Mohegan Chapter, Ossining, N.Y., Mrs. Jacques has become more aware of the need to record her mnemonic family history. She also encourages her relatives to join the DAR in support of their Patriot, Mary Hemings, who was captured by the British in Richmond in 1781 and was not freed until the Siege at Yorktown later that year. To nominate a Daughter for a future issue, e-mail a description to americanspirit@dar.org.
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National Treasures
Step inside the DAR Museum for a closer look at its fascinating collection.

Play On

The premier London piano maker John Broadwood and Son made this grand piano in 1809. Because of their dynamic sound qualities, Broadwood grand pianos were used by many of the leading musicians of the day in Europe, including Mozart, Haydn, Chopin, Beethoven and Liszt. Thomas Jefferson reportedly visited Broadwood’s Soho showroom to discuss musical instruments. This particular model’s case is made of mahogany with lightwood inlay and features a foot pedal support in the form of a classical lyre. The piano was a gift to the DAR Museum from the Gadsby’s Tavern Museum in Alexandria, Va.
Consider membership in the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR), a volunteer women’s service organization that honors and preserves the legacy of our Patriot ancestors. More than 200 years ago, American Patriots fought and sacrificed for the freedoms we enjoy today. As a member of the DAR, you can continue this legacy by actively promoting patriotism, preserving American history and securing America’s future through better education for children.

★

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

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

How many members does the National Society have?
DAR has 165,000 members in nearly 3,000 chapters worldwide, including chapters in 12 foreign countries. Since its founding in 1890, DAR has admitted more than 800,000 members.

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

Preserving the American Spirit
www.dar.org
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Letters
Spirited comments from our readers

Sold on Spirit
I have already renewed my subscription by mail, but I wanted to pass along my comments on the magazine. I have been in DAR since I was 18 years old. (My grandmother processed my paperwork, so I was “official” on my 18th birthday.) I began subscribing to the magazine last year and it is wonderful! It is beautiful, informative and provides great stories that are not available elsewhere. I’m definitely sold on the magazine! Keep up the great work. I look forward to getting each issue. I have even passed a number of articles and information along to my daughter’s school for inclusion in its American history curriculum.

Christin Spurr
Cincinnati Chapter
Cincinnati, Ohio

New Jersey’s Finest
Thank you for the article in the May/June 2008 issue “History Gets Personal,” about a special New Jersey teacher. We are all so proud of Rosanne Lichatin, the state winner in the 2008 Outstanding Teacher of American History contest. She has a great story—thank you for sharing.

Melva Paint Murray
New Jersey State Historian
Hester Schuyler Colfax Chapter
Pompton Lakes, N.J.

Girl Scouts’ Honor
I thoroughly enjoyed your article about Savannah, Ga., in the November/December 2008 issue. It is a beautiful, historic city with much interesting history. I did want to correct an inaccuracy about the birthplace of Juliette Gordon Low, founder of the Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA). Her Savannah home was built between 1818–1821 for Mayor James Moore Wayne, later a U.S. Supreme Court Justice. Juliette was born there in 1860, and to Girl Scouts it is known as her birthplace. It was purchased and restored by GSUSA to its documented appearance in 1886, the year that Juliette married Willie Low in the house. It is open to the general public as a museum, and Girl Scouts from around the world visit it as a program experience. However, it is not the headquarters for GSUSA; those offices are on Fifth Avenue in New York City.

Joanne Galvin
Ezra Parker Chapter
Royal Oak, Mich.

More to Savannah’s Story
As a direct descendant of Robert Bolton, who settled in Savannah about 1741, I was both thrilled to see the article on Savannah’s rich history and disappointed in its briefness. First, a correction: The Independent Presbyterian Church was founded in 1755 as the Presbyterian Church of Savannah by the original Scots settlers. Its first minister, J.J. Zubly, was a member of the Continental Congress. The church burned down and suffered damage by hurricanes through the years and was relocated at least twice.

I would also like to note that Savannah’s Richardson-Owen-Thomas House was designed by the architect William Jay, the brother of my great-great-great-grandmother, Ann Jay Bolton, whose portrait hangs in the house. Now a museum for the Tailfair Museum, the house was built for a member of our family, but was lost to us because of the economic problems of 1820.

It’s also important to note that the DAR has helped maintain the Colonial Park Cemetery. The rich history of Savannah certainly deserves more detailed coverage.

Elizabeth Bolton
Cooch’s Bridge Chapter
Newark, Del.

A Miller’s Proposal
I was thrilled to see the article “A Miller’s Tale” in the November/December edition regarding the Stony Brook Grist Mill. This is where my husband proposed to me 10 years ago on a beautiful summer day. He is a native of Stony Brook, N.Y., and I was visiting to welcome him home from a trip. We were sitting on a park bench next to the pond on which the grist mill is located, looking at photos from his trip when all of a sudden he was down on one knee asking me to marry him. I immediately said yes! Thank you for refreshing a wonderful memory!

Regina Fallace
Sarah Platt Decker Chapter
Durango, Colo.

Please send letters to the editor to americanspirit@dar.org.
Forever Young

In the article “Born Brave: Young Patriots in the American Revolution” in the September/October issue, one of the featured young patriots, Jeremiah Greenman of Newport, R.I., is the direct ancestor of two of our members in the Arapahoe Chapter, Boulder, Colo. Alice Appenzeller and her daughter Mary Alice Appenzeller Wait just presented a program about Jeremiah to our chapter in November. His diary, as mentioned in the article, is fascinating!

Jeanney Scott Horn, Regent
Arapahoe Chapter
Boulder, Colo.

Yarn Spinners

The item in the picture at the bottom of page 48 of the “Meadow Garden” story in the November/December issue is not a weasel. It is a spindle-type spinning wheel, known by various names: wool wheel, great wheel or walking wheel. I own one of these wheels and, as a hand spinner, I’ve spent hours walking back and forth, spinning yards of woolen yarn on it. The string that is looped on the wheel is the drive band—the bane of spinners using these old wheels. Due to wear, these wheels no longer run true, causing the drive band to “jump off.” I am unable to tell from the picture if this wheel has the “mother and spindle” it needs in order to be used. The wheel with the spindle in place is a dangerous piece of machinery. It was often removed for safety reasons and lost. I believe the missing spindle may be the cause of misclassification.

I also own a weasel that is used in measuring yarn after it is spun. After each 10 yards, the weasel goes “pop,” hence the old nursery rhyme, “Pop goes the Weasel.”

Elizabeth Davis
Daniel Davison Chapter
Bridgeport, W.V.

Canadian correction: In “America’s Campaign for Canada” in the September/October issue (page 34), we write, “At that time, most of Canada’s population lived in what are now the provinces of Quebec and Montreal.” Montreal should be Ontario. Thanks to Karen Nilsen, Washington Crossing Chapter, Doylestown, Pa., for pointing this out.

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For selection criteria and application, visit www.BillofRightsInstitute.org/DAR2
Celebrating America

Between the inauguration of America’s 44th president, George Washington’s 277th birthday, Lincoln’s 200th birthday and the celebration of Black History Month, January and February are busy—and historic—months to be in or near Washington, D.C. Here are some must-attend events in our nation’s capital for you and your family:

The Presidential Inauguration

Washington, D.C.’s, inaugural events give average Americans the opportunity to celebrate the formal swearing-in of a new president. Inauguration Day will be held January 20, and ceremonies will begin with a worship service before President-elect Barack Obama takes the oath of office on the steps of the Capitol building and gives his inaugural address. Bundled-up visitors can also enjoy the Presidential Inaugural Parade, in which the new president and his family will join musical units, marching bands, color guards, salute batteries and honor cordon in traveling from the Capitol to the White House. For tickets to the inaugural ceremony, contact your senator or representative.

For more information about inaugural events, visit http://inaugural.senate.gov.

A Party at Mount Vernon

Celebrate Presidents Day with Washington himself at Mount Vernon February 14–16. Featuring a Washington re-enactor, festivities will include the first president’s favorite breakfast—hoecakes swimming in butter and honey—cooked over a fire; “America’s Smallest Hometown Parade,” complete with a fife and drum corps; and spirited military demonstrations. Nearby in Alexandria, Va., you can take part in a free walking tour of sites associated with Washington. Tours will be held every Saturday in February. To reserve a spot, call (703) 991–4474.

For more information about Presidents Day events, visit www.washingtonbirthday.net.

Abraham Lincoln: An Extraordinary Life

To honor Lincoln’s 200th birthday, the American History Museum will explore the life and legacy of this great American president in its exhibit “Abraham Lincoln: An Extraordinary Life.” Displaying artifacts and objects of interest from the museum’s prestigious collection, the exhibit will showcase treasures from Lincoln’s life, such as an iron wedge he used to split wood in the 1830s in New Salem, Ill., and the iconic top hat he wore to Ford’s Theatre the night he was assassinated. For more information, visit www.si.edu/visit/whatsnew/nmah.asp.

See our story on page 34 for a list of events taking place in Washington, D.C., and elsewhere around the country celebrating President Lincoln’s bicentennial birthday.

