On Sacred Ground
Q&A With the Manager of the Flight 93 National Memorial Campaign

A Penny Saved
Colonial Americans and Their Money

The Life and Art of Quilter Amelia Heiskell Lauck

Smithfield Plantation
Sophistication on the Frontier

St. Paul's Chapel
A Symbol of Recovery, A Place of Remembrance
“Freedom Stands Tall”

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Our Patriots
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BY NANCY MANN JACKSON

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Daughters of the American Revolution
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From the President General

As the nation commemorates the 9/11 anniversary with solemnity and remembrance, American Spirit brings its readers unique stories of the sites identified with the New York, Washington, D.C., and Shanksville, Pa., tragedies. We review the fascinating history of St. Paul’s Chapel, a pre-Revolutionary War church in the shadows of Lower Manhattan skyscrapers. Many readers know of it as a place of healing and the epicenter for volunteers following the attack on the World Trade Centers, but few know that it functioned as a symbol of recovery as far back as 1776.

We also speak with Victoria Tagliabue, manager of the Flight 93 National Memorial Campaign and a DAR member, who explains the major features of the memorial under construction in Shanksville, Pa., and the profound lessons we can take away from the bravery of those 40 Americans.

The DAR is proud of Mrs. Tagliabue’s work, as we are of this issue’s Today’s Daughter Gail Kettlewell. Dr. Kettlewell has been instrumental in an educational and community-focused program that is directing the rebuilding of the west African country of Sierra Leone following a 10-year war that ended in 2002.

We explore the history of money in two features. First, we examine the role of thrift—and debt—in the Colonial economy. While debt is a hard reality for modern Americans, living frugally has, since the 18th century, been a widely admired ideal. The values of thrift and industry have helped shape the nation’s institutions—and it’s a lifestyle and attitude that Americans are returning to now.

Secondly, we present the life of financier Robert Morris. Although not your typical Patriot—he didn’t bear arms against the Continental Army—he did play a great role in America’s triumph. Had it not been for Morris, the Colonies would never have had the money to fight and win the Revolutionary War. Though shrewd in the nation’s financial dealings and credited as one of the brilliant minds that developed the American economic system, Morris wasn’t always such a success in his personal finances, a reason he might be overlooked today.

Revolutionary Patriots are remembered for their actions and honored for their service, but the women in their lives are often known only as connective parts of the family tree. Amelia Heiskell Lauck, wife of Revolutionary War soldier Peter Lauck, left behind a legacy created with her sewing needle. We’ll show you two of the quilts she made for her children, and we’ll also give you a sneak peek at the new DAR Museum exhibition on early American folk art.

Merry Ann T. Wright

Merry Ann T. Wright

Daughters of the American Revolution
The year 2011 marks the 10th anniversary of September 11, 2001. To honor the heroism and selfless sacrifice shown by the American people—and the unshakable spirit of our nation—The Bradford Exchange has specially designed an exclusive new limited edition. We now proudly present the “We Will Never Forget” 9/11 Commemorative Sculpture.

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A portion of the proceeds will be donated to those who have been affected by the events of 9/11
Rebuilding a Country Through Education

Gail Kettlewell brings a vision of a brighter future to the people of Sierra Leone.

By LENA ANTHONY

IN 2005, Alusine Kanu, a doctoral graduate of George Mason University, came up with a noble but far-fetched idea. Growing up in the western African country of Sierra Leone, which had been devastated by a decade-long civil war that ended in 2002, he saw an opportunity for its people: a community college that would help educate the adults in the country.

Had he taken this proposal to just anyone, it probably would never have gotten off the ground. But he brought his vision to Gail Kettlewell, who was serving as director of George Mason’s community college education doctoral program at the time. Today, Dr. Kettlewell and teams of volunteers both in the United States and Sierra Leone are making Kanu’s dream a reality.

It’s a huge undertaking. The vision involves a new, comprehensive model for developing nations. Paramount chiefs—chosen for life, these are the highest level of traditional tribal chiefs in a region—donated land in four rural provinces for the community college system. Each 200-acre college site will include a business/industrial park and a community town center.

Currently, Dr. Kettlewell is working on securing international funding—the goal is $55 million—as well as recruiting businesses to provide on-the-job training for students and eventual employers for graduates.

Dr. Kettlewell says the program has its critics, primarily people doubting that it can work because of its sheer size. “I tell them, ‘Try me,’” says the member of Muskingum Chapter, Zanesville, Ohio. “That’s one of the reasons we were given our gifts and talents. I know it’s going to work fine. If I weren’t confident, I wouldn’t have spent so many hours working on it.”

