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From the President General

If you’ve ever had your own vegetable garden, you have had to find a way to deal with the piles of cucumbers, tomatoes, squash and okra that pile up on your kitchen counters. In one of our cover features, we discuss the many ways that Colonial Americans preserved their harvests to last throughout the year and how modern Americans are learning to use these methods again.

If you’re interested in growing your own heritage garden, check out our feature on the plants and plans of early American gardens. These Colonial gardens served two purposes: Herb and vegetable gardens provided necessary food, while decorative ornamental layouts of greenery and colorful flowering plants provided enjoyment. Historic sites like Colonial Williamsburg and Monticello are famous for their gardens, and they, along with online heritage garden sites, even sell seeds and plants so that anyone can create an authentic 18th-century revival garden.

Daughters from all over the country will be excited to read more about El Camino Real de los Tejas, a trail whose history dates back more than 300 years. Starting as an Indian trail, the Spanish later used it to link their Louisiana and East Texas missions and forts to Mexico. After decades of hard work by DAR members, El Camino Real recently became a U.S. National Historic Trail.

In this issue we also tell the little-known story of Navy Captain James Willing, whose military activity on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers caused greater problems for the British than any other Continental Marine operation during the Revolutionary War. He recruited Continental Army soldiers and even some local river pirates for his missions, calling his new recruits “Marines,” marking one of the first engagements by the fledgling Marine Corps.

In our Spirited Adventures department, we explore St. Mary’s City, Md., one of the prime archaeological sites in the country. Founded in 1634 by 140 English settlers, the tiny St. Mary’s City was the incubator of religious freedom in the United States and flourished for 60 years. However, with the transfer of the Maryland Colony’s capital to Annapolis, the town declined and virtually disappeared by the Revolutionary War. Today, a living museum is bringing the history of St. Mary’s alive again.

We salute Gail Chumbley, the 2005 winner of the DAR Outstanding Teacher of American History Award, in our Class Act department. She is actively involved with the Library of Congress’ Veterans Oral History Project, and each year her students at Eagle High School in Eagle, Idaho, record the histories of veterans of World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War, preserving those memories before they are lost forever.

Linda Gist Calvin
Working as a scientist, Maggie Gentz knows that job satisfaction is never immediate. In fact, she can spend days in the lab at the Institute for Molecular Bioscience at The University of Queensland in Australia, where she's earning her doctorate, and hit dead end after dead end with her research. But that never seems to deter her, because she knows a breakthrough is always around the corner.

"The rare feeling of discovering something truly novel is elating, and it makes all the long hours and occasional frustrations of experiments that haven’t gone according to plan worthwhile,” says Ms. Gentz, who is screening the venom of native Australian spiders to find new, earth-friendly insecticides. "The bonus is that it encourages and inspires me to keep going with the next phase of the project, because solving one part of the equation always leaves more questions to be answered. It’s undoubtedly one of the most rewarding aspects of being a research scientist.”

Growing up near Boston, Ms. Gentz always had a passion for science. “From early on, I was quite certain that I wanted to work with animals,” she says. “I knew it was something I wanted to do for the rest of my life.” So in high school, she started working toward that goal. As part of a school project, she volunteered at an aquarium in Connecticut. "That place and the fantastic people who worked there taught me a lot about science, the importance of environmental and marine conservation, and how to be a good volunteer and citizen,” she says.

Ms. Gentz continued working at the aquarium once she entered Connecticut College, where she studied biology and chemistry. After graduating with honors, she moved to Hawaii to earn a master’s degree in entomology at the University of Hawaii. In 2007, she moved to Australia to begin the doctorate program, which she expects to complete in the next two years.

A typical day for Ms. Gentz includes planning and conducting her own research, collaborating with other scientists on joint projects, learning new techniques and instruments, training others on how to use them, and volunteering in the community to help increase interest in science. On two nights every month, she is busy milking her subjects—40 funnel-web spiders and tarantulas—to get the venom needed for her research. “My goal is to determine the physical structure and biochemical activity of the individual venom components,” she says. “Each venom is a complex chemical cocktail consisting of at least hundreds of toxins, each with a different biological role.”

The hard work has paid off. In her short career, Ms. Gentz has received many honors, including scholarships, research grants and published articles. Most recently, she was selected as one of the Young Science Ambassadors for the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering. “I was able to travel to the Australian Outback and speak with students in rural communities about opportunities to study and create careers in science, which was incredibly rewarding,” she says.

Her passion for volunteering extends to her involvement with the DAR. “I enjoy being a Daughter because of the much-needed community work the organization does and the volunteer causes it supports, including awarding scholarships and increasing literacy,” says Ms. Gentz, a member of the Aloha Chapter, Honolulu, Hawaii.

She joined the DAR when she moved to Hawaii—16,000 miles from her hometown. “Hawaii is a place steeped deeply in cultural knowledge, and I felt that getting to know my ancestors better would be a way to stay connected to my family on the East Coast, even though I was living so far away,” Ms. Gentz says. “Also, after working in a lab all week it was a great relief to go to a DAR meeting and chat with the other Daughters about something other than work. Their support meant a great deal to me while I was working on my master’s degree, and I’m pleased to be able to contribute now as a full member.”
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For more information, please contact the NSDAR Office of Development at (800) 449-1776 or giftplanning@dar.org.
National Treasures
Step inside the DAR Museum for a closer look at its fascinating collection.

Steeped in History
Miss Mercy Wood Tyler of Boxford, Mass., ordered this porcelain tea set, with a hand-painted, pseudo-armorl decoration, in 1824. According to the original bill of sale, also in the collection, the set was shipped from China through Amsterdam to England before arriving in the United States.

Both in Britain and in the Colonies, tea drinking was an elaborate affair with a strict code of manners. The social custom required many specialty items such as a large slop bowl for waste and a tea caddy (the rectangular bottle with a lid) and caddy spoons for dispensing tea leaves. Although tea consumption in America plummeted after the Tea Act of 1773, proper tea parties were still enjoyed by the upper classes.

The DAR Museum purchased the tea set through the Bernice Abbott Cope Bequest.
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.
IN GAIL CHUMBLEY'S CLASSROOM, preservation takes top priority. No, her students at Eagle High School in Eagle, Idaho, aren’t renovating historic structures or digging up old family photos—instead they’re recording and archiving the oral histories of American war veterans. Whether her students are talking to homeless veterans about their service to our country or tracing population growth in their burgeoning Idaho community, one thing is certain: The history Chumbley teaches her students reaches beyond the pages of a traditional textbook.

Each year, Chumbley’s students record interviews with veterans of World War II, the Korean War or the Vietnam War. Drawing from these interviews, she has created a repository of oral history that adds another dimension to her daily history lessons. “There’s something magical about oral history and spoken words,” Chumbley says. “It really connects people in a positive way.”

Chumbley recalls when a former student flew to Chicago to interview his uncle, who had been withdrawn since he returned from serving in the Vietnam War. For the first time in decades, he opened up to family members, and they were able to help him grieve, Chumbley says. “Once my students hear stories like this, history means something tangible to them. Oral history lends lifeblood to the study of the past.

“I might be the only person who introduces history to these students; I have to do it in a meaningful way,” Chumbley adds. “Oral history is the glue that holds us together as a country. We have a responsibility to carry on the stories, not just in history books, but by collecting the histories of individuals all over. Put that together, and you have our country’s real history.”

THE GIFTS OF ORAL HISTORY

In addition to teaching Advanced Placement American history and an honors history class for high-school sophomores, Chumbley heads up a history club for students who take a deeper interest in America’s past. One of the group’s special projects is to visit with homeless veterans and record their oral histories.

In 2007, the history club collected testimony from every living superintendent who had served in Eagle High School’s district. “Our district went from a barn in a field to one of the largest districts in the state,” Chumbley says. “It was fascinating to trace the growth of the area.”

After collecting the oral histories, Chumbley and her students organized an event for which the interviewees came to the school for a panel discussion about changes in technology, population growth and a major fire that had affected the district. “It was a neat way to reach out and remember who we’ve been and who we are,” Chumbley says. “I wanted to show the district the importance of history and accounting for the changes we’ve experienced.”

The history club took on another big assignment when it committed to help raise money for the World War II Memorial, which opened in Washington, D.C., in 2004. By launching a Web site, sending press releases and soliciting donations on radio shows, Chumbley’s students managed to raise nearly $26,000—more than any other school in the country.

“My students had heard stories from their own family members who served in World War II, so they were really excited to contribute,” she says. “It showed me how much good kids can do.”

Chumbley’s efforts to be an exceptional teacher have been noticed outside the classroom, too. In 2004, Chumbley was the first teacher to be presented the Gilder Lehrman Preserve America Award for Idaho by Laura Bush, and, in 2005, the DAR named her its Outstanding Teacher of American History. “I had to give a speech when I was given the DAR award,” Chumbley recalls. “I was incredibly nervous, but the Idaho delegation was there cheering me on, and it was great to have their support.”
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In November 2008, the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History (NMAH) reopened its doors after the completion of a two-year, $85 million renovation of the building’s center core. The NMAH now boasts a sky-lit, five-story atrium, which displays more than 400 objects representing the breadth and depth of the museum’s collection, as well as a Star-Spangled Banner Gallery designed to tell the story behind America’s flag and national anthem. Made possible with $46 million in federal funds and $39 million from private donors, the renovation also includes new elevators and restroom facilities, a new lobby for the Carmichael Auditorium, and food and retail shops.

Visitors at the reopening had the rare opportunity to see the White House copy of President Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address displayed in the Albert H. Small Documents Gallery. The copy of the manuscript is one of five drafts, and it is the last written in Lincoln’s hand. In honor of its reopening year, the NMAH will host new exhibits and programs throughout 2009. For more information, visit www.americanhistory.si.edu.
THE HISTORIC CHARLESTON FOUNDATION invites you to explore the interiors and gardens of some of America’s finest Colonial properties. From March 19 to April 18, the Festival of Houses and Gardens will include three tours that will take visitors to at least eight properties dating from the Colonial period to the Antebellum and Victorian eras. The two- to three-hour tours give visitors a rare glimpse into the history and design of Charleston’s private gardens, as well as a guided historical tour of the city’s Old and Historic District.