Black History Month

In 1926, February officially became Black History Month to celebrate the contributions of African-Americans throughout history. This year, the Smithsonian honors that heritage at the National Museum of African American History and Culture’s ongoing exhibit “The Scurlock Studio and Black Washington: Picturing the Promise.” Featuring more than 100 images from one of the premier photo studios in the country, the exhibition captures weddings, baptisms, civil protests, graduations and sporting events in the African-American community. For more information, visit nmaahc.si.edu.
THE EDISON FORD Winter Estates in Fort Myers, Fla., recently received the Trustee Emeritus Award for Excellence from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. A popular historic site for tourists, the Edison Ford Estate was constructed more than 100 years ago when Thomas Edison and Henry Ford built adjacent winter homes on the property.

Today, the estate includes well-manicured gardens and a nine-building complex, just as it did when the two friends lived there in 1929. Over the years, the estate has suffered storm and humidity damage, resulting in a much-needed three-year, $10 million restoration that repaired the historic wood buildings, seawall and landscaping. The Edison Ford Estates are open daily from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. For more information, visit www.efwefla.org or call (239) 334-7419.

Every year, the National Trust presents the National Preservation Awards to distinguished individuals, agencies and nonprofit groups for notable achievements in the preservation of America’s cultural and architectural heritage.

For a complete list of 2008’s 21 national winners, visit www.preservationnation.org/magazine.

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FOR MANY PEOPLE, traveling the country means spending a week driving through as many national parks and historic sites as possible before returning home. If you’re looking for a different way to encounter America, Sheryl Kane’s *Immersion Travel USA: The Best and Most Meaningful Volunteering, Living and Learning Excursions* (The Countryman Press, 2008) provides a resource that will change the way you think about travel.

A valuable resource for vacationers looking for a long-term—and more purposeful—get-away, *Immersion Travel USA* provides candid accounts of travelers who have immersed themselves in other cultures. It also gives detailed profiles of the best volunteer, education and short-term job opportunities, as well as practical tips for leaving home and hitting the road for an extended period of time.

Kane outlines opportunities like Amizade, a service-learning program (http://amizade.org) that promotes community-driven service and intercultural immersion and exchange.

“Not only did I feel honored to be featured in the book,” says Tracy Patterson Kee, site director of the Amizade program for the Navajo reservation in Tuba City, Ariz., “but I enjoyed reading about other programs since I love to take advantage of the cultural exchange when I travel.”

Whether you want to swim with dolphins in Hawaii for a few months, live at a national park for a season or work as a caretaker for a historic lighthouse, *Immersion Travel USA* can make your next vacation much more memorable. For more information, visit www.countrymanpress.com/titles/ImmersionTravelUSA.html.

Remembering American Presidents

NOW THAT THE LONG-FOUGHT BID for the presidency is over, Americans can turn their attention from learning about presidential candidates to relearning the history of some of America’s most famous presidents. PBS’ acclaimed *American Experience: The Presidents Collection* sheds light on the tenure of past presidents and their methods of handling foreign and domestic affairs. While it’s instructive to know something about every president who has led our nation, *The Presidents Collection* focuses on 10 men who shaped our nation in significant ways: Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush.

For more information on the award-winning program, visit www.shoppbs.org.
Restoring Galveston

On September 18, 2008, Hurricane Ike struck the coast of Texas, severely damaging parts of Galveston, including the historic Strand shopping district. In the mid-19th century, the Strand, named after a street in London, was known as “the Wall Street of the Southwest” for its booming business market. The historic 36-block district’s Victorian architecture still looked much like it did 150 years ago until the surge of flooding following Hurricane Ike left the Strand under eight feet of water and a heavy coat of sticky mud, leaving many historic structures in disrepair.

In the months following Ike, Galveston residents worked hard to rebuild the city and keep the integrity of historic structures intact. To help preserve Galveston’s heritage, the National Trust for Historic Preservation paired with the Galveston Historical Society. Together the groups participated in fundraisers, called for engineers and structural architects to lend their expertise, adapted a $147,000 grant to aid recovery efforts and shared lessons learned from New Orleans’ recovery process after Hurricane Katrina.

If a historic home you care about was struck by flood damage last fall, visit www.preservationbooks.org for a free manual on treating flood-damaged historic structures.

To learn more about the National Trust’s work in restoring Galveston, visit www.preservationnation.org.

Genealogy101

Ready to expand the branches of your family tree? For genealogy buffs who want a deeper look at their ancestry, the New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS) offers free online seminars that can take your commitment to genealogy to the next level. Whether you’re looking for new methods for tracing your ancestors across the pond, ways to uncover a wife’s maiden name or tips for transcribing gravestones, NEHGS offers a seminar for you.

The video seminars are put on by NEHGS staff and genealogists. The informative video lectures are updated frequently and include organized outlines to help viewers keep track of important information. To download a video seminar, visit www.newenglandancestors.org/events/online_seminars.asp.

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Return to Toyland

DAR Museum, Washington, D.C., through February 28

This playful showcase of late 19th- and early 20th-century toys from the DAR Museum collection celebrates the childhood of our ancestors. The exhibit includes old-fashioned dolls and dollhouses, games, stuffed animals, and military and vehicular toys. The exhibition provides a glimpse at the role social conventions played in the evolution of toys, as boys were expected to enjoy toy weapons and military games while girls were given dolls as good practice for the childcare skills they would need as mothers. While the toys we give children today are different from this display of antiques, their roots are evident in the Museum’s collection of models. For more information, visit www.dar.org/museum.

The Sugar Mill Chapter, Port Orange, Fla., is named for a plantation and sugar mill established by Patrick Dean of the Bahamas after he received a grant of 995 acres from the Spanish government. The mill was used for sugar processing until it was heavily damaged in the Second Seminole War of 1836. It was rebuilt in the late 1840s, and was later used to process salt from seawater for the Confederate Army during the Civil War. In 1936, the owners donated their remaining 12-acre tract to Volusia County. After World War II, these acres became known as “Sugar Mill Gardens,” a place of quiet beauty with enormous live oaks. When placed on the National Registry of Historic Places in 1973, only the coquina ruins of the factory and some rusted machinery remained. Today, historical markers and plant identifiers posted throughout the property give visitors a taste of its history.

The Isaac Van Wart Chapter, Van Wert, Ohio, was named for the Revolutionary War soldier famous for the capture of British spy Major John André. André was carrying secret papers from Benedict Arnold as part of a treasonous plot to surrender West Point, N.Y., to the British. Isaac Van Wart, with fellow New York militiamen John Paulding and David Williams, stopped André, whose story aroused their suspicions. They searched him and found the papers in his stockings. André tried to bribe the soldiers into setting him free. General George Washington later sought out the three and honored them for their honesty and virtue. Van Wart and the other captors received a $200 annual pension, a farm in Westchester County, N.Y., worth $2,500 and the Fidelity Medallion. In 1853, a monument was erected at the site of the capture. Van Wert County, Ohio, is named for Isaac Van Wart. A spelling error corrupted the original spelling.

The Lohmann’s Ford Chapter, Lakeway, Texas, is named for John Henry Lohmann, a German immigrant who, with his wife and four small children, made his way to inland Texas and settled at a small place called Ridgetop. The name of the tiny settlement was later changed to Austin when the state’s capital was moved there, and Lohmann’s dairy farm was located on the site of the present-day University of Texas. A few years later, Lohmann moved his homestead about 15 miles away to a spot on the Colorado River, where he maintained a private road or river crossing that became known as Lohmann’s Ford Road. The crossing aided early settlers in expanding further westward as America settled Texas.

Does your chapter name have an unusual story behind it? E-mail a description to americanspirit@dar.org.

Captured Colors

DeWitt Wallace Decorative Arts Museum, Williamsburg, Va., through July 19

Fewer than two dozen Revolutionary War flags are known to exist in museums and other collections, and most of them are badly damaged and consist only of fragmented pieces. But thanks to the anonymous owner of four well-preserved Revolutionary battle flags, visitors to the DeWitt Decorative Arts Museum can view Revolutionary history in person. The flags were captured by British cavalry officer Colonel Banastre Tarleton, and they remained in the Tarleton family until they were sold at a Sotheby’s auction in 2006.

For more information, visit www.history.org/History/museums/dewitt_gallery_current.cfm.
When Piracy Was Fun

Mention piracy and most of us picture Johnny Depp in the Caribbean or Errol Flynn on the high seas—and both of those “Hollywood” pirates were the good guys. Probably closer to the truth is the character of Long John Silver, both a good guy and a bad guy, seeking the chest of gold in Robert Louis Stevenson’s Treasure Island.

The pirates—or privateers as they preferred to be called—who helped us in the American Revolution were more like a cross between an investment banker and a trial lawyer. They were licensed to capture and seize crews, weapons and goods from the British for private profit, as long as they split their legally acquired gain with the 13 Colonies.

In creating our new nation in the 1770s, we relied heavily on pirates to harass British naval and merchant vessels. Oddly enough, there was a kind of “pirate’s code” that gave our freebooters some legal cover. To comply with international law, states like Rhode Island and Massachusetts issued “letters of marque and reprisal.” These were sort of like a Monopoly game’s “get out of jail free” card, in that they elevated our pirates to the status of privateers who were empowered to attack and seize both British warships and commercial vessels on behalf of the belligerent states. Obviously our pirates did not want to sink the British because then there would be no loot to plunder.