Dubbed the Sierra Leone International Community College Town Center (icctc.net), the program is expected to welcome its first students next year in two key programs—mining and agriculture. “Right now, there is no food processing capability in the country,” Dr. Kettlewell says. “They have thousands of pineapples just languishing on the ground because they have no way to process them. The community college system will help build those skills.” The schools will start in temporary locations while the infrastructure and actual brick-and-mortar facilities are being developed.

The college system also will emphasize women’s literacy, which is an issue close to Dr. Kettlewell’s heart. “Fewer than 15 percent of the women in Sierra Leone can read,” she says. “We’ll be partnering with literacy organizations already established across the country to address this gap.”

While the program is still in the planning stages, Dr. Kettlewell says the excitement level is high: “They have more than 5 million people and only 1 percent are educated at the level they need,” she says. “For them, it will make a huge difference in the redevelopment of the country and being able to make their own money. They want their own people to become business owners, and they know this kind of program is the solution.”

Dr. Kettlewell hopes that Sierra Leone is just the first of many developing countries worldwide that will benefit from an International Community College Town Center system. “Sierra Leone is going to serve as the model for the rest of the world,” she says. “One of the things we’ll be building is a research center so we can keep track of everything we do. That way, when we move into other countries, we can provide the best of what’s available.”

Dr. Kettlewell says her work in Sierra Leone is a reflection of her dedication to the DAR, which she joined back in 1958 as a college student. “I know I may not be able to attend all of the chapter meetings, but I feel like I’m out in the world being a Daughter of the American Revolution, helping to promote independence and democracy.”

Gail Kettlewell visits the site of the Makeni college and reviews the survey of the land.

Gail Kettlewell brings a vision of a brighter future to the people of Sierra Leone.

By LENA ANTHONY
The Mystery Of Mother And Child

**THE CLEANING AND STABILIZATION** of a portrait almost always enhances its beauty. Occasionally a date, name or notation previously obscured may appear as cleaning proceeds. However, seldom is a portrait so transformed by conservation that an entirely different image is uncovered. Such a transformation occurred with the DAR Museum’s oil on canvas painting, “Head of a Young Woman.” Conservation yielded an exciting surprise: a baby nestled against its mother’s shoulder.

When the portrait arrived at the DAR Museum in 1959, it was sent promptly to a conservator who noted the inscription “Mother & Child / TS 1870” on the canvas. Despite an X-ray of the portrait, it was impossible to determine the composition of the underpainting—until its 2008 conservation.

Now titled “Mother and Child,” a popular term for such unidentified subjects, the painting still holds mystery. There is still no answer to the obvious question: Why was the infant painted over? Philadelphia painter Thomas Sully (1783–1872) painted several “Mother and Child” portraits. Whether this painting is the one he described as “begun Feb. 24th, 1870, finished the same day” is unknown.

The painting was a gift from Julia E. Caruthers. The object was adopted for conservation by Prairie Rose Chapter, Overland Park, Kan.; Carroll Campbell Strickland; Michael Stoner Chapter, Dallas, Texas; and individual contributors to the DAR Museum’s Adopt-an-Object conservation program. For more information about the program, call the DAR Museum Office at (202) 879–3241.

Before conservation photography by Helga Photo Studio; during conservation photography by Alexandra Tice; after conservation photography by Mark Guzelian
IT MAY SEEM ODD to review a book about gardeners in the autumn. After all, in autumn gardeners harvest their last produce and prepare their plots to lie barren until spring. For the next few months, most of us must content ourselves with tending gardens in our minds.

Yet this is exactly why it is a perfect time to review Andrea Wulf’s *Founding Gardeners: The Revolutionary Generation, Nature, and the Shaping of the American Nation* (Knopf, 2011). Though the Founding Fathers whom Wulf profiles avidly cultivated the literal soil, in their minds they sowed a much bigger garden: America itself.

Wulf expertly wields her knowledge of gardening and political biography to unearth fascinating insights about these legendary figures. For instance, it is well-known that Washington often escaped the cares of leading the Continental Army by sending detailed instructions for planting to his plantation’s overseer. We also have heard stories of the retired general sometimes shucking his coat to direct or even help workers. It is less well-known that he had built at Mount Vernon a new garden that “was to be truly American, a radical departure from the traditional Colonial plots, for it was the first ornamental garden to be planted almost exclusively with native species,” she writes.

Stocked with trees, shrubs, flowers and bushes from all 13 Colonies, it was literally a revolutionary garden for America’s leading revolutionary. Ironically, Washington’s chief reference work for his project was written by an English authority describing the use of American plants in English gardens.

As another example, she shows Adams and Jefferson in London in 1786, struggling to negotiate a commercial treaty with their former foe. Frustrated by the lack of progress, they often visited the magnificent gardens on nearby estates to calm their frazzled nerves and discuss future strategy.