Originally known as Charles Towne, Charleston, S.C., has long stood as an example of living history. The city is heralded for its commitment to preservation of historic homes and buildings. Strict laws have forbidden homeowners or developers to change any site in the city’s Old and Historic District without approval from the city’s Board of Architectural Review. Today, tourists can explore the modern city and take in almost the exact views people would have seen more than a century ago. For more information on the Festival of Houses and Gardens or to obtain tickets, visit www.historiccharleston.org.

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Celebrate Women’s History Month

In 1987, the National Women’s History Project petitioned Congress to make March the National Women’s History Month. Since Congress approved the resolution, support for this monthlong celebration has grown, and it has evolved into a theme-based event celebrated around the country. This year, National Women’s History Month will honor women who have taken on leadership roles in the environmental movement on a local, state or national level. To promote this celebration of women in your community, the NWHP recommends the following:

• Suggest that local schools participate in green projects that emulate the accomplishments of female leaders.
• Plan a reception to honor female leaders who have served your community.
• Write a letter to the editor of your local paper explaining the importance of honoring Women’s History Month and suggesting women in the community who deserve to be heralded.

For more information on the National Women’s History Project or ways to celebrate Women’s History Month, visit www.nwhp.org.

Picturing America

From Pennsylvania’s Amish country to Arizona’s rodeos, William Albert Allard’s collection of photography has captured the essence of American life since his career began in the 1960s. Allard began his career photographing Amish life in Lancaster, Pa., nearly 40 years ago, and continued his work, capturing Southwestern rodeo life, class disparities in the Deep South, the lakes of Minnesota, blues culture in Chicago and more. Portraits of America encapsulates the best of Allard’s work with large-format prints along with an introduction by the photographer himself. “There is a lot to love about America,” Allard writes. “And as a photographer and a writer I’ve been able to find as much as I could possibly ask for.”

Dream World

Forget Wonder Woman—the latest comic book heroine is Beatrice Whaley, a modern-day teen who gets caught up in an 18th-century adventure. The wealthy Boston high-school senior finds her world turned upside down when she wakes up from a vivid dream about a soldier in a red coat. As Beatrice continues to dream about Revolutionary-era America, she becomes unable to separate her real life from her Colonial dream world and eventually winds up fighting British soldiers in the Battle of Long Island. With a commitment to historical accuracy, The Dreamer is an exciting, fun read for the young patriots in your life.

America’s Botanical Heritage

Trace America’s botanical history with Flowers and Herbs of Early America, a comprehensive guide to America’s Colonial and early Federal gardens. Written by Lawrence Griffith, curator of plants at Colonial Williamsburg, and accented with photographs by staff photographer Barbara Temple Lombardi, the 2008 book explores the cultivation and use of such early American flowers and herbs as hound’s tongue, all-heal and ragged robin. For gardening aficionados, Flowers and Herbs includes valuable instructions on planning and maintaining your own period garden. For more information about the history of Colonial gardens, turn to American Spirit’s story on page 17.
Family History Tools
Looking for a way to update your family records? These latest software programs can help you organize your files, search for important facts and design your family tree.

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The Family Tree Maker software helps you create your family tree with ease. The program allows you to search Ancestry.com for your family records, merge your findings into your family tree and share your work with relatives. The software’s interactive maps give you an up-close look at exactly where your ancestors came from and allow you to track their migration paths. The result will be a family history your relatives will treasure for years to come.

- **Cost:** $30
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What’s in a Name
Discover the meanings behind some of the DAR chapters’ interesting names.

The namesake of the Sarah Platt Decker Chapter, Durango, Colo., was born in Mcdoo Falls, Vt., on October 1, 1855. At an early age she became concerned about the welfare of women and children, and worked on their behalf when she moved to Denver in 1877. She was responsible for many legal reforms affecting women and children in Colorado, and became the first woman appointed to the state’s Civil Service Commission. She died in San Francisco in 1912, while attending a convention of the General Federation of Women’s Clubs. Mrs. Decker spent time in Durango in 1908–1909 as a houseguest of Mrs. John L. McNeil, State Regent of Colorado. It was during this time that chapter members met her, and they later elected to name the chapter in her honor and to accept her motto: “Never frown, never sigh, keep step.”

The Daniel Davison Chapter, Clarksburg, W.Va., is named for Major Daniel Davison, known as “the proprietor of Clarksburg, Va. (W.Va.).” He received a royal grant of 400 acres, from which he donated the land for the courthouse, jail, the Hopewell Baptist Church and a cemetery, now called the Daniel Davison Cemetery. The Daniel Davison Chapter is the trustee for this cemetery, which is maintained as a historic site. Davison was also a major of the militia during the American Revolution, commander of Nutter’s Fort and a representative in the House of Burgesses.

The Fort Crailo Chapter, Rensselaer, N.Y., is named for the fortified home of Hendrick Van Rensselaer, which was built in the early 18th century. Bequeathed to the DAR in 1924, it was turned over to the state of New York to be maintained as a museum of early Dutch life along the Hudson Valley. The Fort Crailo Chapter held its chartering ceremony there in 1933, and helped to get the site listed on the National Historic Registry in 1962. The well behind the home is where the best-known versions of “Yankee Doodle” were reportedly written during the French and Indian War. The Fort Crailo Chapter has adopted a tricorn hat with a yellow feather as its chapter emblem.

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

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

Seven Deadly Sins
DAR Museum, Washington, D.C., April 3 through August 15, 2009

Learn lessons about dog envy, hare pride, miserly greed and other fabled enticements in the exhibition “Seven Deadly Sins: Fables and Early-American Temptations.” This exhibition takes a lighthearted look at life in early America and the temptations of envy, gluttony, greed, lust, pride, sloth and wrath. A reading area featuring fables, fairy tales and hands-on activities is also part of this family-friendly exhibition.

Jamestown and Bermuda: Virginia Company Colonies
Jamestown Settlement, Williamsburg, Va., March 1 through October 15

Bermuda, settled in 1609 as the result of a shipwreck, is the focus of an exhibition that explores its governmental, religious and trade connections with Jamestown, Va. The British established their presence in Bermuda when The Sea Venture, a British flagship, wrecked on the island’s coast. The surviving passengers left the island to sail to Virginia in 1610, leaving behind more than two dozen objects that will be exhibited courtesy of the Bermuda Maritime Museum. In conjunction with Bermuda’s 400th anniversary, the exhibit includes a 17th-century speaker’s chair from the Virginia House of Delegates, portraits of King James I and Queen Elizabeth II, silver communion sets dating to the 17th century, and examples of Bermuda-made furniture and silver spoons.

Evangeline: From Tragic Heroine to Cultural Icon
The Historic New Orleans Collection, New Orleans, La., through April 25

More than 160 years ago, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow published “Evangeline: A Tale of Acadie,” a poem about a heroine who searches America for her lost love after the Acadian exile from Nova Scotia. Longfellow’s fictional poem was based on the true story of Acadians exiled in 1755. These people eventually settled in southern Louisiana and became known as Cajuns. The exhibit explores the relationship between the poem and Cajuns, who have embraced Longfellow’s work as part of their culture. Among the highlights are images from the 1929 silent film “Evangeline” and a copy of the poem illustrated by artist Howard Chandler Christy in 1905.

In the Galleries

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More than 160 years ago, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow published “Evangeline: A Tale of Acadie,” a poem about a heroine who searches America for her lost love after the Acadian exile from Nova Scotia. Longfellow’s fictional poem was based on the true story of Acadians exiled in 1755. These people eventually settled in southern Louisiana and became known as Cajuns. The exhibit explores the relationship between the poem and Cajuns, who have embraced Longfellow’s work as part of their culture. Among the highlights are images from the 1929 silent film “Evangeline” and a copy of the poem illustrated by artist Howard Chandler Christy in 1905.
Most Americans believe they know the story of Valley Forge and the Revolutionary War. That storyline usually goes like this: The brave and courageous American revolutionaries survived Valley Forge, and with the assistance of the French, won the rebellion against the British Army and their allies, the German mercenaries. In fact, however, some of the Germans fought brilliantly for our side. The Drillmaster of Valley Forge: The Baron De Steuben and the Making of the American Army by Paul Lockhart is the story of the Prussian captain who was "essentially a nobody," yet earned immortal fame fighting for the American side.

Imagine a middle-aged Prussian Army captain, Baron Friedrich Wilhelm Ludolf Gerhard Augustin von Steuben, who sympathizes with the ideals of the new American republic. Picture Captain Steuben deciding to emigrate to the American Colonies to fight with General George Washington. Through a series of misrepresentations and deceit, he becomes one of Washington's top generals and probably changes the course of the war.

Americans in Paris encouraged Steuben to help and, to facilitate that, these Paris-based supporters crafted a fictional résumé for him. In December 1777, they wrote Washington singing Steuben's praises as a "Lieutenant General" in the Prussian army who had served 20 years fighting in all of King Frederick the Great's military campaigns. Almost all of these details were false, but it was enough to encourage Steuben to come to America to volunteer his services—and to receive a hearty welcome when he arrived.

No one could know that the war would continue for five more long years, but the newly arrived and action-hungry Steuben worried that it would soon be over because the Continental Army had just won the Battle of Saratoga. Therefore, he set out for the headquarters of the American Congress in York, Pa., to offer his services. He was canny enough to tell the Congress that he would serve without pay for the duration and would expect payment only after the war was successfully concluded. Impressed that he did not want money up-front, Congress made him a captain and sent him immediately to Valley Forge.

The problems that haunted Valley Forge during that desperate 1777–1778 winter extended beyond just lack of food, clothing and supplies. The Continental Army was an army in name only, as most of its valiant soldiers were really militiamen—farmers and hunters with little or no formal training in the art of war.

Washington quickly recognized that Steuben knew far more about military strategy and tactics than most of his generals. Hoping that the Prussian with the impressive credentials could solve this crushing military problem, Washington made him the Inspector General of the Continental Army, which put Steuben in charge of soldier training and drilling. Steuben was ideally qualified for this formidable task and succeeded beyond anyone's expectations. He followed the classic model of training a company of experienced veterans and then having them drill the other companies. As the snow swirled, the men developed discipline and martial skills.