In his new book, Patriot Pirates: The Privateer War for Freedom and Fortune in the American Revolution (Pantheon, 2008), Robert H. Patton, a descendant of General George Patton, traces the stories of famous privateers such as John Brown, Silas Deane and John Langdon, as well as the involvement of Robert Morris and Benjamin Franklin.

Brown, of Rhode Island, was one of the most aggressive privateers in attacking the British ships and fighting for the new American freedom, while also supporting his own rich standard of living with the wealth he seized and divided with the state government that commissioned him as a privateer. This was a win-win for everyone except the crew and passengers who were seized as prisoners—perhaps to be ransomed—and, of course, for the British who lost their investments. Brown later used his family fortune, which was built on the slave trade and privateering, to become one of the founders of Brown University.

In his new book, author George Patton does an excellent job of portraying these Robin Hood-esque pirates in a compassionate and sympathetic way. The story Patton tells is so compelling that after reading this book, you’ll want to know more about each of these adventurers.

Larry and Saralee Woods own Bookman/Bookwoman Books in Nashville, Tenn.

The Bookshelf

New books take a look at the life of patriotic pirates and an under-appreciated president.
The Bookshelf

Far More Than a Footnote

He was a radical, a free thinker, a poet, an abolitionist, a feminist, a compulsive book collector, a physical fitness advocate and, for much of his life, probably better known in Europe than in the United States.

Despite these achievements, John Quincy Adams is sometimes viewed as something of a disappointment compared to the reputations of his father, John Adams, and other illustrious presidential predecessors as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and James Monroe.

If this were examination time in school and the question was “write all you know about John Quincy Adams,” your answers would probably be brief and dull. The popular knowledge about Adams generally goes no further than that he was our sixth president, and he and his father were unique until 2001 in being the only such pair elected president of the United States.

Adams was far more than a footnote to the Founding Fathers, as Joseph Wheelan reveals in *Mr. Adams’s Last Crusade: John Quincy Adams’s Extraordinary Post-Presidential Life in Congress* (Perseus Publishing, 2008). He was a complex, honorable man who followed his own high standards, no matter what the cost.

To protect his principles, Adams lost several political elections and changed political parties four times; as President, he insisted on keeping capable Cabinet officers despite their support for his opponents. One can scarcely imagine such loyalty and principled behavior in the politics of today—or for that matter, of any era.

Adams won relatively few elections, and the means by which he captured the presidency were themselves historic. The 1824 presidential election was thrown into the House of Representatives when no candidate in the November election took a majority of the electoral votes.

Adams ran against Andrew Jackson, John C. Calhoun and Henry Clay, who threw his support and votes in the House to Adams. One of the reasons Jackson defeated Adams four years later was Jackson’s claim that there had been a “corrupt bargain” in 1824 for Clay’s votes, a charge that author Joseph Wheelan strongly refutes in *Mr. Adams’s Last Crusade*.

Unlike his predecessors in office, Adams’ high reputation is founded mostly on his work following his presidency. Rather than retire to private life, Adams ran for and served in the House of Representatives from the age of 63 until his death 17 years later. Adams possessed a very demanding sense of public service and as a representative, he went to great lengths to achieve public goals.

In Congress, he championed the abolitionist movement and fought the evils of the slave trade both here and abroad to such an extent that Wheelan describes him as “the Congressional lightning rod on the slavery question.”

Adams staked his “personal, moral, intellectual and political character” to win a major Supreme Court decision in the *Amistad* case. The subject of a major film in 1997, the *Amistad* was a Spanish slave ship that was taken over by its African captives off the coast of Long Island in 1839. The legal battle focused on whether the Africans were property—that is, slaves—because the slave trade was illegal in America by then (although not the institution of slavery). Adams represented the Africans and the court ruled that they were free.

Wheelan reminds us that Adams should also be remembered for many other milestone achievements, including having designed the Monroe Doctrine; leading the way for the creation of the Smithsonian Institution; and organizing the American acquisition of Florida. While in Congress, Adams forecast the likelihood of civil war between North and South, and he also laid out the basic arguments that President Lincoln would later use for the Emancipation Proclamation.

As a young man, Adams traveled with his father in Europe when John Adams served as minister to France and the Netherlands. Later on, the younger Adams held various diplomatic posts. Wheelan argues that Adams was possibly our best diplomat from the 1790s through the 1810s, using his skills to keep the fledgling nation alive and securing aid to help it grow.

Adams’ private life was marked by a number of hardships, many due to the demands of his public duties. But there was also a silver lining to those demands—during one trip abroad, he met his future wife, Louisa Johnson, in London. They had four children, but three of them died at tragically young ages.

Many political biographies are dry, but this book is alive and compelling with its portrayal of a great American leader. Author Wheelan has brought to life a complicated American statesman and leader who is lesser known than he should be.

—L.W. and S.W.
Until recently, there was one branch on Amy Lenertz Coffin’s family tree that she couldn’t quite fill out. It belonged to her great-great-grandfather, Richard Monson Jones, who, Coffin assumed, must have died around the time of the Civil War because his widow remarried. It wasn’t until she typed his name into a search box on Footnote.com that she found his slim eight-page Civil War service record—and the answers to her questions. The record contained information about when and where Jones enlisted and in what company, along with documentation of his promotion, other military service details and his death on May 6, 1864, at the Battle of Calcasieu Pass (in what is now Cameron Parish, La.).

“‘For four years I’ve been living two hours away from the battle area and his grave, and I had no idea,’” she said.

Like Coffin, Diane Giannini also discovered a wealth of information about her lineage after searching online for her ancestors’ military records. She located the Civil War pension record of her great-great-great-grandfather, Samuel S. Bibler, on Ancestry.com. From that document, she was able to find his family and four other brothers who also served in the conflict.

For Giannini and Coffin, these searches didn’t take much time, but they helped both women fill blank spaces in their family trees. Since then, their success stories have inspired others.

The mega-sites they used—Ancestry.com and Footnote.com—lead the online race to digitize records of our nation’s history and the roles our ancestors played in it. Ancestry.com’s home page links to the U.S. Military Records Collection’s Web site, which lists an overview of its online resources from the Revolutionary War to the Vietnam era. You can search all collections simultaneously or select a war, or check out a timeline that highlights the material available for searching. The site contains more than just documents.

“For four years I’ve been living two hours away from the battle area and his grave, and I had no idea.”

Amy Lenertz Coffin
You can view Civil War photographs and even World War II newsreels. Each conflict-specific page provides the option to fill in a search box, browse featured titles, read a historical timeline and description of the war, or gain inspiration from reading another researcher’s success story. Once you’ve gathered a selection of hits, you can click on them to view the original record or scroll over to make sure it’s something you want to look at further. Searching is free, but you need to have a membership to actually view the majority of your finds. The subscription price is $12.95 per month.

Since both Ancestry.com and Footnote.com partner with the National Archives, some overlap is common. (For instance, Footnote.com also has Civil War photographs.) But there are significant differences between the two sites that go beyond the breadth and depth of their digital archive. An annual membership to Footnote costs $69.95, but many other features, including searching, are available at no cost. On Footnote, you can view Mathew Brady’s famous Civil War photos, the compiled service records for Confederate and Union soldiers, and other material on 20th-century wars, including photos of the Marine Corps in Vietnam. Just as on Ancestry, Footnote allows you to search the entire collection of specific war materials. (Use the drop-down menu at the top of the screen, then click on “Original Documents” to browse record collections.)

For genealogist Laura Prescott, an online Revolutionary War pension record provided the missing marriage...
For Laura Prescott, an online Revolutionary War pension record provided the missing marriage date for an ancestor—the last detail she needed to complete her lineage application for the Daughters of the American Revolution.

ON FOOTNOTE, YOU CAN VIEW MATHEW BRADY’S CIVIL WAR PHOTOS, THE COMPILED SERVICE RECORDS FOR CONFEDERATE AND UNION SOLDIERS, AND OTHER MATERIAL ON 20TH-CENTURY WARS, INCLUDING PHOTOS OF THE MARINE CORPS IN VIETNAM.

Don’t stop your search for online military records at these two sites. The Internet contains so much more material, including resources from around the world. From muster rolls to military uniform attire, you can conduct interesting searches to add to your knowledge of the military personnel in your family. Start by looking at the links on the Web index site Cyndi’s List (www.cyndislist.com).

Searching for patriots on the Internet can be addictive. As a user on one of the online genealogy sites wrote, “My life is falling apart. My house is rotting, my family is neglected and I am behind in everything. I have found four confirmed Civil War ancestors, and I think I have found my third Revolutionary War ancestor.”

Start your own search, and soon you, too, will have family history gems to share with others.

There’s no shortage of twists and turns and back alleys in historic Philadelphia, but only one turn can take you back to the 18th century. Opened in 1702, Elfreth’s Alley has been home to more than 3,000 Philadelphians over the past 300 years. But this isn’t ancient history: The homes lining the alley are still privately owned, still lived in and loved. Cars still drive down the street, and residents still rush by on their way to work.

At the same time, thanks to the Elfreth’s Alley Association, visitors can literally walk in the footsteps of the men and women who lived and worked in these rooms in centuries past. By Gin Phillips | Photos by Sam Oberter
Three centuries of history are packed into a street only 16 feet wide, a characteristic typical of alleyways in the 18th and 19th centuries. Elfreth’s Alley has been a working-class neighborhood from the start, ever since two property owners in 1702 decided to create a new subdivision. Today these 31 homes form one of the last intact 18th-century streetscapes in the nation. The earliest surviving houses were built in 1728, and the baby on the block was finished in the mid-1830s. Two buildings transformed into a visitor’s center and museum are the only ones not privately owned.