For Jefferson, these walks were a dream come true—a chance to see some of the world’s finest ornamental gardens and project their loveliness onto his hilltop home, Monticello. And his dream of a nation of farmers and gardeners would help inspire his quest for westward expansion, culminating in the Louisiana Purchase.

Wulf also shows us Madison retired to Montpelier after his presidency, deeply worried about the misuse, abuse and exhausting of fertile land sown with cotton and tobacco, as well as deforestation and a general lack of scientific agriculture. Elected as head of the Agricultural Society of Albemarle County, this former president gave a speech to fellow farmers in 1818 that made him instantly “one of the most respected farmers in America and would place him at the vanguard of forest and soil conservation, decades before a concerted effort was made to preserve America’s nature.”

However, while these and others in the Founders’ generation spied prosperity and strength within the seemingly limitless fields and forests, the “peculiar institution” of slavery gnawed at the roots of their vision. Slavery upheld the Southern aristocratic lifestyle. It enabled men like Jefferson, Washington and Madison to have the time and resources to create a new nation. But it also fostered tension between North and South and encouraged the rest of the world to scoff at American “liberty.”

Wulf presents considerable detail about the importance of slaves to their masters’ lives and agricultural schemes, and how this ultimately contributed to the catastrophe of the Civil War. — Bill Hudgins
God Bless America!

“Miss Independence”

First Issue in the America, We Love You! miniature doll collection

by Master Doll Sculptor Sherry Rawn

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She may be little, but her heartfelt excitement is larger than life! She’s “Miss Independence,” first issue in the America, We Love You! miniature doll collection by master sculptor Sherry Rawn.

This baby girl is fully sculpted, then hand-cast in artisan resin to accentuate everyadorably lifelike detail, from her joyful pose and sweetly dimpled smile to the itty-bitty creases on her toes. She wears a tiny tee adorned with a heart-shaped flag, shorts, floppy hat and cool shades. Her face is delicately hand-painted and her soft hair is hand-applied to add to the charming realism.

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“Archivists bring the past to the present. They are records collectors and protectors, keepers of memory. They organize unique, historical materials, making them available for current and future research,” says Lisa Lewis, associate archivist for the Catholic Diocese of Baton Rouge.

In order to raise awareness about what archivists do—as well as the treasures available in our nation’s historic repositories—the Society of American Archivists is promoting October as American Archives Month. One way to experience the value of archives is to visit the DAR Americana Collection.

The Americana Collection contains more than 4,000 historical documents. Although the collection consists mainly of early American manuscripts and imprints, the holdings span five centuries. The oldest item is an English Bible dating to the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. The most recent material, pertaining to United States presidents and first ladies, is from the late 20th century. Among a wide variety of holdings, the collection also includes signatures of all the men who signed the Declaration of Independence (see July/August 2011 American Spirit), two autograph collections of the framers of the U.S. Constitution, the signatures of many of the U.S. presidents and first ladies, and a signature and portrait collection focusing on prominent 18th-century foreign statesmen and women. The collection is also home to Colonial-era diaries, household inventories, samples of Colonial-era currency, court records, birth and marriage records, land deeds and grants, and military papers.

For more information on American Archives Month, visit www.archivists.org/archivesmonth.
“Wendell Minor: In the American Tradition”
Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, Neb.
September 24, 2011–December 31, 2011

In this unique exhibit celebrating America’s national heroes and natural wonders, artist Wendell Minor’s book illustrations, spanning from the Everglades to the Arctic Circle and from the Midwest to the Grand Canyon, will be on display. The exhibit of paintings from more than 20 children’s books—including Jack London’s *The Call of the Wild*, Diane Siebert’s *Mojave* and his own picture book adaptation of Katharine Lee Bates’ *America the Beautiful*—showcases America’s natural grandeur as well as Minor’s belief in the urgent need to protect its wildlife and unspoiled places. For more information, visit www.joslyn.org.

Midwestern art lovers have a chance to view Charles Willson Peale’s portrait of George Washington, now on loan from the Brooklyn Museum of Art. Commissioned in 1776 by John Hancock, president of the Continental Congress, this was Peale’s second full-scale portrait of Washington, and the first to portray him as commander in chief of the Continental Army. Peale, America’s foremost portrait painter of the time, was also one of the nation’s earliest collectors and created one of the first museums in the young country. Visit www.cmra.org.

Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, Cedar Rapids, Iowa
Through December 31, 2011

“When Janey Comes Marching Home: Portraits of Women Combat Veterans”
July 8, 2011–September 26, 2011

The National Museum of the Marine Corps’ new exhibit presents a multifaceted portrait of service women returning from war zones in Iraq and Afghanistan. A collaboration between author-filmmaker Laura Browder and photojournalist Sascha Pflaeging, the exhibit features 45 large-scale color photographic portraits and oral histories of women who served in the Global War on Terrorism. It reveals not only what it was like to be under fire, but also the unique challenges they faced as women in combat zones. For more information call (703) 784–6107 or visit www.usmcmuseum.org.