During the remaining years of the war, Steuben spent most of his time and energy creating and drafting the official regulations for the army (known as the Blue Book) and fighting the British in Virginia. Steuben's other great contribution to our military preparedness was to write a plan for Washington recommending the creation of a permanent military academy to train our future military leaders. Some years later, this vision for creating professional military officers came true at the United States Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., on the banks of the Hudson River.

As was often the case, Steuben's success and favor came at a price. Author Lockhart ably describes the backstory underlying this important military saga, complete with almost constant rivalries, backbiting and fierce competition among Washington's generals and the Colonial politicians. This clandestine war was usually waged in social settings or by letter-writing campaigns. Lockhart examines these internal struggles, as well as those against the common foe, and presents a convincing analysis of why and how Steuben succeeded.

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

The Bookshelf

New histories reveal the German contributions to American military efforts and Noah Webster's work to legitimize American English.
Like the Bible and the Constitution in their respective fields, “according to Webster” has become shorthand for the final, authoritative reference on words. And like those other standards, Noah Webster’s American Dictionary of the English Language endured sharp criticism and controversy from the start. Websterisms: A Collection of Words and Definitions Set Forth by the Founding Father of American English (Free Press, 2008), compiled by veteran New York Times crossword creator Arthur Schulman, is a compact collection of 1,500 entries from the original edition.

The introduction by Harvard historian Jill Lepore provides a fascinating context for Webster’s achievement in legitimizing the birth of American English, which had been considered at best a bastardization of “true” English.

Oddly enough, Webster could be critical of the American people in general, but he spent a large portion of his life in solitary labor defending their right to their own language. Schulman points out instances in which Webster’s definitions embody his personal quirks—references to family and his few friends (and sometimes to foes) as well as his admiration of Washington Irving above most other American writers. Read or skim this brief collection and you’ll never again think that reading a dictionary is dull.

—Bill Hudgins
Building a Heritage Garden

While most early Americans considered a garden a necessity, today's hobbyists are reviving many of their ancestors' principles in pursuit of their own heritage gardens.

By Maureen Taylor
Fragrant, floral and functional gardens in early America took many forms, from simple kitchen gardens to elaborate decorative landscapes. Creating an authentic Colonial-era style garden is a matter of understanding the difference between 17th- and 18th-century plots and those nostalgic re-creations of the early 20th century. It's all a matter of studying the past. Garden historians, for instance, study archaeological evidence such as walkways, posts and gates to gain a sense of the size and layouts of Colonial gardens. They also read probate inventories, letters, diaries and newspaper advertisements to gain insights into what was planted. Thanks to their efforts, it's possible to design a plot of historical horticulture right in your own yard.

Learning From Exemplary Gardens

Although few authentic period gardens still exist, historical evidence suggests that the average Colonial garden was simple and sparse. However, by the early 18th century, affluent southern families, seeking to copy the plantings of their homeland, began constructing elaborate gardens. Larry Griffith, curator of plants at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and author of Flowers and Herbs of Early America (Yale University, 2008), explains that these southern gardens had patterned and symmetrical spaces with a hierarchical approach: Practical gardens were placed near the house, followed by formal gardens, which were then followed by orchards. In his book, Griffith documents 56 flowers and herbs and includes an illustration of each plant accompanied by a contemporary photograph.
“Little is known about early American gardening except for the formal gardens of wealthy landowners such as Thomas Jefferson, George Washington and Lady Jean Skipwith,” Griffith says. Skipwith, an 18th-century woman who lived with her husband, Sir Peyton Skipwith, in Southside, Va., became known for her beautiful gardens and extensive library. At their family home, Prestwould, she maintained a collection of native and imported plantings, and her gardens once included an orangery and a bee house. She kept notes about her garden, and in her papers are invoices for seeds and plants, providing historians with insights into the horticulture on her property. Prestwould Plantation’s house and gardens are open to visitors.

William Middleton’s Middleton Place on the Ashley River in Virginia was another spectacular example of a classic southern garden. André Le Nôtre, the architectural garden designer who worked on Versailles, designed it. Today, visitors can see the original framework of what historian Samuel Gaillard Stoney called “the premier garden of the 13 Colonies.”

More modest southern gardens were largely modeled by those at Williamsburg, Va., where the House of Burgesses limited the size of a lot to a half-acre. A lot consisted of a fence, an orchard and, right behind the house, a work yard and a formal garden followed by the paddock. (Conversely in New England, flower gardens were usually in the front of the house.) The law required fences of at least 4-and-a-half feet. There were no shade trees in 18th-century Williamsburg due to insurance regulations regarding fire.

Flowers and bulbs were scarce. Estate owners tried to import their favorite plants from England with mixed success. For instance, one man wrote how in one shipment only three out of 100 bulbs made the passage in good condition. Shrubs like English Boxwood and...
plants such as dianthus, iberus and wallflowers had to be imported.

**Preserving ‘Colonial’ Gardens**

At Colonial Williamsburg and many other historic properties, “Colonial” gardens are really gardens designed in the Colonial revival, or Colonial restoration, style. After World War I, the public began to show an interest in preserving historic properties and their grounds, but these 20th-century versions of Colonial gardens present an idealized view of what life was like rather than the reality.

In the 1920s, restoration of the gardens and buildings at Williamsburg began. According to M. Kent Brinkley and Gordon W. Chappell in *The Gardens of Colonial Williamsburg* “the plants and recreated gardens in Williamsburg reflect the legacy of the early plantsmen,” though they do not necessarily duplicate them. (The authors give flowering dates of Williamsburg’s gardens at [www.history.org/almanack/life/garden/garintro.cfm](http://www.history.org/almanack/life/garden/garintro.cfm).)

“The art of Colonial revival gardens is a really beautiful art form and very well respected, but these are not necessarily original,” Griffith says. However, visitors to Colonial Williamsburg can view an authentic Colonial garden at the Governor’s Palace.

**Creating Your Own 18th-Century Garden**

It’s possible for average gardeners to create miniature versions of 18th-century masterpieces or historic kitchen gardens like those grown by generations of households. Since most historic properties maintain gardens, a visit to William Byrd’s Westover Plantation or one of the other James River Plantation Houses ([www.jamesriverplantations.org](http://www.jamesriverplantations.org)) might inspire you.

Skipwith and other Colonial gardeners consulted 18th-century garden books such as Philip Miller’s 1731 *Gardener’s Dictionary* for ideas on plants and arrangement. Thomas Jefferson kept track of his gardens at Shadwell and Monticello in a book that spans the years 1766 to 1824 (with gaps for periods when he wasn’t in residence). View Jefferson’s Garden Book online at the Massachusetts Historical Society Web site ([www.thomasjeffersonpapers.org/garden](http://www.thomasjeffersonpapers.org/garden)). The online Thomas Jefferson Encyclopedia also has information on his horticultural pursuits. Jefferson used native trees and shrubs such as holly, rhododendron and magnolia. His contributions to American horticulture include his work classifying plants and trees.

If you’re intending to lay out other types of plants and walkways throughout your garden, consider the plans of older gardens. The Smithsonian Institution maintains the Archives of American Gardens, a collection of around 60,000 images of the nation’s historic and contemporary gardens.
Finding the Right Plants

Victory Seed Company (www.victoryseeds.com) sells a wide variety of flower, vegetable and herb seeds to help customers create an 18th-century garden. However, there are some caveats. While some seeds and plants have been passed down generationally within families, many more varieties are either extinct or altered. The plants in your garden might be descendants of Colonial varieties. If you’re the owner of an old seed stock or just want to purchase seeds, check out the Seed Savers Exchange (www.seedsavers.org). The exchange began in 1975 when founders Diane Ott Whealy and Kent Whealy were given seeds from her grandfather. The seeds were from two plants that his parents had brought from Bavaria to Iowa in the 1870s. In addition, Monticello and Colonial Williamsburg sell seeds through their Web sites.

The basic implements used to dig and plant—spades and hoes for instance—haven’t changed much in the past 200 years. In the 18th century, however, these tools were custom made by local tradesmen and, therefore, were extremely valuable. At Colonial Williamsburg, modern tools are utilized to construct the gardens and manage pests. For instance, gardeners there introduce beneficial pests or use antibiotics to save their elm trees, options not available to Colonial gardeners.

If you decide to plant a historic garden, you’ll find plenty of options regardless of the dimensions of your plot. Pick a spot in your yard, purchase a few seeds and plants, and you’re on your way.

Maureen Taylor has a small herb garden at her New England home.
With the local food movement growing in popularity and food safety attracting headlines, more Americans have become interested in growing their own food. And not just a few patio containers of tomatoes. City-dwellers and rural Americans alike are planting flowerbeds and entire gardens full of vegetables, fruits and berries, or at least shopping for fresh produce at farmers’ markets.

But once the bounty is harvested, growers must find a way to deal with the heaps of cucumbers, tomatoes, squash and okra that pile up on their kitchen counters every few days during the summer. While eating freshly harvested food is part of the fun, safely preserving the fruits and vegetables makes it possible to eat locally and healthfully all year long. Plus, environmental concerns have made the trend toward eating local food more important to many people. Preserving food at home isn’t too difficult but it does require a learning curve—and learning to can, pickle, blanch and freeze can make one feel very Colonial.

“There’s definitely an interest in gardening and preserving food again, and the economy is a lot of the reason,” says Nancy Carter Crump, author of Hearthside Cooking: Early American Southern Cuisine Updated for Today’s Hearth and Cookstove (UNC Press, 2008). “In these troubled times, people are interested in looking back at the past, and preserving food is definitely a part of that.”

In early America, preserving food for the winter wasn’t optional; it was the only way a family was guaranteed to continue eating. And food preservation was a constant, daily task. “I think people would be surprised at the constant activity and thought that went into [food preservation],” Crump says. “They were always working to make sure there would be enough food available for the family and for slaves, if they had them.”

But like today’s cooks who might relish the sense of accomplishment Crump says she feels upon finishing a batch of peach preserves, Colonial women could enjoy the satisfaction that came from using their resources and stocking up for the year to come. “Memoirists of the day frequently expressed a sense that the house had been filled with the earth’s bounty, top to bottom, end to end,” writes Keith Stavely in America’s Founding Food (UNC Press, 2003).