A Historic Hub
Throughout most of the 18th century, Elfreth’s Alley was an artisan community of Philadelphia’s middle class. A few well-to-do artisans made their homes along the alley, but plenty of working people rented rooms as well. These residents practiced pragmatic crafts of the time; bricklayers and cabinet makers, hatters and blacksmiths worked long hours in tight quarters, typically living and working in the same space.

Alongside the craftsmen (and crafts-women), workers in the maritime trade were drawn to the neighborhood’s proximity to Philadelphia’s primary port. Sea captains, ship builders and sea merchants all valued the location, which was only a block and a half from the Delaware River.

That atmosphere started to change around the middle of the 19th century. The neighborhood and its surroundings were starting to see wear and tear, and an influx of immigrants—many employed at local factories—shifted the demographic balance along the street. More people packed into the neat row houses: In 1860, there were 211 residents living along Elfreth’s Alley. By 1870, the population had leapt to 358. Census records show 22 people living in a single two- and a-half story row house.

The decline continued into the 20th century as the alley became even more industrialized. A 1910 city newspaper referred to the area as the city’s worst slum, and by the 1930s, the houses were in a terrible state of disrepair. In 1934, a group of men and women began working to save several houses from demolition by absentee landlords. They called themselves the Elfreth’s Alley Association and helped rescue the street from additional threats, including the construction of I-95 in the late 1950s.

Pieces of the Puzzle
Ultimately, the story of the alley is a personal one of families, tragedies and successes. But the residents of Elfreth’s Alley weren’t exactly the headliners and trendsetters of the city, which poses a problem when it comes to telling their stories.
The Women of Elfreth's Alley

The women who lived along the alley represented a cross section of women’s lives at the time. Some were independent businesswomen like Mary Smith and Sarah Milton, who purchased House 126 from Jeremiah Elfreth in 1762. There is no evidence that either woman ever married, and their independence would not have been unusual for the time.

“In the late 18th century, about 30 percent of the houses on the street were headed by independent women, either widows or unmarried women,” Meeker says. “Certainly Sarah and Mary, as independent women, would have faced social and economic hardships compared to their male counterparts. But it seems like it wasn’t uncommon for two independent women to live together both to pool economic resources and to provide companionship for each other.”

Other women turned to entrepreneurship out of necessity, like a widow in House 116. When her husband died in 1793, she continued to own the house and converted it into a boardinghouse. She chose a fairly common profession for single women; tavern keepers, innkeepers and boardinghouse owners were always needed, especially in downtown Philadelphia near the port.

For married women, of course, their destinies were inextricably tied to their husband’s fortunes. On one end of the spectrum were the success stories like Daniel Trotter, a prominent cabinet maker. Trotter moved to the alley with his wife, Rebecca, in the early 1770s and stayed until 1795. Samples of his work still survive. Life for Rebecca Trotter would have been typical of a successful artisan’s wife. The family didn’t lack resources, but she would have been managing a household that included not only her own children but also an assorted cast of her husband’s apprentices and journeymen.

The alley saw successful businessmen like Trotter eventually leave the neighborhood for greener pastures. A more typical portrait might be that of Barney and Phoebe Schumo. The Schumos lived in a fairly modest house along the alley with their five children, and documents show that in 1810, they were renting the rear of the house to three free African-Americans.

“Phoebe would have been responsible for keeping the house, tending to the needs of her children and boarders, and probably helping Barney with his woodworking business,” Meeker said. “And somewhere along the line, they had aspirations of something more.”

Wanting a larger house, Barney tore down the workshop he owned on the opposite side of the alley and built what one architectural historian has referred to as the most ambitious construction project on the street. The three- and a-half story house he constructed featured ornate woodwork. Shortly after completing the house, Barney grew sick and suspected he would never recover. In his will, he instructed his wife to sell the new house and move back across the street to the modest house where they had started. The newer house—with all its ornate touches—still stands, but there’s no record of how Phoebe Schumo’s life played out.

“Occasionally widows would inherit property or money,” Meeker says, “but more often you found situations like Phoebe Schumo—five dependent children and no means of supporting them.”

While the houses stand firm along the alley, the stories behind them come in stops and starts. With tantalizing details and more questions than answers, these histories leave the listener to fill in the gaps.
MY SIT-DOWN WITH

COLONIAL AMERICAN

By Rex Hammock

Craftsmen
THREE DECADES AGO, I married into a family whose members love furniture made during the early days of America. By merely tagging along on tours of historic house museums and trips to antiques dealers, estate sales and the occasional flea market, I grew to understand the subtleties of design and craftsmanship that provide clues to the style, period and origin of a chair, table or chest. Through the years, I grew more and more curious about the craftsmen who transformed the wood from the trees they found in the New World into utilitarian objects—boxes and stands on which we sit, store items, work or eat—as well as uniquely beautiful art that has lasted centuries.

Specifically, I grew curious about the men who made and sold Windsor-style chairs. Why the Windsor? Perhaps it’s the variety and ubiquity of the style. In portraits of founding families, for example, you can often see a distinctive Windsor feature—perhaps the leg of a chair—peeking out from behind fancy attire. The Windsor style was not limited to highbrow furniture you’d find in the formal rooms of the well-to-do. Chairs in this style could be found nearly everywhere in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, from chapels and schools to taverns and barns.

My curiosity about the early chair makers grew to the point that I decided to truly understand what these craftsmen were like. I’d need to make a chair myself. I decided to concentrate on a loopback (or, as some would call it, hoopback) side chair. I knew that decision would prove challenging because, previous to that, the only experience I had in woodworking was watching episodes of “The New Yankee Workshop” on PBS.

Fortunately, there is a small but passionate network of Windsor chair-making enthusiasts around the country—and many have the patience and skills necessary to teach people like me how to make a beautiful chair of our own. (See sidebar on page 29 to find out where you can receive instruction on Windsor chair making.)

My seven-day—and 60-plus hour—adventure took place at the John C. Campbell Folk School in southwest North Carolina. (See sidebar on page 27.) Early one Saturday morning in July, I found myself with 12 other students standing around a pile of firewood. At least, that’s what it looked like to me. In hindsight, it seems odd that I was surprised we’d begin the chair-making process with logs from a recently felled white oak tree. But before that weekend, all of my previous Saturday morning projects had started with visits to Lowe’s or Home Depot.

I quickly learned that a key to making a long-lasting loopback Windsor is using hand-rived, or split, wood from trees that have grown on flat land. Such trees produce beautiful, long, straight grain—the secret sauce that provides amazing strength to the spindles (or “sticks” as the early chair makers called them) and “loop” of a Windsor’s chair back. Riving the wood rather than sawing it ensures long, uninterrupted grain lines. When steamed, bent and formed into the shapes of the chair back pieces—then cured and dried for an appropriate time—these delicate-appearing slivers of wood possess the strength to last centuries, if cared for properly.

Who’s Making Windsors?
The desire to make a Windsor chair knows no demographic boundaries.
Rex explains some of the steps in his 60-hour process of crafting a Windsor chair:
(1) and (2) Starting with pieces of a recently felled white oak, he rives, or splits, the wood stock, or billet.
(3) He uses a lathe to shape a chair leg. (4) and (5) A steam box is set to the correct temperature and wood is placed inside in preparation for shaping the loop that frames the back of the chair. (6) A finished chair leg. (7) and (8) Starting with a pattern, he carves the chair seat and assembles the lower part of the chair. (9) He uses a spokeshave to shape a spindle for the back of the chair.

Continued on page 28.
Our 13-person group included—among others—a medical doctor, a State Department employee, a private investigator, educators, small-business owners, a corporate executive, a "period interpreter" at a historic house museum and a young woman who had graduated from college a few weeks earlier.

We came to the class with different skill levels, but each left with a beautiful Windsor chair. (The John C. Campbell Folk School may be called a school, but since its founding in 1925, the instruction has never been about competition or grades.) We were given the opportunity to make the chair with modern power tools (the school has state-of-the-art equipment) or with nonpowered tools traditional to the early 19th century. A few of the group went completely unplugged, except for the use of modern lathes. Early American chair makers used lathes powered by foot pedals, or, once the Industrial Revolution began making its way into 19th-century America, by waterwheel.

Even those of us who used tools such as power-drill presses to ensure correctly angled holes spent at least 30 to 40 hours of the week doing traditional hand shaving, shaping, carving and sanding on each individual piece that would be used in the assembly of our chairs.

The Chair-making Process

One of the reasons the Windsor chair proved popular—and ubiquitous—among 18th- and 19th-century Americans was its sturdiness relative to the limited amount of materials necessary for its construction. No screws or nails were needed, and the chairs could be made from a wide variety of lumber from trees growing throughout the Eastern Seaboard from New England to South Carolina.

What the chairs didn’t need in materials, however, they required in the skills of the maker. It is no small challenge to overcome the laws of physics necessary to make a delicate chair able to withstand the force applied to it daily by men, women and children through the course of decades, even centuries.