Early American imprints in the Americana Collection include newspapers that provide richly detailed accounts of historic events as they occurred. The Boston Gazette and Country Journal from March 12, 1770, describes events associated with the Boston Massacre, which took place March 5.
Buffalo Grass Chapter, Floydada, Texas, is named after the plant that sustained the herds of buffalo that roamed the arid Texas plains. The gray-green, native perennial grass spreads vigorously and withstands heavy grazing. Its nutrient density supplies efficient forage for cattle, making buffalo grass as important today as it was in the days of the American Indians, who along with explorers and early settlers relied on the buffalo for their meat and hides. The remarkable characteristics of this native grass enticed the first settlers to establish homes in the region. Because the treeless plains offered little construction material, the earliest pioneers also used it to build houses out of sod.

The namesake of Faith Trumbull Chapter, Norwich, Conn., was born December 13, 1718, into a prominent Massachusetts family descended from Mayflower cooper John Alden. In 1735 she married Jonathan Trumbull, governor of the colony and later state of Connecticut from 1769–1784. Their six children included John, a well-known early American painter whose work hangs in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda, as well as David and Joseph, who furnished supplies to the Continental Army and its allies. Faith’s personal contribution is remembered in local lore. After a church service, attendees were solicited for donations to the army. The congregation hesitated, until Faith rose to place her scarlet cape—a gift from Count Rochambeau—on the altar. The cloak allegedly was cut into strips and used to trim soldiers’ uniforms.

The Lydia Cobb-Quequechan Chapter, Taunton, Mass., formed in 1989 when two chapters, each of which included four Real Daughters, merged. Lydia Cobb Chapter borrowed the name of a Real Daughter and chapter member at the center of a staunchly patriotic family. Lydia’s husband, Captain Thomas Cobb, was a commander in the French and Indian War, son David was an aide to George Washington, and son-in-law Robert Treat Paine signed the Declaration of Independence. The Quequechan Chapter moniker employs an American Indian word meaning “river of falling waters,” a reference to the rushing rapids of its original hometown, Fall River, where water powered the mills of the manufacturing city.
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A Scrumptious Quilt

The cake on the cover of the July/August issue is a beautiful eye-catcher. I was especially thrilled to see the quilt because I believe that it was inspired by a quilt that I made. It appeared in the May/June 2008 issue of American Spirit and also received the 2007 Evelyn Cole Peters Award. This issue will always be my favorite! I hope the cake tasted as good as it looked.

Jean Van Bockel
Lieutenant George Farragut Chapter, Coeur d’Alene, Idaho

Editor’s Note: The cake’s quilt layer was inspired by several quilts, including Ms. Van Bockel’s beautiful design.

Salutations From South Africa

Congratulations on an outstanding edition. I always look forward to my American Spirit’s arrival, but lately I think they are just getting better and better. Keep up the fantastic work. I’m living in Johannesburg, South Africa, and looking forward to the next edition’s arrival!

Margo Duplantier Rhinehart
Spirit of ’76 Chapter, New Orleans, La.

The Le Barons: A Page-Turning Family

I enjoy reading every issue of your excellent magazine, but the May/June issue is the best. Imagine my delight to turn to the “Revolutionary Courtship” article and see the marriage portrait of my ancestors Dr. Francis Le Baron and Mary Wilder. Their great-grandson, James, is my latest Patriot supplement. A descendant, architect William Le Baron Jenney, is mentioned in the issue’s Chicago article.

In the late 1800s, Jane G. Austin wrote two books about the Le Baron family. A Nameless Nobleman relates the mystery of the doctor’s heritage. Thirty-seven editions were printed. The story continues with their son in Dr. Le Baron and his Daughters. Austin wrote other “Old Colony Stories” featuring the Alden and Standish families. Although based on real people and events, these stories about the Plymouth Colony are mostly fiction. There is more information about Austin and the Pilgrim families on the Pilgrim Hall Museum website (www.pilgrimhall.org/plgrmhll.htm).

Carol Glasgow Kent

Part of the reason I joined was that I loved reading my mother’s American Spirit magazine and sharing it with my fifth-grade class during social studies. Now we have two to pass around!

Imagine my surprise when I turned to page 42 of the May/June issue and saw a picture of my ancestor, Francis Le Baron, in the article on marriage in Colonial America! I am the seventh-great-granddaughter of Francis and Mary. I think they would be proud to know their history lives on in a new DAR member. Thank you for a wonderful magazine.

Ann Joyce Crawford
Mary Ball Chapter, Tacoma, Wash.