Preserving in the Colonies

Those Colonial homes filled from top to bottom could have contained a wide variety of foods, as early American cooks had many options for preserving food, including drying, smoking, salting, pickling, potting, confiting, cheese making, wine making, brewing and sugaring. An inventory of the recipes included in Martha Washington’s Booke of Cookery and Booke of Sweetmeats, one of the most important historic cookbooks of its time, shows how important preserving was in feeding a family. According to Trudy Eden, author of Early American Table (NIU Press, 2008), the book’s general cookery section of 205 recipes contains four recipes for making cheese; eight for pickled meats; 11 for pickled vegetables, berries and flowers; and one for keeping quinces for a year. The sweetmeats section, which contains 326 recipes, includes 100 for making fruit preserves, conserves, marmalades, jellies and quidonies (a thick syrup or jelly often made of quinces): 23 for fruit pastes and cakes; and 20 for flower and herb candies.
While drying, pickling, salting, smoking and sugaring are still widespread methods of preserving foods today, potting is much less common. Modern potted meat has a mixed reputation, but in the Colonies, it was a popular way to keep food fresh to serve throughout the year. Various foods were potted, including meat (ham, beef, veal, tongue, game), poultry (chicken, turkey, swans), small birds (woodcocks, quail, larks), fish (shad, tench, trout, eels), shellfish (lobster, crab, shrimp), mushrooms and cheese.

“Generally, the meat or fish was cooked, boned, then pounded in a mortar with salt, pepper and a mixture of mace, nutmeg and cloves,” says Patricia Reber, a hearth cooking demonstrator, teacher and owner of the Web site hearthcook.com. “The mixture was firmly pushed into a potting pot and sealed from the air with a layer of clarified butter. The pot was covered with paper or a bladder tied securely in place and stored in a cool dry location for months.” (See sidebar for a recipe for potted swan.) Colonial cooks also “regarded pie shells as storage containers,” Edan says. “Some recipes for pie shells require coarse wheat or rye flours to make a tough crust. These crusts, called coffins, had removable lids. After the cook baked the pie, she removed the lid and poured melted butter over the filling to seal out the air. She put the lid back on and set the pie on a shelf for, some cooks said, a whole year. When she prepared the pie for a meal, she removed the lid, scraped off the butter, replaced the lid and heated the whole thing.”

**More Than a Long Shelf Life**

For Colonial Americans, preserving food wasn’t just about delaying its decay. Research shows that colonists also preserved foods in certain ways because they believed the processes were important for health reasons and it also added new flavors and variety to their diets.

“IT WOULD BE HARD TO UNDERESTIMATE THE IMPORTANCE PLACED ON DIGESTION IN THE EARLY MODERN ENGLISH WORLD,” Eden writes in “The Art of Preserving: How Cooks in Colonial Virginia Imitated Nature to Control It,” an article in the journal Eighteenth Century Life. “It ranked foremost in matters of preventive and therapeutic health. Anglo-Americans believed that most illnesses arose in the digestive tract as a result of eating too much, eating the wrong foods or eating the right foods improperly.”

Those beliefs about digestion informed the colonists’ practices of preserving food. Some preservation techniques, such as fermentation to produce wine, cheese, beer, bread and vinegar, imitated the natural process of digestion to refine foods. Other techniques, such as potting or making fruit preserves with sugar, “supplemented digestion by treating foods difficult to digest with easily assimilable, corruption-resistant substances,” Eden writes.

In addition to mirroring or assisting digestion for better health, preservation techniques in early America were important for making food more enjoyable. “While extending the shelf lives of their foods, colonists’ preserving techniques were also developed as cooking techniques to extend the variety of their foods,” Eden adds. “Actually, I think their concept of good food was as complex as ours is today, just different.”

While some accounts hint that early Americans used the spices and salt of the preservation process to cover up
“While extending the shelf lives of their foods, colonists’ preserving techniques were also developed as cooking techniques to extend the variety of their foods,” says Trudy Eden, author of *Early American Table*. “Actually, I think their concept of good food was as complex as ours is today, just different.”
the taste of spoiled food, food historians say that just isn’t true. According to Frank Clark, manager of the Historic Foodways Program at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Hanna Glass’ *The Art of Cookery*, the best-selling cookbook of the time, devotes eight pages to instructing cooks on how to choose the freshest meat at market. “The freshness and safety of meat was of great concern,” Clark says. “People of this period used spices in their food because they liked the taste of them, and they were somewhat costly, so using them made your food seem fancier and more high-class.”

Preserving Food Today

Food preservation has changed significantly since Colonial days, especially with the introduction of modern canning techniques in the mid-1800s and home freezers in the 1950s. But after the rise of commercial food preservation in the 1960s, canned and frozen foods became readily available at the supermarket—and modern Americans largely lost interest in preserving foods at home.

“I cannot recall ever being asked for a pickle recipe in the 15 years I have worked in the kitchens at Colonial Williamsburg,” Clark says. He does often hear people reminiscing about how their parents or grandparents “used to butcher their own hogs and make their own bacons and hams, or can their own vegetables,” he says.

But change is coming. “We have begun to turn the corner on the mass industrialization and processing of our foods,” Clark continues. “People are beginning to know what good cooks have always known, that local, fresh and natural foods taste better and are better for you than mass-produced and processed ones.”

For instance, the highly spiced foods relished by American colonists are much less common today. “I think part of the [reason] is the mass production and marketing of foods,” Clark says. “When you’re selling to huge audiences, you don’t want to put anything in there that might offend a potential customer, so foods got blander and blander.”

Although home food preservation has skipped a generation or two, “I now hear anecdotally how more parents are wanting to [preserve their own foods] to teach some family heritage to their children. They need help because they remember grandparents doing it, but their own parents didn’t, so they weren’t taught.”

– Elizabeth Andress, Ph.D., director of the National Center for Home Food Preservation

For those new to home food preservation, Andress recommends starting with processes that offer fewer food safety risks. Freezing foods is less risky than canning, because “food stored at frozen temperatures is not going to be microbiologically unsafe, while food stored in closed containers at room temperatures could be if not processed properly first,” she says. To get a more Colonial experience, beginners can try making jams and jellies, or properly pickled foods, which are also less risky from a food safety standpoint.

While Colonial Americans preserved their food out of necessity, those who do so today are motivated more by special food interests. The past two decades have seen varying interest in home preservation of salsas, mustards, barbecue sauces, tomato sauces and jams, according to Andress. “People now see home preserving in a more creative light than in the past, when it had more to do with needed food supply and subsistence,” she says. “Preserving food at home is seen as a creative outlet and a heritage-related activity rather than as a necessity.”

Nancy Mann Jackson’s story on inauguration history appeared in the January/February 2009 issue of *American Spirit*. 

Nancy Mann Jackson's story on inauguration history appeared in the January/February 2009 issue of American Spirit.
Since the American Revolution, the United States Marine Corps has been reputed for its bravery, heroism and steadfast patriotism—but before they were the Marine Corps, this renowned group was known as the Continental Marines. On November 10, 1775, the Continental Congress in Philadelphia passed a resolution demanding the creation of two battalions of Continental Marines to help defend the fledgling country against British forces, and the Marine Corps was born. In 1776, Continental Marines aboard the American frigate, *Alfred*, led by the future first commandant, Captain Samuel Nicholas, won some renown for their attempt to seize a store of royal gunpowder at New Providence, Bahamas.

While this landing was the first time a Marine-led expeditionary force stepped foot on foreign soil, a second expeditionary landing followed soon at the river town of Natchez in British-occupied West Florida. Furthermore, this expedition was led not by a Marine officer, but by a temperamental and newly commissioned 26-year-old Navy captain named James Willing.

Willing and his men had a special mission from Congress to take a volunteer riverine force down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers and ultimately join Continental agent Oliver Pollock, then in residence in Spanish-held New Orleans. The purpose was to establish a covert supply line between New Orleans and Fort Pitt, and possibly seize portions of weakly defended British West Florida.

Recruiting approximately 34 Continental Army soldiers and even some local river pirates, Willing, most likely in deference to his naval commission, called his new recruits “Marines.” While these men certainly were far different from their seagoing brethren, they were exceptional raiders. Their military activity on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers caused greater consternation for the British than any other Continental Marine operation during the war.
| Raiding British Territory |
A dashing figure, Willing was proud, quick-tempered and charismatic. In 1772, Willing moved to the Mississippi River district of British West Florida to make his fortune. Planting indigo and other crops on a sprawling plantation near the remote village of Natchez on the east bank of the Mississippi River, Willing quickly gained a reputation for being quarrelsome with his neighbor planters. His plantation was not a commercial success, and when war finally came to the region, Willing had already returned to Philadelphia.

While in Natchez, Willing befriended Oliver Pollock, who occasionally worked as a business associate of the Philadelphia-based Willing and Morris firm. Fluent in Spanish, Pollock’s presence in New Orleans was found acceptable to the Spanish governor of the Louisiana Territory. He was “granted lucrative trading rights, including contracts to supply the local military garrison [at New Orleans] with flour and foodstuffs.”

During the summer of 1777, Willing, now a commissioned Navy captain, was instructed by Congress to proceed to Fort Pitt in Western Pennsylvania and draw provisions from its commandant, General Edward Hand, for a secret expedition down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. While Willing’s written congressional instructions no longer exist, his mission can be surmised from letters of introduction sent to both Hand and Pollock. Willing arrived at Fort Pitt on December 12, 1777, and the letters that he carried also authorized him to recruit “Marine” volunteers for the expedition from the Army’s garrison troops.

Willing later claimed that Congress instructed him “to capture whatever British property he might meet with.” This part of the mission ultimately landed him in hot water. In a May 1778 letter to Pollock, Willing wrote: “[I have been] ordered to make prize of all British property on the Mississippi River” and to “apply to the Governor [of Louisiana] for Liberty to make Sale of them. That obtained, I am again instructed to pay one moiety [share] of the Net proceeds into Your hands as agent for the Congress.”

This gave Willing carte blanche to raid and pilage the British side (the east bank) of the Mississippi River and then sell the proceeds in New Orleans. The more he took, the wealthier he and his men could become. Acting as a land privateer and applying the rules of warfare at sea to inland river operations, Willing could gain the wealth that had eluded him. It also meant that his Marines were entitled to a share of prizes taken during the expedition. Since Gen. Hand’s Army garrison troops were paid an average of $6.66 a month, Willing easily recruited more than enough volunteers.