While the chair’s style originated in England, where artisans developed it into formal and ornate furniture, it became a utilitarian workhorse when it arrived around 1720 in Colonial America. Two humorous scenes in the Mel Gibson movie "The Patriot" make reference to the disparity in the quality of the Colonial Windsor and its fancy British cousin.

Before the Industrial Revolution, individual craftsmen worked alone making the chairs. If especially successful, a craftsman may have been assisted by an apprentice or journeyman chair maker. In those early days, the craftsman prepared each piece of the chair—the shaving and shaping of the spindles, the carving of the seat (or bottom) and the turning of the legs and stretchers.

In the early 1800s, Windsor chair makers began to, in a modern way of describing it, outsource some of the preparation of the stock pieces. Young assistants would prepare batches of sticks, for example. Soon, however, each step in the chair-making process long a tradition in Europe—especially Denmark—"folk schools" began as a way to preserve traditional means of artistic, agricultural, musical and culinary arts. Today, the schools not only serve individuals in the immediate region, but they also attract visitors throughout the nation who participate in short- and long-term programs.

More than 830 different weeklong and weekend classes are offered year-round at the John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, N.C. The school is named after the educator Campbell, who surveyed the people of the Southern Appalachians around the turn of the 20th century. Together with his wife, Olive, he worked to preserve the history of the mountain people and share the intricate crafts of the region. With a heavy emphasis on traditional regional crafts, music, dance and food, the school, founded in 1925, appeals to hobbyists, professional artists and craftspeople. The school makes it easy for anyone to immerse themselves in learning new skills and sharing old ones in the context of the rural, foothills setting.

The school’s Web site (www.folkschool.org) offers a complete listing of upcoming classes and programs, including several related to woodworking.
began to be carried out by specialists with titles like “bodger”—an individual who worked primarily in the forest cutting down trees and splitting logs into the wood stock, or billets, used to craft individual parts of the chair.

Connecting With Early Craftsmen

Using the same tools as the Colonial craftsmen—two-handled drawknives and spokeshaves—our class sat at traditional shaving-horse workbenches carving, shaping and sanding the pieces of wood that we would fit together days later. After several hours of shaving, your hands and shoulders begin to ache, but some time later, the pain goes away. The repetitive movement of shaving down wood is hypnotic, but it requires enough concentration to prevent you from drifting off into a daydream. In the same way Eastern religions suggest that stress can be controlled by being “in the moment,” much of woodworking’s repetitive tasks can be simultaneously physically taxing and mentally relaxing.

It is during these moments that you are transported to an earlier time. The chair becomes more than the sum of its pieces—it becomes a time machine. As I whittled, shaved, carved and sanded, I had the same sensation you have when climbing to the crest of a mountain and viewing a majestic vista.

With an inch-deep layer of white oak shavings at my feet and sweat

You are transported to an earlier time. The chair becomes more than the sum of its pieces—it becomes a time machine.

—Rex Hammock

(1) Rex shapes the loop for the back of the chair on a frame on which the wood will dry. (2) and (3) The chair spindles and dried loop frame are ready for assembly. (4) The finished spindles are placed in the chair seat.
Pouring into my eyes, it was finally easy to comprehend the craftsman’s pleasure at discovering this most practical piece of furniture is a work of art that will carry on his legacy. I felt that way about my chair, too.

Among the hundreds of funny stories that our close-knit group of chair makers shared was one about a student in a similar class years ago. Tommy Boyd, our instructor, recalled that on the second day of the class, the student said, “I could sell this chair for $700.” On the third day, he said, “I could sell it for $1,000.” The next day, the man said, “No way am I ever selling this chair.” And on the last day: “No one is ever going to sit in this chair.”

Making my own Windsor chair was like that. I can put a price tag on what the chair may be worth in the marketplace. But in its value for making me appreciate the craftsmen who first made it in Colonial America, my chair is priceless.

When he’s not at his new table saw, Rex Hammock is a publisher and editor in Nashville.
On January 20, the world will watch as the United States installs Barack Obama as its 44th president and the first African-American to occupy the White House. After a historic campaign, it’s sure to be an Inauguration Day to remember. And while the celebration is bound to offer new elements, it will undoubtedly build on the more than 200-year-old tradition of American presidential inaugurations.

“A presidential inauguration, like the presidential campaign preceding it, is both serious and silly,” writes Paul F. Boller in *Presidential Inaugurations* (Harvest, 2002). “It is important in the nation’s life as a public demonstration of the peaceful transfer of power from one president to another, regardless of political views and party affiliations, and as an occasion to celebrate the basic values that unite the American people and continue to shape the nation’s life. But a presidential inauguration is a carnival, circus, pageant and big show, as well as an occasion for solemnity, and, compared to a royal coronation, it is, as someone once observed, ‘kitsch.’ But Americans [love] the kitsch.”

Today, a presidential inauguration can seem like a huge party with some obligatory speeches stuck in between an extravagant parade and multiple balls. It’s an amazing celebration held to usher in new leadership. But it wasn’t always like that.
The First Inauguration

When George Washington was inaugurated as the first president of the United States in 1789, it was a momentous occasion. The new country was trying something different from the rest of the world, which was largely ruled by kings, sultans and czars. Because the newly adopted Constitution was silent about how a president should be inaugurated (Article II, Section I simply includes the brief oath each president takes before entering office), Washington was free to make the occasion as simple or as grand as he pleased. The world was watching, and many of Washington's own countrymen were skeptical about the new nation’s success, so setting a precedent was important.

“Washington was very insistent about establishing precedents and procedures, because everything he did was for the first time,” says Gene Smith, professor of history at Texas Christian University and curator of history at the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History. “His inauguration included lots of symbolism, pomp and circumstance.”

After boarding a ferry in Elizabeth Town, N.J., Washington traveled to New York, flanked by scores of boats carrying his admirers. In New York, the city’s leaders greeted Washington, and he stayed there for a week. He was honored with a 13-gun salute, representing the 13 Colonies. On Inauguration Day, 10,000 people filled the city’s streets “to watch and take part in the process,” Smith says.

The entire day was orchestrated, with a processional to Federal Hall, the meeting place set aside for Congress, and militiamen lined up for Washington to walk through. But after reciting his oath of office, he broke from the script and added his own words, “So help me God.” These words have been repeated by many presidents since. After the ceremony, Washington attended church services at St. Paul’s Chapel and later that night, he watched fireworks with the rest of the city. A few days later, the French minister gave a private ball in Washington’s honor.

Jefferson, Jackson Alter Traditions

While Washington’s inaugural opulence set the tone for inaugurations to come, two future presidents would transform Americans’ ideas about Inauguration Day and about the presidency in general, Smith says.

Thomas Jefferson, inaugurated in March 1801, was the first president to take office in...

Weighty Words

While 55 inaugural addresses have been composed since 1789 (not including the one to be presented this month), only a few have achieved distinction. Paul Boller, author of *Presidential Inaugurations*, says the most stirring are Washington’s first (1789), Jefferson’s first (1801), Lincoln’s first (1861) and second (1865), Wilson’s first (1913), Franklin D. Roosevelt’s first (1933) and John F. Kennedy’s (1961). Here are a few of the highlights:

George Washington: “The preservation of the sacred fire of liberty and the destiny of the republican model of government are justly considered, perhaps, as deeply, as finally, staked, on the experiment entrusted to the hands of the American people.” (1789)

Thomas Jefferson: “Sometimes it is said that man cannot be trusted with the government of himself. Can he, then, be trusted with the government of others? Or have we found angels in the forms of kings to govern him? Let history answer this question.” (1801)

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WEIGHTY WORDS

Abraham Lincoln: “Both [parties] read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other … The prayers of both could not be answered. That of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes.” (1865)

John F. Kennedy: “And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.” (1961)

A Growing Party. As the country grew up, inaugural ceremonies became more elaborate. In 1837, Martin Van Buren’s inauguration was celebrated with two balls, and his was the first inaugural parade to contain floats.

Frozen Trumpets. The weather was so cold during Ulysses S. Grant’s second inauguration in 1873 that the valves on the band’s musical instruments froze during the ball.

Feeding an Army. In 1857, James Buchanan’s inaugural ball was held in a building built for the occasion for a staggering $15,000. Six thousand guests drank $3,000 worth of wine and devoured 400 gallons of oysters, 60 saddles of mutton, four saddles of venison, 125 tongues, 75 hams, 500 quarts of chicken salad, 500 quarts of jellies, 1,200 quarts of ice cream and a 4-foot-high cake.

Truman’s Carnival. When Harry S. Truman won a surprise victory over Thomas Dewey in 1948, the Democrats were determined to celebrate with abandon, and the lavish, weeklong celebration was referred to as a “carnival” by Newsweek and Time. The Republicans couldn’t be too upset: Expecting a Dewey victory, the normally thrifty Republican-controlled Congress had approved $80,000 for inaugural purposes, and the Democrats gladly used it.

Jelly Bellies. At Ronald Reagan’s inauguration in 1981, 40 million jelly beans were eaten at his eight inaugural balls.