Flag Your Calendar for Flag Day 2012

Congratulations on the 10th anniversary of American Spirit. This continues to be the best history magazine on the market, bar none! Not long ago, you had an article about my part of our wonderful country. I’d like to give your readers news about the future of the Mohawk Valley.

A special celebration is being planned for Flag Day 2012 to mark the centennial of the 14 DAR monuments depicting the 40-mile route taken by Revolutionary War hero General Nicholas Herkimer and the Tryon County Militia in August 1777. They were marching to relieve the siege of Fort Stanwix, but were ambushed at Oriskany. A re-enactment of the 1912 event is planned. The celebrants traveled by train from Utica to the Herkimer home then by motorcade to the Oriskany Battlefield.

Jean Van Bockel
Lieutenant George Farragut Chapter, Coeur d’Alene, Idaho

Editor’s Note: The cake’s quilt layer was inspired by several quilts, including Ms. Van Bockel’s beautiful design.

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Mary Ball Chapter, Tacoma, Wash.

Flag Your Calendar for Flag Day 2012

Congratulations on the 10th anniversary of American Spirit. This continues to be the best history magazine on the market, bar none! Not long ago, you had an article about my part of our wonderful country. I’d like to give your readers news about the future of the Mohawk Valley.

A special celebration is being planned for Flag Day 2012 to mark the centennial of the 14 DAR monuments depicting the 40-mile route taken by Revolutionary War hero General Nicholas Herkimer and the Tryon County Militia in August 1777. They were marching to relieve the siege of Fort Stanwix, but were ambushed at Oriskany. A re-enactment of the 1912 event is planned. The celebrants traveled by train from Utica to the Herkimer home then by motorcade to the Oriskany Battlefield.

Jean Van Bockel
Lieutenant George Farragut Chapter, Coeur d’Alene, Idaho

Editor’s Note: The cake’s quilt layer was inspired by several quilts, including Ms. Van Bockel’s beautiful design.
We look forward to having many Daughters and Sons of the American Revolution, descendants of troops who fought in the Battle of Oriskany, and others join in this celebration on June 14, 2012.

By the way, Col. Marinus Willett was second in command at Fort Stanwix during the siege of 1777. Our chapter is named in his honor.

Mary Helen Jones
Col. Marinus Willett-Mohawk Valley Chapter, Frankfort, N.Y.

More on the ‘57th Signer’

I enjoy reading my wife’s American Spirit because of its quality and content. I was especially interested in the July/August articles on the signers of the Declaration. Although I am not a Declaration of Independence scholar, I was disappointed that there was no mention about the man who has become known as the “57th signer”—Charles Thomson, secretary of the Constitutional Congress. While Thomson did not sign the familiar, handwritten engrossed copy, he and Congress President John Hancock did appear as the two signers in typeset broadsides of about 200 copies printed for distribution and reading in July 1776. John Dunlap, Congress’ official printer, had the typeset version done weeks before Timothy Matlack had the fancy engrossed copy ready for signing on August 2, 1776.

You may want to print a note on Thomson’s “signing.” Thomson, it also seems, is credited with the accepted design of the Great Seal.

Richard A. Santer, Ph.D.
N.S.S.A.R.

Editor’s Note: Thanks for your letter. We look forward to telling Thomson’s story in a future article on the Great Seal.

Journey With Jouett

Thank you for your very informative article “Remembering Jack Jouett’s Brave Ride” in the May/June issue. The Jack Jouett Society Children of the American Revolution, Louisville, Ky., held its November 2010 meeting at the Jack Jouett House in Versailles, Ky. We learned a lot about Jack Jouett prior to and during the visit. Thanks to American Spirit, we now are able to separate facts from the legends.

Sharlene Cooper
John Marshall Chapter, Louisville, Ky.
Senior Society Vice President, Jack Jouett Society C.A.R.

Biblical Treasure

It was with considerable interest that I read “The Book of Lives” in the July/August issue. The name of publisher Isaiah Thomas and the date 1791 caught my eye. Upon looking at the one remaining old Bible in my possession, there they were! Isaiah Thomas took great pride in publishing his Bibles, claiming they were as good as, if not better than, the ones coming across the pond. The center pages contain a meager amount of genealogical material that has been helpful in research. It is with thanks to previous generations that this huge, leather-bound tome came into my home.

Thank you to Bill Hudgins for his fine historical article. Both the article and this Bible will be shared with my DAR sisters to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible.

Joan Elizabeth Bailey Hart
Charles Dibrell Chapter, Albuquerque, N.M.