James Willing started his expedition at Fort Pitt, where the Pittsburgh DAR Chapter has owned the Blockhouse since 1894.

Twenty of the recruits came from the 13th Virginia Regiment. Another 14 men were enlisted from other garrison troops. These instant Marines later would be joined by other men, mostly river pirates picked up along the way.

| Forced Neutrality |
For his trip downriver, Willing purchased the armed boat Rattletrap for 300 pounds Pennsylvania currency, charging the bill to Congress. The boat had a flat bottom and was propelled by a make-shift sail, and oars or poles. Willing also requested that Rattletrap be armed with two swivel guns, most likely located on the stern and bow of the boat. Finally, on January 10, 1778, the expedition got under way for New Orleans.

Worried that Willing and his men might be headed his way, British Indian agent John Stuart had instructed two of his deputies, Hardy Perry and Robert Welsh, to station a party of Choctaw Indians on the bluffs at Walnut Hills [Vicksburg]. Perry wrote that “as for one bateau coming down, I do not think they will venture as they cannot but hear we are lying in wait for them.”

But Perry and Welsh were not diligent in keeping the Indians assigned to their posts, and the Choctaw soon went home. While the deputies scrambled to get replacements, Willing and his Marines aboard Rattletrap descended the Mississippi unnoticed. The British colonial secretary, Lord George Germain, was furious with Stuart.

On the night of February 18, 1778, 40 Americans under the command of Lieutenant Thomas McIntyre rowed ashore in two small barges and completely surprised Stuart’s deputy Indian agents in the home of John Watkins. While Willing’s men eventually let Watkins go, they captured and threatened to kill agents Robert Welsh, John Richmond Marshall, Henry Earnest and John Earnest. But before leaving with their prisoners, McIntyre and his men forced Watkins to take an oath of neutrality and plundered his plantation of everything they could carry.

Arriving at Loyalist Anthony Hutchins’ Natchez plantation the very next day, Willing took him prisoner and sent out small parties to arrest all British citizens who lived in the surrounding area. Those who did not answer the call willingly were brought in at gunpoint. Purposely misleading the citizens of Natchez that he commanded 500 men, soon to be followed by a larger force of 2,000 coming downriver in May, Willing declared the town and its surrounding plantations property of the United States.

| Negotiations Go Awry |
On February 20, 1778, some inhabitants were selected to negotiate terms with Capt. Willing and quickly proposed an eight-point document of capitulation. The terms included the release of Robert Welsh and that “they would not in any way take up arms against the American Spirit • March/April 2009
United States,” or “otherwise act to the prejudice of the United States nor in word or deed.” Finally, they guaranteed that all “persons, slaves and property shall remain safe and unmolested during [their] neutrality.”

With the exception of plundering Hutchins’ plantation and seizing 18 of his slaves and all movable property, evidence indicates Willing kept his word with the rest of the residents of Natchez, many of whom he knew when he lived there prior to the war. However, the area below Natchez was not included in the terms. Willing and his men’s actions grew out of control there.

Singed out for special treatment by Willing were the plantations of prewar enemies. Lt. McIntyre was well aware of the enmity that existed between Alexander McIntosh and Willing, and he sarcastically informed McIntosh, “That damned scoundrel James Willing is come once more to pay you a visit.” Willing’s men killed all of McIntosh’s livestock and stole most of his personal property. Other planters also had slaves seized and livestock destroyed or taken.

The area between Natchez and New Orleans became a virtual no-man’s-land as Willing’s men began raiding every plantation outside of Natchez proper. They were not beneath taking personal belongings from the planters. During the raiding below Natchez, Willing allegedly carried a blacklist of targeted plantations with him.

While the expedition caused great panic among the Loyalists of West Florida, the raid probably did more harm than good to the American cause. When Willing finally arrived in New Orleans, laden down with his plundered goods and stolen slaves, Spanish Governor Bernardo Galvez found himself in a diplomatic dilemma.

Peter Chester, the British governor in Pensacola, Fla., was not happy about the appearance of Willing and his “banditti.” To make matters worse, Gov. Galvez had given Willing and his men the freedom of New Orleans. One British prisoner complained: “The party of rebels under the command of ... James Willing were permitted to have a public guard house in the said town, that they mounted guard and patrolled the streets, and the county round, recruited, exercised and in every respect performed the function of soldiers, as publicly as British troops did...

‘Parties of rebels [were] fitted out from the said town of New Orleans, who went up the river and across Lake Pon[t]chartrain, plundered the British subjects thereof their [slaves], cattle and other property which was brought to New Orleans, and by authority of the Spanish government, sold at public sale.”

British citizens besieged Galvez with petitions demanding restitution of their private property. Galvez kept them mostly at bay and refused to be intimidated by British threats of retaliation. In fact, Pollock praised Galvez to Congress, stating that he should be “given the greatest applause ... for his noble Spirit & behavior on this Occasion, for, tho’ he had no Batteries erected, or even Men to defend the place against the Two Sloops of War [sent earlier by the British to enforce their demands against him] and at the same time a Small Sloop with a Hundred Men in the Lakes all coming against him with Demands & Threats, yet in this Situation he laughed at their Haughtiness and despised their attempts.” In short, they returned as they came.

| Natchez Fights Back |

Both Pollock and Willing remained concerned about the continued neutrality of the Natchez district. Some of this was due to Hutchins’ decision to flee New Orleans and return to his Natchez plantation where he proceeded to stir up the local inhabitants, urging them to break their previously coerced oath of neutrality. Consequently, Willing sent a lieutenant named Harrison with a body of men to see what was taking place there. Harrison expected no trouble from the local citizenry as he approached the town dock in a river bateau.

Calling upon “friends of the United States” to stand apart from the gathering crowd, a voice responded in reply for “all friends to the Natchez” to duck below the gunwales of Harrison’s bateau. At this point someone fired a shot (each side accused the other of ordering it to happen), and fighting broke out. Harrison and his men were heavily outnumbered by the locals, and quickly surrendered after five men were killed in the dockside ambush.

Willing was not dismayed by this reversal of fortune. In late May 1778, he was urging Galvez to “open the Levy,
and by Burning and destroying Buildings and other materials, put a stop to their Operations until such time as sickness or ye arrival of a Reinforcement might effectually prevent their fixing themselves solidly.”

The longer that Willing stayed in New Orleans, the more difficult Pollock and others found him. Using New Orleans as a sanctuary, Willing continued to raid the British West Florida territory whenever the opportunity presented itself and continued to expose his Spanish benefactors to potential British retaliation.

Concerned that Willing was beginning to alienate the pliant Gov. Galvez, Pollock wrote to Congress in August 1778 complaining about Willing’s continued presence in New Orleans: “What his next Pretense for tarrying here will be God knows, but as there is a clear Passage for him and his Party to go up. part by Land and Part by Water through the Spanish Territories by way of the Appelousa & Nachetosh and join Colonel [George Rogers] Clark I am determined to stop all Supplies in order to get him away.”

This was easier said than done. Galvez was gravely concerned that if the increasingly erratic Willing were allowed to return to the Natchez district via Spanish-controlled territory, he would inflame the situation by a resumption of plundering along the river. Instead, Willing was told he needed to return to the United States via a schooner while the greater part of his original expedition force was granted permission to travel northward under the direction of a more reliable officer, Lieutenant Robert George.

Willing finally departed New Orleans after settling his accounts with Pollock, who entrusted him with a letter to Congress along with a box of “Havana segars,” but neither Willing nor the cigars ever reached Philadelphia. Most likely captured by a British privateer off the capes of Delaware Bay, Willing was thrown into prison. He further aggravated his situation when the volatile raider argued with a British naval officer and was placed in irons for three months.

| In Willing’s Wake |

Willing’s entire venture brought Pollock to the brink of personal bankruptcy. Due to demands being made upon him by Willing during his extended stay in New Orleans, Pollock had been forced to use his own funds or to seek loans from New Orleans merchants. Pollock spent time in a Havana jail until the intercession of Robert Morris and Spanish Gov. Galvez himself won his release in 1785, after the official end of the American Revolution. As late as 1792, Pollock’s creditors were hounding him for their money.

The Willing expedition failed to achieve most of its original objectives. British West Florida remained solidly in British hands for the rest of the war. Moreover, due to the mercurial temperament of Willing, the best friend the United States had in the region, Gov. Galvez, nearly was attacked by the more powerful British.

In fact, Willing was guilty of using his position and congressional instructions to settle old prewar scores with his former neighbors in the Natchez district and to make money for himself at the same time. Willing used his nautical title and commanded land-based Marines, so that he could specifically take private property with impunity in the same manner that a seagoing privateer operated.

However, while the American dream of ridding West Florida of British occupation would be unfulfilled, the expedition revealed to Congress the extent they could count upon Bernardo Galvez, who, despite the activities of Willing, risked life and limb for the American cause to the extent that was permissible under the rules of neutrality.

Finally and not insignificantly, the Willing expedition tied up British reinforcements that might have been sent elsewhere. Further, the proceeds of the expedition were later used by Oliver Pollock to partially finance a more successful expedition under Col. George Rogers Clark into the Illinois country.

Thanks in part to Pollock’s funds and Spanish military stores sent upriver, Col. Clark was able to seize the trading posts of Kaskaskia and Vincennes and to drive the British back to Fort Detroit, and thereby solidified the American postwar claim to the Northwest Territory.

While the Willing Expedition is historically obscure today, the impact of what he and his Marines indirectly accomplished had far-reaching consequences for the postwar development of the new United States. Without first Willing’s and then Clark’s expeditions, the British might have been able to hold onto the Ohio and Illinois territories and keep the western borders of the new United States from going much farther beyond the Appalachian Mountains.