At right, souvenir program and button from Harry S. Truman’s inauguration after his stunning victory over Thomas Dewey. Items courtesy of American Spirit contributing editor Bill Hudgins, whose parents attended the event.
Washington, D.C., and was dedicated to a simpler concept of government. His inauguration followed suit. Staying in a boardinghouse with friends, Jefferson woke up on Inauguration Day, ate breakfast and walked down Pennsylvania Avenue to the Capitol. “There were no grand gestures or ceremonies,” Smith says. “No crowd gathered; two people heard his inaugural address, [Chief Justice] John Marshall, who administered the oath, and Vice President Aaron Burr.”

Earlier that morning, Jefferson had sent out copies of his address to local printers so it could be distributed to the people. But the inauguration itself was a quiet occasion, both because of Jefferson’s political ideals and because of his dislike for public speaking. Although Jefferson’s simplicity ushered in a new era, inaugurations changed again in 1829 when Andrew Jackson heralded the age of the common man. Known as a self-made man who would be the spokesman for common Americans, Jackson was the first “people’s president.” Citizens came from all over the country to see his inauguration, and at the public White House reception after the ceremony, 20,000 people came just to shake Old Hickory’s hand.

“The ceremony of Washington, the quietude of Jefferson and the rowdy experience of Jackson shows the evolution of the American politic,” Smith says. “Each inauguration shows the heartbeat of America and how it’s beating at that moment in history.”

So what can we expect to see in 2009? Smith envisions a combination of the Washington and Jackson philosophies. “Federalists like Washington would see today’s celebrations as being part and parcel of the political process, with the elite who helped the president get elected being involved in the events,” he says. “But today, we’re also hearing a lot about Joe Six-Pack and Joe the Plumber, so I think we’ll also see more of Jackson’s ceremony of the common man.”

Nancy Mann Jackson wrote about the North Alabama Hallelujah Trail of historic churches for the November/December 2008 issue.

Thomas Paine’s Cottage
Sandwich, England, UK

*Take an opportunity to holiday in Thomas Paine’s pre-Revolutionary War home and shop.

Constructed in 1677, Thomas Paine moved to this cottage in 1759. Later that year he was to meet and marry his first wife in Sandwich. Discover the pre-Revolutionary life of Thomas Paine at this 4-star, self-catering cottage. Located close to Canterbury and Dover for sightseeing or daytrips across the channel to Paris.

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+44 7507 063 822
Leo Tolstoy once tried to analyze Abraham Lincoln’s enduring appeal—which expanded beyond the bounds of the fractured country he held together—and isolate what made him so beloved.

“He really was not a great general like Napoleon or Washington,” the Russian novelist wrote, “... but his supremacy expresses itself altogether in his peculiar moral power and in the greatness of his character. Washington was a typical American. Napoleon was a typical Frenchman, but Lincoln was a humanitarian as broad as the world. He was bigger than his country—bigger than all the presidents together.”
The reach of Lincoln’s legacy seems palpable as the 200th anniversary of his birth approaches. It’s a nationwide celebration, although the densest concentration of events is in, of course, Washington, D.C., as well as Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois.

The three states all have particular claims to him: Lincoln was born in Kentucky, where the Lincoln family lived on 30 rented acres of the Knob Creek Farm from the time Abraham was 2 until he was 7 years old. The 16th president lived in Indiana from the time he was 7 until he was 21. Then he and his family moved to Illinois, where he carved out his professional life as a politician and a lawyer.

Lincoln attractions are scattered across the states, from the Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site in Hodgenville, Ky., to Lincoln’s boyhood home in Indiana to his home of 17 years in Springfield, Ill., that he left to head for the White House. From small county festivals to urban fanfare, Lincoln will be remembered.

Along with celebrations in 2009, the year of all things Lincoln, you’ll find artifacts on loan, traveling from museum to museum. Starting January 1, the Department of the Treasury will release new commemorative silver dollars to honor Abraham Lincoln.

And Lincoln sites both famous and obscure are renovating their structures as a timely birthday gift. In what seems like an obvious choice. Washington, D.C.’s Lincoln Memorial is being rededicated. The Lincoln Homestead State Park, the home of the president’s favorite uncle, Mordecai Lincoln, in Springfield, Ky., also has recently been renovated. (Visitors can also swing by the Lincoln Homestead Golf Course.) And in Lexington, Ky., officials have spruced up Mary Todd Lincoln’s house, where she and Lincoln stopped on their way to Washington for his term in Congress.

All the pieces have come together in time for the bicentennial of Lincoln’s birth, which organizers of the myriad events and programs hope will serve as a reminder of Lincoln’s legacy of equality and love of country.

“The anniversary is a chance for DAR members to promote historic preservation, education and patriotism,” says Norma Cole, DAR Commemorative Events Committee National Vice Chairman for the 200th Anniversary of the Birth of Abraham Lincoln. “President Lincoln certainly valued these as demonstrated by his love of learning, historic preservation and country after leading the nation through its greatest internal crisis. He will always be a most beloved leader.”

So what is it about Lincoln that moves us? It’s an intersection of the man and the country he served, according to Dr. Tom Schwartz, Illinois state historian.

“He reaffirmed the aspirations in the Declaration about the equality of men,” Schwartz says. “Lincoln helped redefine this ongoing experiment in American democracy by pointing out the fact that equality was an important principle, and that democratic government was not an abstraction. It was meaningful that people could govern themselves, but peaceful ballots and
Americans for the September/October 2008 issue.

Lincoln was a prototype of the "self-made man." He had to go through a sacrifice if he wanted to transmit those things from a previous generation that he had to go through it. You're part of a continuum. You better yourself, you become a better citizen, and you have more to offer.

And during a presidency defined by a struggle no other president had ever faced, Lincoln’s ability to confront a complicated problem may also have some bearing on the America of today. "The way Lincoln liked to deal with what seemed to be intransigent problems was always to look to the future and project things out over time," Schwartz says. "If people take the long view, they realize other people have been in difficult economic circumstances, and they came through it. You're part of a continuum.

Lincoln inherited all sorts of positive things from a previous generation that was only able to transmit those things through their sacrifice. He also had to go through a sacrifice if he wanted to transmit a better life to his children and their children. Life will have some hardship, but it's what we do for the future."}

Gin Phillips explored the sleep patterns of early Americans for the September/October 2008 issue.

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Celebrating Honest Abe

It's a yearlong party for Lincoln’s 200th birthday. Here are just a few ways to celebrate throughout 2009.

**Bicentennial Birthday Gala,**
*February 2, Washington, D.C.*
The nation’s capital will throw a world-class birthday bash with a concert and wide range of entertainment, including the premiere of the documentary “Looking for Lincoln.” Military bands will perform 19th-century popular and patriotic music.

**Marian Anderson Tribute and Naturalization Ceremony,**
*April 12, Washington, D.C.*
As part of the Lincoln Memorial Rededication Series, the National Park Service is hosting a tribute to the famous opera singer. A naturalization ceremony for new U.S. citizens will follow.

**“Our American Cousin,” February 6–8 and 13–15, Springfield, Ill.**
Coinciding with the Lincoln Bicentennial observance, this production is an authentic staging of the hit 19th-century comedy about a staid British family whose lives are turned upside down by the arrival of a boorish American relative. The play assumed its place in American history when it was performed at Ford’s Theater. The Springfield Theatre Centre production will recreate that pivotal union of theater and history. Visit www.springfieldtheater.com.

**Ravinia Festival,**
*July 7–August 15, Chicago*
The 17 concerts of this classical music festival, centered around the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Residency program, include several events celebrating Lincoln. Pieces include Aaron Copland’s “Lincoln Portrait,” which will be paired with Beethoven’s rousing Ninth Symphony in the annual Gala Benefit Evening. Lincoln will also be observed through music composed by his contemporaries, particularly Mendelssohn and Brahms.

**Unveiling of New Lincoln Statue,**
*February 11, Louisville, Ky.*
Kentucky sculptor Ed Hamilton will display a replica of his new Lincoln statue at Louisville’s Waterfront Park, where the statue will be unveiled later this year.

**Pioneer Week,**
*August 12–16, Rockport, Ind.*
Events will include a parade, community picnic, patriotic music, rafting, square dances and more.

**Bicentennial Period Ball,**
*February 12, Springfield, Ill.*
A presidential ball will be held the evening of Lincoln’s birthday in the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum Plaza. The 10th Cavalry Regiment Band will provide period music; guests are invited to wear mid-1800s attire. The event is free and open to the public.

**Tour de Lincoln,**
*August 16–23*
The 360-mile bicycle ride will snake through Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois, taking in historical Lincoln sites. Visit www.tourdelincoln.com.

**Lincoln Memorial Rededication,**
*February 12, Washington, D.C.*
“Four score and seven years” after President Warren Harding dedicated the Lincoln Memorial on May 30, 1922, the Lincoln Memorial will be rededicated with a series of events. This wreath-laying ceremony is the first.

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*American Spirit • January/February 2009*
The Other Colonial Coast

America’s Eastern Seaboard welcomed some of the earliest European colonists, who made their homes in settlements such as Jamestown and Plymouth. But for some Europeans, another coast offered their first view of the new land. Further south and west than the more famous settlements, the Mississippi Gulf Coast was also home to generations of early Americans.