Send your letters to americanspirit@dar.org.
A Family Affair

By LENA ANTHONY

no test can verify this, but Ted Dickson is certain that teaching is in his blood. “My grandmother had 12 grandchildren, and half of them became teachers,” says Dickson, who teaches Advanced Placement (AP) U.S. history at Providence Day School in Charlotte, N.C. The family has been honored for their service to the profession: Dickson’s brother John won the Massachusetts state DAR Outstanding Teacher of American History Award in 2008, and Dickson won the national award this year. And that’s not the only recognition Dickson has received. A former student, Reggie Love, is the personal assistant to President Obama. Love recently honored Dickson as his most inspirational teacher in a public service announcement for Teach.gov. Dickson points to his close-knit family and upbringing in historic Weston, Mass., as reasons for his passion for teaching and history. “The house I grew up in was like a museum,” Dickson says. “My grandfather, who built the house, was born in 1867 and collected antiques. And my father, who was born in the house and lived there his whole life, never threw anything out.” Dickson’s attic, which he spent countless hours exploring as a child, was filled with artifacts from American history, including muskets from the Civil War and Life magazine issues from World War II. He shares these experiences and family stories with his students to help bring history to life. “My students sometimes think my course is a history of my family because of the stories I tell to keep them interested,” he jokes. Dickson has a knack for connecting with students, and sharing his own personal history is just one of the ways he does it. He also uses primary sources like historical letters or images, and incorporates role-playing simulations into the classroom as much as possible.

Another one of his secrets to engaging students is as simple as building relationships with them. “The bottom line is if they feel like I know them, they’re more willing to be involved in my classroom,” he says. Dickson sums up his teaching philosophy with a quote from President Franklin Roosevelt: “A nation must believe in three things. It must believe in the past. It must believe in the future. It must, above all, believe in the capacity of its own people so to learn from the past that they can gain in judgment in creating their own future.” Dickson’s goal is for his students to learn actively, “relating what they are studying to their own experience and current events so they can answer the question, ‘So what?’ for themselves,” he says.

Despite a busy school schedule—in addition to his classes, he’s also head of the history department—Dickson knows how important it is to make time for personal and professional development. “Teachers can easily become isolated in their own classrooms,” he says. He’s active in the College Board, the organization that governs AP coursework. He is now working with a team of educators to overhaul the AP history curriculum.

Dickson also coauthored a book published in 2008 on teaching U.S. history in a global context and presents lessons from the book to groups across the country. “We tend to teach our history as if nothing else was going on in the world,” he says. “We knew we needed to get students to think about U.S. history on a global level. When 9/11 happened, that just added to the need to understand the world more.” Dickson believes understanding the larger context is crucial as students become active citizens. “When people make decisions, you hope there’s that effort to understand what’s influencing those decisions,” he says.

It’s a lesson he shares with his three children, Katie, Emily and Nathan, as well. As a teacher at his children’s school, he has the unique opportunity to inspire them both in the classroom and at home.

“Nathan is in eighth grade, but there’s a good chance I will have taught all three children when it’s all said and done,” he says. As for Katie, his oldest, it appears teaching is a passion for her, too. She is studying elementary education at Boston College “without any pressure from me,” assures Dickson.

Family vacations for the Dicksons often involve touring historical sites. Not surprisingly, Dickson has been known to teach tour guides a thing or two about history. On a recent tour of the U.S. Capitol, “The tour guide said she knew only one story about John Quincy Adams and that it wasn’t a very interesting one,” he says. “So I gave her a few more.”
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Prior to 9/11, St. Paul’s Chapel was an old church nestled among many commercial and public buildings of greater outward significance. It was visited only occasionally by New Yorkers or tourists not affiliated with the Episcopal Church. As a result of 9/11, it is now considered by New Yorkers to be one of the most important buildings in Lower Manhattan and a major tourist destination for visitors. Though in the shadow of the World Trade Center, it survived the 9/11 attacks virtually unscathed and served as a center for the recovery efforts. It has become to many New Yorkers a symbol of the city’s survival and recovery. Few realize that 9/11 wasn’t the only time St. Paul’s Chapel survived disaster to become a stalwart symbol of a city’s strength.

SURVIVING THE GREAT FIRE

The building was originally constructed in 1766 as an Episcopal chapel of the Parish of Trinity Church, and it served as an adjunct to its parent church several blocks to the south. On September 21, 1776—right after the British occupied New York City following their victory at the Battle of Long Island—a fire broke out that destroyed a quarter of the city and killed more than 1,000 people. The British accused the Patriots of setting the fire to keep the city out of the occupiers’ hands, although Washington’s orders from Congress specifically prohibited burning the city. After the fire, dozens of Patriots were arrested, including a young American spy named Nathan Hale, who was hanged by the British on September 22, 1776. His statue stands in City Hall Park a block or two away.

St. Paul’s Chapel survived the fire that destroyed Trinity Church. As a result of the destruction, St. Paul’s became the main house of worship for the Episcopal Church until Trinity Church was rebuilt in 1790. When New York served as the nation’s capital from 1785 to 1790, the building was considered the most prestigious house of worship in the city. George Washington had a pew, and even attended services there in 1789 after his inauguration.