Dr. Niemeyer is director of the Marine Corps history division of Marine Corps University. Portions of this article first appeared in the September 2008 issue of Leatherneck magazine.
St. Mary’s
A City of Firsts

By Phyllis Speidell
Photos by John H. Sheally II

Interior of the reconstructed Cordea’s Hope at Historic St. Mary’s City. The structure served as a storehouse and office for the French Catholic settler and merchant, Mark Cordea, who was also the first mayor of St. Mary’s City.
and Margaret Brent, a 40-something single businesswoman, realized that the future of her struggling Maryland settlement, St. Mary’s City, might be riding on her judgment. Never shy about breaking with tradition, Brent went before the Maryland Colony’s General Assembly and asked for the right to vote. Not only did she request a voice in the assembly, she asked for two votes—one for herself as a landowner and one for her position as a representative of the English Lord Baltimore. Not surprisingly the gentlemen of the assembly refused.
rent’s request, the first of its kind from any woman in the English colonies, is just one of the “firsts” attributed to the short-lived St. Mary’s City. The tiny settlement founded in 1634 was the incubator of religious freedom in the United States, home to the first English Catholic chapel in the colonies, the first capital of the Maryland Colony and the spot where a person of African ancestry first cast a vote in a Colonial legislature—and all before 1650.

St. Mary’s also claimed the first printing press and one of the first female printers in the southern colonies. So why has St. Mary’s City—and Brent—remained relatively unknown? Because the settlement, the 17th-century metropolis of Maryland, vanished, fading into farm fields by the early 1700s. More than two centuries passed before archaeologists began to piece together the history of the obscure settlement.

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The Brent sisters, both single, established their own tobacco plantation, Sister’s Freehold. Margaret Brent, a 38-year-old Catholic English noblewoman, arrived five years later with her younger sister and two brothers. Entrepreneurs, the Brents were eager to participate in a daring social experiment, an environment of toleration of all Christian religions that the colony later voted into law in 1649.

The Brent sisters, both single, established their own tobacco plantation, Sister’s Freehold. In a community where men outnumbered women by about five to one, Margaret Brent steadfastly chose to remain single.

She ran the plantation, imported and sold indentured servants, lent money to newly arriving settlers and represented herself—and occasionally others—in court to collect bad debts or settle other business. She was such an adept businesswoman that when her brother Giles ran into financial difficulty, he turned his plantation over to her. As Brent flourished, so did St. Mary’s City.

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The Brent sisters, both single, established their own tobacco plantation, Sister’s Freehold.

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A Daring Social Experiment

St. Mary’s City’s tradition of religious tolerance began aboard the Ark. Realizing that the Catholic/Protestant strife wracking England could destroy his new colony, Calvert allowed the passengers to worship as they chose.

When they landed in the spring of 1634, the settlers moved into a nearly abandoned Yaocomaco Indian village to live in native witchotts, or long houses, until they could build a fort and English-style shelter. Farming fields the American Indians had previously cultivated, they grew food for the next winter, yielding a far easier first year than the Jamestown settlers experienced. They also learned to grow tobacco—the key to the colony’s prosperity.

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Indentured servants worked off their contracts and claimed their own land to grow tobacco. Mathias de Sousa finished his indenture, became a trader and captain of a small sailing ship, and voted as a member of the lower assembly.

But disaster struck the settlement in 1645. A Protestant ship captain, claiming to represent the English parliament, attacked St. Mary’s, burned the Catholic chapel, raided the homes of Catholic settlers and took Giles Brent and the Jesuit priests back to England as prisoners.

Calvert, with most of St. Mary’s 600 residents, fled to Virginia. He returned a year later, fell terminally ill and picked Brent as his executor, leaving her to deal with too
The recently opened St. John’s Site Museum shelters the remains of the foundation of the original plantation built on the site in 1638. This page, clockwise from right: Tobacco was the cash crop and main support for the early settlers of St. Mary’s City. • St. Mary’s Chapel under reconstruction. • A Historic St. Mary’s City historic interpreter, Erica Kerchner, checks deer hooves drying in preparation for use in tools and other daily implements in the reconstructed Indian hamlet. • Forensic mason Jimmy Price of Virginia Limeworks stands in the center of the chapel surrounded by pole-and-rope scaffolding that turned out to be, he said, among the best scaffolding he’s ever used. • The storage loft of Cordea’s Hope, a storehouse and office for French Catholic settler and merchant, Mark Cordea. • Site supervisor Roberta Smith portrays Mistress Spray, who interprets and maintains the reconstructed tobacco plantation at Historic St. Mary’s City.
few assets to satisfy his debts, including what he owed the mercenaries he’d hired to defend the colony.

The Maryland Assembly appointed Brent as attorney, in Calvert’s place, for Lord Baltimore, who was back in England. This gave her control over his holdings in the colony. Faced with mounting responsibilities and perhaps hoping for financial support, she asked to join the assembly with two votes, one for herself and one as Baltimore’s attorney.

When the members of the assembly refused, they also refused to pay Calvert’s soldiers. The colony was weakened and vulnerable, and the soldiers were clamoring for money. Desperate, Brent sold off what was left of Baltimore’s cattle to pay the mercenaries.

Lord Baltimore, oblivious to the issue from his home in England, was outraged when he heard. In spite of the assembly’s assurances to him that Brent “deserved favour and thanks” from him rather than “all those bitter invectives you have been pleased to express against her,” he was implacable.

The Brent sisters fled Baltimore’s anger and sought refuge in Virginia where they established a plantation named Peace. Margaret Brent died there in 1671.

† Rise and Fall Redux

But St. Mary’s City recouped and flourished.

Most of the colony’s residents lived on plantations and came to the town center—a cluster of taverns, storehouses and the governor’s house—for business. By 1676 the assembly was meeting in a two-story brick statehouse, and a year later the Jesuits finished a new brick chapel that replaced the wooden one burned in the attack.

But a dozen years later, when the Protestant King William and Queen Mary took the British throne, Maryland Protestants raised an army and marched on St. Mary’s. Royal governors replaced the Catholic Calverts and moved the capital of the Maryland Colony to Annapolis in 1694–1695.

It was the death knell for St. Mary’s.

Business owners followed the capital to Annapolis, taking their customers with them. In 1704 the royal governor ordered the chapel closed, never to be used again. The Jesuits dismantled the building, recycled the bricks into a new mission about 4 miles away and sold the land to a farmer. Eventually abandoned, the settlement’s other structures rotted into the ground, burying their stories along the rural shores of the St. Mary’s River.
† Coming to Light

Thanks to archaeologists and historians, those stories are emerging with the evolving reconstruction of St. Mary’s City. A state commission that has overseen the outdoor museum and archeological park since the mid-1960s affiliated formally with the adjacent St. Mary’s College in 1997.

Far different from the manicured Colonial charm of Williamsburg, St. Mary’s City is a sprawling collection of reconstructed Indian wigwams, wooden storehouses, taverns and homes. Footpaths follow the original town roads leading to the river where the Maryland Dove, a reconstruction of a 17th-century merchant ship, lies at anchor.

The brick statehouse was re-created 50 years ago and the painstaking rebuilding of the Jesuit chapel scheduled to be structurally complete sometime in 2009. At the re-created 1660s working tobacco plantation, authenticity blooms in the gardens, orchards and even the livestock, including a quartet of heritage breed hogs.

Roberta Smith, one of the knowledgeable staffers, portrays Mistress Spray and enhances the time warp in character, welcoming guests into the plantation house with chatter about how fortunate she is to have glass windows as well as a generous husband in Godiah Spray. Pointing to greenery tacked above the door, she explains, “Rue is thought to ward off evil spirits.”

St. John’s Site Museum sits on the college campus where the St. John’s plantation was settled in 1638, the same year Brent arrived at St. Mary’s. The building houses the foundation of the original 1,400-square-foot plantation house that was one of the largest and finest structures in St. Mary’s. The St. John’s house also served as an early meeting place for the provincial court, assembly and council. Later it was the official governor’s residence and then an inn.

† The Spirit of St. Mary’s

The reconstruction of the chapel—using materials and methods authentic to the 17th century—stands on the original foundation’s site as a striking example of using history to teach history. During the course of excavation, archaeologists uncovered three lead caskets and realized that colonists had been buried beneath the floor of the chapel as well as in the surrounding fields.

“You can’t change history; you have to follow history,” says Jimmy Price, the forensic mason who led the construction. His diverse army of volunteers included experienced masons eager to learn 17th-century construction skills, students, traditional tradesmen from around the world—and even local traffic offenders working off their community service sentences.

Price and his teams used traditional pole-and-rope scaffolding and hoisted most of the structure’s 380,000 wood-fired bricks with manpowered windlasses. They slaked oyster shells for mortar and penciled the joints of the red-washed exterior just as the Jesuits would have ordered.

“The masons and carpenters back then were working for God,” Price says. “I feel like we’re doing the same.”

Following the St. Mary’s City tradition of separation of church and state, the chapel project was funded by a private foundation, although Historic St. Mary’s City is a state-owned property.

One of the most arresting sights at Historic St. Mary’s City is the ghost frames, skeletal wooden frameworks marking the sites where other original structures stood—and will be reconstructed when their archaeological analysis is done. In the gleam of a full moon, the ghost frames are a gripping reminder of the men and women who struggled to establish Maryland’s first settlement.

“St. Mary’s has a soul,” says Susan Wilkinson, director of marketing and communication for the historic site. “A soul that seems as strong as the spirit of the people who lived here before.”

Phyllis Speidell and John Sheally visited sites connected to Patrick Henry for the July/August 2008 issue.

Exploring St. Mary’s

For more information about Historic St. Mary’s City, visit www.stmaryscity.org or call (800) 762–1634. The hours of the museum and living history exhibits change with the seasons, so check before you go.

Spirited Adventures
THE
Quincy
Homestead
HOME TO ONE OF AMERICA’S
FIRST FAMILIES

By Patricia Bates
Dorothy Quincy Hancock never imagined she would become the wife of John Hancock, who signed the Declaration of Independence before anyone else as president of the Second Continental Congress. Nor would she have anticipated becoming first lady of Massachusetts when he was elected to nine nonconsecutive terms as governor between 1780 and 1793.

“I imagine Dorothy was a lively teenager while growing up here in her big family,” says Karen Melican, chairman of the Quincy Homestead, operated by the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the organization that purchased the property in 1904. “She was perky and she had spunk, and that may have attracted John to her.”

The Quincy Homestead in Quincy, Mass., is as much a testimony to the family’s prominence in 17th- and 18th-century Massachusetts as it is to the fond attention the Colonial Dames have given her childhood home through major restoration projects for more than a century. Their latest restoration began in 2005, and included painting the yellow exterior with its gambrel roof and the trim around the dormer windows.