By Nancy Mann Jackson
When King Louis XIV decided that the French crown should make a more permanent stake in the area, Pierre Le Moyne, Sieur d’Iberville, was commissioned to plant a colony somewhere near the mouth of the Mississippi. In October 1698, he set sail from France with about 200 colonists and arrived at Biloxi Bay six months later. The Mississippi Gulf Coast, once home to the Biloxi Indians and later to d’Iberville’s French, changed hands countless times over the centuries. With each new flag, a new culture was infused. Today’s visitors can visit beaches, golf courses and casinos—as well as see and touch remnants of a rich Colonial history.

Though Hurricane Katrina left its destructive mark on the area in 2005, including damage to a number of historic structures, today’s visitors can still enjoy a unique early American experience in Mississippi. “The Mississippi Gulf Coast offers more than 300 years of history, and some of our Colonial-era buildings are still standing,” says Janice Jones, manager of media relations for the Mississippi Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau. “The genuine Southern hospitality surprises many visitors. Most people expect good customer service but don’t expect to be treated like a friend or member of an extended family.”

As visitors enjoy the local hospitality, they can also soak up three centuries of history. Here are suggestions for some of the most interesting stops on your tour.

**Historic Ocean Springs.** In 1699, soon after arriving in America, d’Iberville selected the site of present-day Ocean Springs to build Fort Maurepas for the first French settlement in colonial French Louisiana. The fort was established as a foothold to prevent Spanish takeover of France’s colonial claims, and it was maintained until well into the 18th century. Hurricane Katrina destroyed a replica of the fort, but the community, known for its focus on history and the arts, continues to celebrate its historic founding with annual re-enactments depicting d’Iberville’s landing.

The name Ocean Springs was coined in 1854 by Dr. William Glover Austin, who believed the local springs had healing qualities. Thanks to his influence, Ocean Springs became a prosperous resort town. Since Colonial times, the community of Ocean Springs has enthusiastically celebrated its local seafood. The abundance of seafood allowed French and French-Canadian explorers and settlers to thrive within the Fort Maurepas area. In the late 19th century, the development of ice plant industries along the coast increased seafood sales. Locals and tourists can still purchase freshly harvested shrimp, fish, crabs and oysters in the area.

**Beauvoir.** Built from 1848 to 1852, Beauvoir’s raised, Louisiana-style architecture may be the reason it’s one of the only National Historic Landmark homes still standing on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, says Rick Forte, acting director. Although the house stands on a 52-acre site overlooking the Gulf of Mexico, “it was built 10 feet off the ground for the water to go under it in a hurricane, which it did, and to let air come in and cool the house,” Forte says.

Visitors can still tour Beauvoir in its original condition, thanks to the wisdom of its first owner, James Brown, a Mississippi planter who built the structure as a summer home for his family and served as his own architect. “We found out [that Brown drew his own architectural plans] when we were doing renovations,” Forte says. “He was off on some of his measurements, but they worked.”

Brown constructed a cottage on each side of the house, one as a guesthouse and the other as a schoolroom for his 11 children. The home’s third owner, Jefferson Davis, who retired to the home in 1877, converted one of the cottages to his library and wrote his memoirs there. As the former president of the Confederacy, Davis, who lived there until he died in 1889, lends another interesting story to the history of the home.

“Other than just being president of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis was also the secretary of war under Franklin Pierce, and he developed a lot of major battlefield technology—rifle artillery and rifle muskets, for example,” Forte says. “He was also a hero in the War of Mexico in 1846, a senator from Mississippi and a driving force behind the creation of the Smithsonian Institution. He was a very educated man and an authority on the Constitution and American law. A lot of [historians] think if the secession hadn’t happened, he would have been the U.S. president; he was that well-known in the North and the South.”
Mary Mahoney’s Old French House, which specializes in local seafood, is one of the most popular stops on the walking tour—especially if you can catch Bobby Mahoney in a storytelling mood.
SHIP ISLAND AND FORT MASSACHUSETTS. Located on West Ship Island, Fort Massachusetts was one of the last masonry coastal fortifications built in the United States, and it was named for the Union ship that was more or less permanently docked at the island. Construction began before the Civil War, but soon after the war started, Confederates seized the unfinished fort. By late 1861, federal forces regained control of the fort, completing it in 1866. “Although Fort Massachusetts fell victim to advancing military technology, its beauty and craftsmanship remain as symbols of a strong, yet passive coastal defense,” Jones says.

West Ship Island is one of five barrier islands off the Mississippi Coast, which are some of the last undeveloped coastlands in the country. A 70-minute ferry trip takes you to the island, where visitors can take a park ranger-guided tour of the fort, observe natural beach wildlife and explore undisputed beaches. The ferry service, started by Croatian immigrant Peter Skrmetta in 1926, is still run by the Skrmetta family for the National Park Service.

DOWNTOWN BILOXI. No trip to the Mississippi Coast is complete without taking Biloxi’s Historic Walking Tour. The visitors’ center offers detailed directions and historic information for a self-guided tour, which takes about 70 minutes to complete, according to Kay Miller, downtown services manager for the city of Biloxi. The tour includes stops at a number of historic homes dating to the 1840s, early churches, a fire station, a theater and the Magnolia Hotel, built in 1847 and the only pre-Civil War hotel left in Mississippi. The 62-foot Old Biloxi Lighthouse, which has led seafarers and fishermen to safe harbor since 1848, is among the earliest cast-iron lighthouses built in the country and now stands in the middle of a busy roadway.

Known at one time as the “Seafood Capital of the World,” Biloxi still celebrates its fishing heritage. Mary Mahoney’s Old French House, which specializes in local seafood, is one of the most popular stops on the walking tour, “especially if you can catch Bobby Mahoney in a storytelling mood,” Miller says.

While the restaurant was founded by his mother in 1964, Bobby Mahoney says part of the home in which it operates was built during the 1700s, while the main house was completed in 1835. Every room in the restaurant has a story to tell, and Mahoney enjoys sharing those stories with his guests. For instance, the oak tree in the courtyard is more than 2,000 years old, and Mahoney can point out the waterlines on his walls from Hurricanes Camille and Katrina. The restaurant also features historic memorabilia, including a telegram Mahoney’s mother received from John Kennedy in 1960, thanking her for campaigning for him; a 1979 invitation to visit the White House from President and Mrs. Carter; and a photo of Mrs. Mahoney “feeding Reagan on the lawn of the White House,” Mahoney says.

Along with telling stories, Mahoney takes pride in serving the fruits of the coastal land he calls home. “I always tell people those crystal blue waters in Florida just don’t yield the seafood we have here,” he says. “Some of our specialties are stuffed snapper, lobster Giorgio and Sisters of the Sea au gratin, but we also have shrimp, crab, oysters and beaucoups of fish. There’s a lot going on in that mud.”

Nancy Mann Jackson explored Louisiana’s Oakley House Plantation for the July/August 2008 issue.

WHERE TO STAY

Check out the Blessy House, a new B&B opening soon in Biloxi. [Call the Biloxi Visitors Center for details at (228) 435–6339.] The Oak Crest Mansion Inn (see photo at left) [(228) 452–5677, www.oakcrestmansion.com] is “rich in mafia history,” says Janice Jones of the Mississippi Gulf Coast CVB. The Magnolia Plantation Inn [(800) 700–7858, www.magnoliaplanationms.com] is “more like a country inn and is a little off the beaten path,” Jones says, and the Gulf Hills Conference Center (1866) 875–4211 offers visitors proximity to a golf course as well as plenty of Elvis Presley history.

WHERE TO EAT

Built around 1737 (depending on whom you ask), Mary Mahoney’s Old French House in Biloxi [(228) 374–0163, www.marymahoneys.com] is a can’t-miss dining spot for history buffs, specializing in local seafood, steaks and chops. (See photo at left.) Reservations are requested. In Gulfport, ConFusion [(228) 604–4617] is “a unique fine dining restaurant in a 1920s cottage,” Jones says.

Nancy Mann Jackson explored Louisiana’s Oakley House Plantation for the July/August 2008 issue.
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Everyone has a mental picture of George Washington from his portraits—a stern old man in a white wig whose ramrod posture signifies his eminence as the military general who became our first president. But he wasn’t always so.
On the Caribbean island of Barbados, the only foreign country he ever visited in his lifetime, a historic home presents a very different image of our nation’s first president. The George Washington House and Museum, the only historic site devoted to him outside the United States, describes him as a teenager in a reddish-brown ponytail, a country boy from backwoods Virginia thrilled by dinner parties, fancy balls, theater and his first taste of a wider world.

A film about the 19-year-old Washington’s 1751 visit to Barbados and recordings from his diary are highlights of this house museum, which opened in 2007. The museum also features an exhibit about historic links between Barbados and the United States. Charleston, S.C., was founded in 1670 by settlers from Barbados, and three signers of the Declaration of Independence, Arthur Middleton, Richard Henry Lee and Lewis Morris, had Barbadian ancestors, as did Civil War generals Robert E. Lee and George Meade.

Located in the plantation house where Washington stayed for six weeks, the museum opened after a painstaking restoration, research and archeological excavations. It was accomplished with the help of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation in Virginia, the University of Florida School of Architecture’s Preservation Institute of the Caribbean, historians in Barbados and the Society of the Cincinnati, a group of eligible descendants of commissioned officers of the Continental army and navy and the French army and navy who served in the Revolutionary War.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) helped finance the $3.5 million restoration of the 1715 house, together with the government of Barbados and the Barbados National Trust. A visit by then-first lady Hillary Clinton, who in 1997 placed a plaque on the house during a visit with President Bill Clinton, helped spur Barbados to buy and restore it as a heritage site. When the restoration project was officially launched in 2000, Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens was the most logical and symbolic location for the announcement.