THE SITE OF MONTGOMERY’S TOMB

Since 1818, a monument to General Richard Montgomery—who at the time of his death in December 1775 at the Battle of Quebec was considered one of the greatest Revolutionary War heroes—has been located...
at St. Paul’s Chapel. Montgomery was a former British officer whose wife, Janet Livingston, was a member of one of the wealthiest families in New York. He had been sent by the Continental Congress to lead a campaign to capture Quebec and all of Canada. It was believed such a campaign might succeed because most British soldiers were tied down in Boston and Massachusetts, and numerous French inhabitants of Canada were thought to support the Patriot cause.

Montgomery successfully captured all Canadian cities up to Quebec, including Montreal. In Quebec he was supposed to join a force led by Benedict Arnold coming through Maine to take the city, thus establishing American control of Canada. He and Arnold were within a hair’s breath of capturing the city when at the last checkpoint Montgomery was killed by a Tory from Boston, and the attack failed. (For more on the campaign for Canada, see American Spirit’s September/October 2008 issue.)

In 1776, the Continental Congress ordered that a monument be erected in Montgomery’s honor. Benjamin Franklin commissioned the piece in France from Jean-Jacques Caffieri, a leading French sculptor who had worked at Versailles. Even though the monument was shipped in crates to Edenton, N.C., one of the few American ports available in 1777, it did not get to New York until 1789. Montgomery’s body was not shipped down from Canada until 1818, when he was given a full military funeral at the request of Janet Livingston Montgomery and her family.

**IN THE SHADOW OF TRINITY CHURCH**

By this time, the city was growing rapidly and St. Paul’s Chapel, though a beautiful building in its own right, was soon eclipsed by many other important buildings around it, such as City Hall and a reconstructed Trinity Church. After Trinity Church’s second building was torn down in 1839 following damage from heavy snows, the church’s next reconstruction commenced in 1846. Architect Richard Upjohn designed it in the neo-Gothic style, making Trinity Church one of the most distinctive buildings in the city. Since the church is located at the foot of Wall Street and its cemetery includes the graves of such notables as Alexander Hamilton and Robert Fulton, it tended over the years to overshadow St. Paul’s Chapel as a center for the Episcopal Church and as a tourist destination.

By the end of the 20th century, very few New Yorkers knew who Richard Montgomery was, let alone the location of his tomb—notwithstanding its clearly marked location in front of St. Paul’s Chapel—unless they went on specialty history tours. His grave was only slightly less obscure than the gravesite of General Horatio Gates. Montgomery’s considerably more successful colleague responsible for the American victory at the Battle of Saratoga. Gates’ grave has been “lost” in the Trinity Church graveyard, and it has no monument associated with it. (For more on Gates, see American Spirit’s May/June 2010 issue.)

**A HAVEN FOR GROUND ZERO WORKERS**

Although it stood just adjacent to the World Trade Center complex, St. Paul’s steeple and structure were hardly touched by the destruction of the buildings in the World Trade Center. When the two towers came down, the Episcopal Church immediately opened the chapel to Ground Zero workers, and it became a center for the World Trade Center recovery efforts until May 2002. In the traumatic days following 9/11, its age and permanence provided an anchor to a city struggling to overcome one of its greatest tragedies. Mayor Rudy Giuliani selected the chapel as the site of his valedictory speech in December 2001 as he was leaving office.

Today, 10 years after 9/11, its interior is largely comprised of exhibits about the 9/11 recovery efforts. The chapel is used for regular services, concerts and organ recitals, and it still contains Washington’s pew.

To many New Yorkers, St. Paul’s Chapel represents the city’s ability to recover from adversity. It stands as a monument to the fact that the city’s strength comes not from its skyscrapers or even the wealth of Wall Street, but rather from its democratic ideals and the spirit of its people.

James S. Kaplan, a tax and estates lawyer by day and walking tour historian by night, has worked in Lower Manhattan for more than 35 years. Every July 4 for the last 15 years he has given a walking tour, sponsored by the Fraunces Tavern Museum, from 2 a.m. to 6 a.m. of Revolutionary War sites in Lower Manhattan. Reach him at Jkaplan@herzfeld-rubin.com.
A Repository of Memories

Visitors to Washington, D.C., can commemorate the 10th anniversary of the September 11 attacks by attending the National Museum of American History’s special exhibit from September 3 to September 11.