Today, Dorothy’s portrait (a copy of the original) hangs in the dining room where the Quincys entertained throughout the first half of the 18th century—hosting everyone...
from statesman Ben Franklin to lawyer John Adams and his wife, Abigail Smith Adams, Dorothy’s second cousin. John Singleton Copley completed the portrait in 1772 when Dorothy was just 25 years old. The property was home to five generations of Quincys before Dorothy’s father, Edward Quincy IV (who referred to her as Dolly), went into bankruptcy and lost the estate.

The love story of Dorothy and John Hancock is often related to visitors as they gaze at the portrait of the brunette in the ruffled pink taffeta and lace dress. And while the parlor’s Pompeii Revival wallpaper with cherubs and flowers lends to the atmosphere, it was installed years after the last Quincy vacated in 1763 and the Hancocks married in 1775.

“It was never covered; it still has arsenic in the coloring,” explains Melican of the French neoclassical design that has survived for more than 200 years. “We also know that the Delft tiles on the hearth in this room came from the 1740s, and the fireplace has a movable breastplate from the 1904 restoration, enabling visitors to see the earlier 1706 form of the fireplace. We have been using PastPerfect Museum Software to catalog objects in the collection.”

AN UNLIKELY COURTSHIP

Dorothy was born on May 10, 1747, as the youngest of 10 children and one of five daughters for Edmund IV and Elizabeth Wendell Quincy. John Hancock lived in North Braintree, which later became the town of Quincy, until his father, the Reverend John Hancock, died when John was 7 years old. His prosperous Uncle Thomas and Aunt Lydia Hancock took him in, sent him to Harvard College, from which he graduated in 1754, and taught him the shipping trade.

One of the wealthiest merchants in Boston, John Hancock had noticed Dorothy Quincy at worship one Sunday in 1771. Aunt Lydia, a matchmaker, often invited Dorothy to visit her in the city, even though Dorothy may have had “shallow affections” for John, according to Herbert S. Allan, who published a biography of John Hancock in 1948.

With his perfect penmanship, John sent a note to Dorothy on March 25, 1775, while she was visiting in Shirley, Mass., with his cousin Reverend Phineas Whitney. John vowed that “no distance of time or place can ever erase the impressions and the determinations formed, being forever yours.”

The articulate Hancock wrote many love letters to Dorothy, who was more of a conversationalist than a writer. “Why can’t you use freedom in writing?” John asked in a June 10, 1775, note. “Be not afraid of me ...” he added. Less than
a month later, John revealed his emotions for her again on paper. The Colonial Dames of Massachusetts society does not know of any diaries or letters of hers that still exist.

By summer 1775, though, Dorothy was becoming closer to family friends’ eligible bachelor nephew, Aaron Burr. The spark of jealousy was just what the widowed Aunt Lydia—who had no heirs—needed to get John and Dorothy to the altar.

“It was the most unlikely Thing within the whole Compass of possibility,” observed John Adams of their betrothal. While the selection of Dorothy was so “natural” for Hancock, Adams knew of Burr’s interest in her. Yet, Dorothy’s “beauty, politeness and every domestic virtue justified his predilection,” Adams wrote.

A WEDDING IN THE MIDST OF WAR

During the years of their courtship, John had become publicly outspoken against British rule. Six months into the Revolution, the British were pursuing him after they failed to capture him on April 19, 1775, at the Battle of Lexington and Concord.

John had escaped from the Redcoats by hiding in a swamp, while Dorothy was taking refuge with John’s Aunt Lydia in the parsonage in Lexington. Dorothy wanted to flee to Boston to be with the Quincys after the conflict, but John—10 years her senior—would not let her leave.

“To which she replied, ‘I am not under your authority yet, and I shall go to my father’s tomorrow,’” says Linda Dell McPike Burner, who performs as Dorothy Quincy Hancock at DAR chapter programs and other events.

The Hancocks were finally wed on August 28, 1775, at Thaddeus and Eunice Burrs’ mansion in Fairfield, Conn. By September, John, accompanied by Dorothy, was en route to Philadelphia for the Second Continental Congress.

John and Dorothy were married for 18 years, until John died on October 7, 1793. Their daughter, Lydia Henchman Hancock, was born in November 1776, but lived only a few months. Their 8-year-old son, John George Washington Hancock, died in 1778 after falling on the ice while skating.

Dorothy had survived her second husband, Captain James Scott, by the time she died on February 3, 1830, at the age of 82. The Hancock family was interred at the Old Granary Burial Ground in Boston, but Dorothy has no grave marker.

INSIDE DOROTHY’S CHILDHOOD HOME

With a name like Hancock, one would imagine Dorothy’s and John’s signatures would be visible all over the Quincy Homestead. Yet, very few of the furnishings belonged to her, except for a wooden spinning wheel. The only things belonging to him are pipe tongs and a sleigh, also known as a “booby hut.”

There is a silk embroidered swatch of the gown that Dorothy wore at her wedding in a frame on display upstairs. And while the original portrait of Dorothy is in the collection at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, another pastel portrait of her by William S. Doyle, likely made from a miniature, hangs in a nearby bedchamber.

Most of the artifacts are not original to the four generations of Quincys, who began living in what is now the post-and-beam kitchen of the expanded Colonial, Georgian and Victorian dwelling in 1686. Extensive additions and renovations were made in 1706, and by the middle of the century, the home appeared largely as it stands now. Parts of the original 17th-century building are still noticeable. It remains one of the few homes in Massachusetts that can make that claim.

The home was designated in 2005 as a National Historic Landmark and is on the National Register of Historic Places. In a cooperative sale-leaseback arrangement, the Colonial Dames maintain the home’s interior and interpret its history for visitors, while the Commonwealth of Massachusetts owns the property, contributes to capital expenditures and maintains the exterior of the house and grounds.

The Quincy Homestead can be toured on special days and by appointment. For more information, visit www.nscda.org/ma/quincy_homestead.htm or call (617) 742–3190. © Patricia Bates wrote about Baker’s Chocolate for the January/February 2008 issue. Thanks to Linda Dell McPike Burner for contributing to this article.
A Timeless Trail in Texas

Following the path of El Camino Real de los Tejas

Story By Emily McMackin * Photo By Joel Constantine
Deep in the heart of Texas, there is a road that cuts through cultures, extends across ecosystems and traverses time. For more than 300 years, this road has served as the corridor linking the Lone Star State to its past, its present and its potential. Stretching from the piney woods in the east to the arid border towns along the Rio Grande, this road has been frequented by American Indians hunting game, conquistadors pursuing fame and fortune, missionaries seeking converts, soldiers fighting for independence and immigrants looking for a home.

Known as El Camino Real de los Tejas (the King’s Highway), this centuries-old trail, with its many twists and turns, encompasses the history, heritage and diversity of Texas and its people. It was also the first “interstate” of international importance in North America.

“It is the autograph of a nation written across the face of a state, made not by chance, but built that the torch of civilization might be carried into the wilderness,” said Claudia Lipscomb Norvell, who served as Texas State Regent from 1918 to 1920. Her efforts to recognize and mark the trail in the early 20th century saved it from neglect and preserved it for generations to come.

The route was designated by Congress as a National Historic Trail in 2004. It begins in the Red River Valley of Natchitoches, La., crosses the live oak savannah and hill country of Central Texas, dips into the coastal plains and ends in the southwestern desert near the Mexican border. A trip along El Camino Real “demonstrates the diverse natural history as well as the rich cultural history of Texas,” says Andrew Sansom, research professor of geography at Texas State University-San Marcos and chair of the El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail Association.

The road passes through five major geographic regions in the state and splits off into a network of trails as it moves southward. This happened because, in its early days, “it would sometimes get impassible due to mud or erosion, so people traveling along its corridor would simply move it over,” Sansom says.

Most every historic event in Texas—at least before the 20th century—can be traced back to the trail, and its diverse cultural heritage makes it unique from the 18 other national historic trails across the country.

“Many of the other trails were designated for historic episodes or events that were short in duration,” Sansom says. “The Oregon Trail, for example, was used for maybe 20 years; El Camino Real was used continuously for 300 years—and it’s still used today.”

A PATH WORTH PRESERVING

Without the involvement of the Texas State Society, El Camino Real and its story might have been relegated to history books, Sansom says.

“We are indebted to the DAR for being the first to call attention to this trail,” he says. “[The Society] took the ball when no one else would to preserve our historic sites. If they hadn’t stepped up, many historic sites in Texas, including this trail, would be lost.”

DAR interest in the trail began with Mrs. Norvell. After attending the 1911 Continental Congress in Washington, D.C., and hearing a Missouri delegate report on the surveying and marking of the Santa Fe Trail—at the time the Southwest’s oldest known trail—she became inspired to preserve the historic Camino Real.
She spearheaded efforts to locate and mark the trail by persuading Governor James E. Ferguson and the Texas legislature to locate and survey it, raising more than $10,000 toward those efforts. The governor hired V.N. Zively, a civil engineer, to survey the route. He began his work in July 1915 and finished in 1916. On March 2, 1920, the Texas State Society presented the historic trail and its markers to the state of Texas as a gift.

During her term as Texas State Regent, current NSDAR Corresponding Secretary General Virginia Hollifield Stegall led efforts to complete a search for missing markers along the route, following the work of her predecessors, beginning with Virginia Hollifield Stegall.

Through the years, highway reconstruction left many of the DAR markers misplaced. While some were fixed and replaced, others were found in ditches and along roadides. In 2005, armed with GPS devices and maps, TSDAR King's Highway Committee members located them, recovering all but seven after three trips across the route. One marker discovered between Cotulla and Catarina Springs was being used as a doorstep.

The end of the trail across from Guerrero, Mexico, never became the site of a town due to lack of firm soil. Now located on private ranch property, the final marker, number 123, is still intact and visible on the bank of the Rio Grande. The marker is topped with pebbles left by immigrants who at one time crossed the river there—a testament to the trail's rich history as a pathway to a new frontier.