George Washington House offers a fascinating glimpse of a little-known chapter of Washington’s early life, where he saw his first big city and military fort and forged connections that influenced the course of his life.

“George Washington’s visit to Barbados proved to be a turning point in his life—a dividing line between his intensely provincial and ordinary youth and a young adulthood marked by extraordinary energy and ambition, in which he began the ascent that would make him the transcendent hero of American history,” wrote Jack Warren Jr., executive director of the Society of the Cincinnati and a historian who specializes in Washington.

INTRODUCTION TO GENTEEL SOCIETY

Washington was invited to Barbados to accompany his half-brother, Major Lawrence Washington, who had tuber-
culosis, because the British colony promised a mild, salubrious climate. At the time, he had never strayed further than 200 miles from his birthplace and never left Virginia, except for crossing the Potomac River into Maryland.

The Washington brothers sailed on a two-masted sloop called the Success around September 19, 1751, a six-week journey and the only long sea voyage of Washington’s life. He kept a daily log on the boat, which anchored in Carlisle Bay on November 2. The brothers planned to stay with Lawrence’s in-laws—Major Gedney Clarke and his wife—but because someone in the household (perhaps Clarke’s wife) had smallpox, they rented a house in the countryside instead, about a mile from Bridgetown, the capital.

Washington confided to his diary he “was perfectly ravished by the beautiful prospects which on every side presented to our view” in Barbados. Unlike Virginia, Barbados was more densely populated. Bridgetown was a thriving, cosmopolitan seaport where sometimes 300 ships were docked in the harbor, in contrast to the rural and small-town Virginia to which he was accustomed. And it was more intensely cultivated, mostly with sugar cane. It was “so furnished with inhabitants it resembled a village in the midst of a garden,” a contemporary wrote.

The brothers rented a house owned by Captain Richard Crofton, commander of nearby James Fort, and built around 1715 by his father-in-law, William Cogan. Overlooking Carlisle Bay, it was “very pleasantly situated,” Washington wrote. “The prospect is extensive by Land and pleasant by Sea as we command the prospect of Carlyle Bay & all the shipping in such manner that none can go in or out without being open to our view.”

The Washingtons often rode horses to Bridgetown to dine with Clarke, and they met military officers, planters, judges, merchants, the governor of Tortola in the British Virgin Islands and members of a local men’s club, the Beefsteak and Tripe Club. The younger Washington was delighted by the “Hospitality and Genteel behavior” shown to “every gentleman stranger by the gentleman Inhabitants” of Barbados, who invited the Washingtons to their homes, or visited them at the Crofton house. “The Ladys Generally are very agreeable,” he also noted.

Washington wrote, “The prospect is extensive by Land and pleasant by Sea as we command the prospect of Carlyle Bay & all the shipping in such manner that none can go in or out without being open to our view.”

“George Washington’s visit to Barbados proved to be a turning point in his life—a dividing line between his intensely provincial and ordinary youth and a young adulthood marked by extraordinary energy and ambition ...”

Though Washington evinced no interest in a military career before his trip to Barbados, he was intrigued by its many British fortifications, such as Charles Fort, whose stone ramparts still stand. He wrote in his diary that Barbados was actually “one entire fortification.”

But his diary notes he was “strongly attacked with the small Pox” on November 17, 1751. The attack turned out to be a blessing in disguise: Since he survived the deadly disease, he became immune. During the American Revolution, when smallpox raged among his troops, Washington was safe.

“Barbadians always like to say we saved him for the American Revolution and the presidency,” Hynam says.

Unfortunately, Lawrence’s TB worsened, and he moved to Bermuda before returning to Mount Vernon, where
he died in 1752. Washington sailed home alone, departing Barbados on December 22, 1751. After his arrival in Yorktown, Virginia Governor Robert Dinwiddie welcomed him for dinner at the Governor’s Palace. Dinwiddie, who had served in the Caribbean, was interested in news from Barbados and was so impressed by the young Washington he later appointed him military adjutant in the British Army, a post Lawrence held before him.

**MISTAKEN IDENTITY CORRECTED**

 Members of the Society of the Cincinnati were traveling in Barbados in the late 1980s when they happened to notice a sign on a small townhouse that claimed George Washington stayed there. The treasurer of the Connecticut chapter, Harold G. Holcombe, wrote the Barbados National Trust to ask if a plaque could be installed. That was the wrong house, the trust informed him. Since 1945, local historians knew the nearby Bush Hill House was the actual house where Washington stayed there. The treasurer of the Connecticut chapter, Harold G. Holcombe, wrote the Barbados National Trust to ask if a plaque could be installed. That was the wrong house, the trust informed him. Since 1945, local historians knew the nearby Bush Hill House was the actual house where Washington stayed there. The treasurer of the Connecticut chapter, Harold G. Holcombe, wrote the Barbados National Trust to ask if a plaque could be installed. That was the wrong house, the trust informed him. 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says. “It might have been the teacups they drank from. I didn’t expect that.”

When restoration began in 2004, yellow ocher was chosen to paint the exterior, based on one of the layers of paint found on the walls, and lime wash, a traditional process, was used by Bruce Jardine, a restoration architect at Gillespie and Steel Associates in Barbados. Caribbean Georgian-style elements were preserved, like wooden louvered shutters to admit breezes, wide moldings and solid interior doors.

Salvaged materials, like bricks used as ship ballast, sandstone tiles and old window glass, were used. A stair banister from Codd’s House in Barbados, where the Emancipation Act to free slaves was signed in 1834, was used to rebuild a staircase demolished in the 20th century. A veranda covering the entire ground floor was rebuilt, copying a 19th-century porch. In a separate kitchen building, the hearth and larders were rebuilt from an 1804 floor plan.

Former curator Douglas Winterich researched and sourced furnishings to reflect the fact that the house was a rental property in Washington’s time, not the ornately furnished Caribbean “great house” many visitors expect. Winterich, previously executive director of New Jersey’s Burlington County Historical Society, purchased some reproductions from Colonial Williamsburg as well as local craftsmen, bought some in England and borrowed others from the Barbados National Trust collection. In the smaller bedroom that historians believe was Washington’s, highlights include an 18th- or 19th-century cherrywood chest of drawers and a “hair trunk” reproduction, whose untanned animal skin still retains its hair to protect the trunk.

The museum on the second floor was designed by the Synergy Design Group, a Tallahassee, Fla., architecture firm, with input from a local advisory committee that included Hynam, curator Winterich and Dr. Karl Watson, a historian at the University of the West Indies in Barbados.

Visitors can sit next to a life-sized statue of young George Washington as he reads from his diary. Another exhibit describes the 17th- and 18th-century migration of 50,000 people from Barbados to the American Colonies, particularly to Charleston and Wilmington, N.C., where a group of investors called the “Society of Barbados Adventurers” established settlements. Yet another exhibit discusses the slavery system and Washington’s later ownership of slaves.

But the most charming and contemporary touch is the short film at the visitor center, and its revisionist image of Washington as a handsome teenager diving in the Caribbean Sea, walking barefoot on a white beach in Barbados and voyaging on a restored ship from Chestertown, Md. It may forever change your view of the father of our country.

Sharon McDonnell's story on Augusta, Georgia’s Meadow Garden ran in the November/December 2008 issue.
Ever since the first humans built a fire in their dark cave, people have realized the importance of proper indoor lighting. But ever since Edison invented the light bulb, lighting technology has, unfortunately, remained relatively prehistoric.

Modern light fixtures do little to overcome problems associated with improper lighting, such as eyestrain, dryness, and burning. As more and more of us spend longer and longer hours in front of our computer monitor, these problems are compounded. And the effects of improper indoor lighting are not necessarily limited to a physical problem: the quantity and quality of light can also play a part in both our mood and work performance.

Studies show that sunshine can both lift your mood and enhance your energy levels. But as we all know, the sun does not always shine. Now, however, there’s a solution to the problem—The Balanced Spectrum® floor lamp will change not only the way you see, but also the way you feel about your living and work spaces. It brings the benefits of natural daylight indoors, simulating the full spectrum of daylight.

The Balanced Spectrum’s 27-watt compact bulb is the equivalent of a 100-watt ordinary light bulb. With the lamp’s sharp visibility, you will see with more clarity and enjoyment in close tasks such as reading, writing, sewing, and needlepoint. It is especially helpful for aging eyes.

Experience sunshine indoors at the touch of a switch. This amazing lamp is not only easy on the eyes, it is easy on the hands as well, featuring a special “soft-touch, flicker-free” rocker switch that is easier to use than traditional toggle or twist switches. And its flexible gooseneck design enables you to get light exactly where you need it. The high-tech electronics, the user-friendly design, and a bulb that lasts 10 times longer than an ordinary bulb—all these features make the Balanced Spectrum® floor lamp a must-have.

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

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This light can change the way you live and work

It provides excellent lighting which is very close to true daylight. The lamp itself is light enough to be moved easily around a room and an office. The glare-free characteristics provide a very non-stressful illumination for prolonged reading.

- Stanley G., M.D.

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

- Donna E.

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Results not typical.

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