**FROM AMERICAN INDIAN TRAIL TO ROYAL ROUTE**

From prehistoric times to 17th-century Spanish exploration to Texas' hard-won battle for independence in 1836 and beyond, the road has seen as many detours in its history as it has in its topography. In *A Texas Legacy: The Old San Antonio Road and the Caminos Reales*, published by the Texas Department of Transportation for its tricentennial history in 1991, Jesus F. De la Teja described the trail's evolution:

“It might almost be considered a living thing: ever changing its humors, taking on new roles and responsibilities, responding to the needs of a developing frontier province. The obstacles of travel on the road made the wayfarer respectful and fearful of it. Anyone wishing to go from Texas to the rest of the world had to be patient with the road, for it had a slow and evasive nature.”

The road began as a series of game trails forged by animals migrating across rivers and used by American Indians to hunt prey and connect with neighboring villages. As the Spanish began to explore the region, they, too, used the trail as a major route—and it soon took on a strategic role in protecting their interests in the New World. When Spanish officials received word in 1685 that Frenchman René Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle—who had been searching for the mouth of the Mississippi River—had landed on the coast of Texas, they sent out entradas, or military expeditions,

**EXPLORING TOWNS ALONG THE TRAIL**

**WANT TO TAKE A ROAD TRIP along El Camino Real de los Tejas? Here are some stops you won’t want to miss.**

1. **NATCHITOCHES, LA.**

   Nestled at the crossroads of the Natchez Trace and El Camino Real, this town (pronounced Nack-a-tish), the oldest settlement in the Louisiana Purchase, was established in 1714 to promote trade with American Indians and the Spanish. Today, Natchitoches, named a “Great American Main Street” by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the setting of the 1989 film “Steel Magnolias,” continues to charm visitors with its historic homes and forts, museums and annual events such as the Festival of Lights. Nearby you can tour Los Adaes State Historic Site—the site of the first capital of Spanish Texas—and Creole plantations in the Cane River National Heritage Area.

   **ROAD TRIP TIP:** While traveling down the first leg of El Camino Real, keep an eye out for Toledo Bend Lake, the point at which early explorers and settlers on the road would have crossed into Texas. The 185,000-acre reservoir offers some of the best fishing, hunting, canoeing and bird watching around. After crossing the state line, look for the Gaines-Oliphant House, the oldest-standing log structure in Texas, which once housed a store for wayfarers on the road.

2. **SAN AUGUSTINE, TEXAS**

   San Augustine is the perfect place to visit for a snapshot of life in the early days of the Texas Republic. As the birthplace of the Protestant religion in Texas and home to three universities, including San Augustine University, chartered in 1837, the town teems with historic churches as well as homes and buildings in styles...
from Greek revival to Victorian. Visit ballrooms frequented by Texas legends Davy Crockett and Sam Houston, as well as more than 50 state landmarks.

**ROAD TRIP TIP:** As you pass through Sabine County, explore the Sabine National Forest and Sam Rayburn Lake, or hunt for treasure at quaint shops and antique stores along the way. Don’t miss the historic Sabine County Jail Museum—one of two Texas jails with a hanging rope.

3. **NACOGDOCHES, TEXAS:** Known as the oldest town in Texas, Nacogdoches was founded by the Spanish in 1716. Here Spanish trader Antonio Gil Y’Barbo built his Old Stone Fort—located today on the campus of Stephen F. Austin State University—which became a gateway for trade with the French in Louisiana and later the Americans. The Battle of Nacogdoches in 1832 freed the area of Mexican troops, making the way for the Texas Revolution. Many of the town’s 17th- and 18th-century homes and buildings are still intact and open for touring.

**ROAD TRIP TIP:** Just west of Nacogdoches is the town of Alto, home to three earthen ceremonial mounds made by Caddo Indians who lived in the region for 500 years, beginning in 800 A.D. You can walk to the top of the mounds (the tallest is 20 feet). Behind them, you can spot a portion of the original El Camino Real and view ground where Spanish conquistadors once stood.

4. **CROCKETT, TEXAS:** Named for Davy Crockett, who camped here en route to the Alamo in 1836, this town began with the establishment of the San Francisco de los Tejas mission and, in 1837, was selected as the government seat for Houston County, the first county created under the Texas Republic. The town has many historic sites worth exploring and boasts lots of cowboys, fiddlers and festivals.

**ROAD TRIP TIP:** Past Crockett, the road departs from Highway 21 onto the OSR, or the “Old Spanish Road.” Though Highway 21 approximates El Camino Real’s original path, the OSR follows it exactly. The 67-mile OSR winds through farmland and cattle ranches in the Texas hill country, passing unique places like Dime Box, a circa-1870 town that took its name from a box where settlers deposited mail, along with a dime, for postal service.

5. **BASTROP, TEXAS:** Named the “Most Historic Small Town in Texas,” because of its large number of buildings on the National Register of Historic Places, Bastrop is full of markers and reverence for the past. Its first settlers arrived in 1829 as part of Stephen Austin’s “Old Three Hundred Colony.” East of town is the 3,604-acre Bastrop State Park, which contains the famous “Lost Pines,” an isolated timbered region of loblolly pines common in East Texas, but not typically found this far west.

**ROAD TRIP TIP:** Traveling southwest will take you past San Marcos, home of Texas State University and the site of several failed attempts at Spanish colonization. Don’t miss New Braunfels, a town founded in 1845 by German immigrants. It is full of antique and craft stores, museums and diverse food from German cuisine to authentic Tex-Mex. Also, check out the artesian springs that flow from the nearby Comal River.

6. **SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS:** One of the state’s most popular destinations, San Antonio has its roots as an American Indian village and became a key city in New Spain in 1718 when the Spanish established San Antonio de Valero (later known as the Alamo), along with other missions. Today these missions, which are considered some of the oldest European sites in the United States, still stand, and some still house parishioners. Each mission is different, with the most famous being the Alamo, where many Texans gave their lives in 1836 while seeking independence from Spain. Visitors flock to the River Walk area, which is lined with unique restaurants and shops.
along the road and by sea in search of their colonial rivals.

By the time Fort Saint Louis was found, the French colony was in ruins, but the encounter proved to the Spanish that they could no longer take the land they had claimed for granted, and their presence in Texas only increased. Around the same time, the Spaniards began establishing missions among American Indians in East Texas.

The missions brought more than religion to the tribes; many were accompanied by presidios, or military installations. El Camino Real linked Spanish officials in Mexico City to missions and posts in far-flung corners of their new empire.

“The missions were the engine that Spanish explorers and conquistadors used to establish their foothold in the New World,” Texas State University’s Sansom says. “When the Spanish first landed in Texas in the 1500s, they weren’t aggressive about settling it. But once they saw evidence that the French were going to advance into these areas, the missions and presidios became the means by which they would stake out their turf.”

Texas became a province of Spain in 1690. The trail, which the Spanish had improved and expanded upon, was blazed into an official royal road by Domingo Teran de los Rios, first provincial governor of the territory. It provided a direct route from Monclova, Mexico, to the boundary of the Spanish territory claim at Fort Los Adaes, the first capital of the Texas province, across from the Sabine River in present-day northwest Louisiana.

In 1700, the San Juan Bautista mission and presidio was established across the Rio Grande in Guerrero, followed by the settlement of San Fernando de Béxar and San Antonio de Valero in 1718. Not long after, the East Texas missions were moved closer to the line of fortifications along New Spain’s northern frontier. These events turned the road into a conduit for trade and the spread of European culture and influence across Texas. And it would soon become the primary pathway for Americans moving westward to settle the southwestern frontier.

ROAD TO REVOLUTION

The first recorded instance of a U.S. citizen using the road was when Moses Austin headed west to San Antonio to meet with Baron de Bastrop about establishing a colony in Spanish Texas. Though Austin died shortly after learning that his colony had been approved, his son, Stephen Fuller
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Austin, traveled back to San Antonio to make good on the contract. Around that time, an influx of Anglo-American colonists, who entered the territory at Gaines Ferry on the Sabine, had also begun using the road to travel into the interior of Texas.

As relations between the Mexican government and its Anglo citizens deteriorated and revolution stirred in the air, the road funneled volunteers from the United States to battlegrounds near San Antonio, where soldiers joined Texans in their fight for independence from the Spanish government. For one famous frontiersman and Tennessee volunteer, Davy Crockett, it was the last road he traveled before his legendary adventures ended. Crockett might have continued down El Camino Real had he not met his fate at the Battle of the Alamo, for he wrote in his last known letter, “I have enrolled my name as a volunteer and will set out for the Rio Grande in a few days with the volunteers from the United States.”

The road remained the main route for Texans until the 20th century, when growth in the cities exploded and superhighways were built bypassing it. But the road, which encompasses parts of Highway 21 in Texas and Highway 6 in Louisiana, has continued to leave its mark in the towns surrounding it.

“Thanks to Mrs. Norvell and her fellow Texas Daughters, Texas does indeed have a significant early trail marked and preserved forever.”

– Florence Fitch Patton

“Texas has the strongest sense of place of anywhere in the United States—and you really see that along the trail,” Sansom says. “Almost any community you pass through has ‘El Camino Real’ in the name of a motel, restaurant or street.”

THE TRAIL TODAY

Since becoming a National Historic Trail in 2004—legislation sponsored by Texas DAR member and U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison—communities along El Camino Real have taken a greater pride in their own heritage.

“We’re seeing a resurgence of interest in protecting and preserving historic buildings and structures along the trail,” Sansom says. “It has caused local communities to take a greater interest in their history. Many of the towns are still relatively small and have richness and diversity worth exploring.”

Not only does the trail pass through some of the most striking rural scenery in Texas, it also reflects the geographic and cultural differences that make up the fabric of the state and offers passage back in time. The historic structures on the eastern end of the trail are constructed of logs and timber “like the buildings you would see in the Great Smokies,” Sansom says. Moving southward on the trail, you will start to see “stone buildings and then adobe as you venture closer to Mexico,” he adds.

“There are many differences in the historic structures that remain—and the same is true in terms of culture,” says Sansom, who describes the southwestern end as having more of a Hispanic influence than the eastern portions, which are steeped in German and Anglo-Saxon heritage.

However it is described, El Camino Real is also considered one of the most significant—and ambitious—preservation projects ever undertaken by the Texas Daughters. “Thanks to Mrs. Norvell and her fellow Texas Daughters, Texas does indeed have a significant early trail marked and preserved forever,” Mrs. Patton says.

Contributing Editor Emily McMackin wrote about the first American magazine for the May/June 2008 issue.
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