“September 11: Remembrance and Reflection” will feature more than 50 objects from the three sites—New York, the Pentagon and Shanksville, Pa.—as well as recent acquisitions related to how American lives have changed since then. To give visitors a more close-up, personal view, the objects will be shown on tables rather than inside glass cases. Artifacts will include airplane fragments, a door from a crushed FDNY fire truck, a Pentagon map from the building’s second floor, and objects recovered from offices, as well as contextual photographs from the museum’s collection. The exhibit will feature video excerpts from the Smithsonian Channel documentary, “9/11: Stories in Fragments,” and a video ABC News made for the museum on the one-year anniversary.

In 2002, Congress designated the museum as the official repository for September 11 materials to ensure that objects, photographs and documents would be preserved permanently in the museum’s collections.

“The National Museum of American History responded to the tragic events of September 11 by collecting history as it was happening,” says Brent D. Glass, director of the museum. “Ten years later, we will share some of those objects in a personal setting, providing an opportunity for visitors to speak with museum staff and to have a place to remember and reflect on what it means to be an American today.”

If you can’t attend the exhibition, view the museum’s September 11 collection online at http://americanhistory.si.edu/september11.

Pentagon Reflections

At 9:33 a.m. on September 11, 2001, American Airlines Flight 77, en route from Washington, D.C., to Los Angeles, turned south and headed for the U.S. Pentagon, where it crashed at 9:37 a.m., killing 184 people.

The physical damage to the Pentagon was repaired in less than one year, and a memorial to help the nation remember and reflect on those lost lives was dedicated on September 11, 2008.

The principal feature of the memorial—located adjacent to the side of the Pentagon where the plane hit—is 184 individual benches, over pools of water, memorializing each victim. The benches are organized as a timeline of the victims’ ages, spanning from Dana Falkenberg, age 3, to John Yannick, age 71. To distinguish victims on board Flight 77 from those inside the Pentagon, 59 memorial benches face one direction, and 125 face the other. The park also features an “age wall” that rises in height one inch per year relative to the age lines running along the memorial benches, growing from 3 inches above the perimeter bench at Falkenberg’s memorial, to 71 inches above the bench at Yannick’s.

The pools are lit from beneath at night, making it an especially meaningful time to visit the memorial. The park is free and open to the public 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

A 24-minute audio tour provides a sequential narrative of the events of 9/11 at the Pentagon, the history of the Pentagon and the purpose of the memorial’s design. Visitors can call (202) 741-1004 at the entrance and the audio recording will lead them on a tour to points of interest throughout the park, or they can watch a video online at http://pentagonmemorial.org/plan/visitor-resources.
On Sacred Ground  
Q&A With Victoria Tagliabue,  
manager of the Flight 93 National Memorial Campaign

Victoria Tagliabue has spent the last four years as part of a two-person team that runs and administers the Flight 93 National Memorial Campaign at the National Park Foundation. A member of Lady Washington Chapter, Houston, Texas, she shares with American Spirit her work to honor the lives lost when United Airlines Flight 93 was hijacked on September 11, 2001, and crashed in a field near Shanksville, Pa.—and the lessons they teach her every day.

American Spirit: How did your previous experience prepare you for your present job, and what motivates you?

Tagliabue: After graduating with a degree in political science and communications, I began work with a political consultant and fundraiser. My dream was always to live and work in Washington, D.C., and I eventually made my way there to pursue my career. Based on my previous fundraising experience, I was offered a job at the National Park Foundation, working on the Flight 93 National Memorial Campaign. I had not heard of the campaign before and knew little about the plans for the memorial. As I began to learn more about the project and read all I could about the 40 people on the plane, the story of Flight 93 became, to me, a truly inspiring story that emerged from a day marred by tragedy, helplessness and fear. I wondered what I would have done if I were on that plane: Would I have been able to hold it together to call my mom to say goodbye? Would I have been able to think clearly enough to help devise a plan of attack and implement it in less than 35 minutes? Then I realized that my reaction was a common one; we all needed a proper place to learn about exactly what happened on that plane.

What began as a personal goal soon became a personal goal: not only to ensure that the 40 heroes of Flight 93 would not be forgotten, but also to create a place where I can one day bring my children to learn about the story of Flight 93. Though daunting at times, I come to work every day thinking about and reliving the events of September 11 with these 40 people at the forefront of my memory.

American Spirit: What is the vision for the design? What are the campaign’s goals?

Tagliabue: The design for the Flight 93 National Memorial was chosen through an open international design competition in 2005. The Flight 93 National Memorial, the only 9/11 site that is a unit of the National Park System, encompasses more than 2,200 acres surrounding the site where Flight 93 crashed. The overall vision is to integrate the memorial into the current landscape of the site, a reclaimed strip mine. The Flight 93 National Memorial creates a designed landscape that promotes healing from the wounds of September 11, and inspires remembrance of the courageous acts of the 40 heroes of Flight 93. The memorial will illustrate how 40 complete strangers can act together in a way that can make a profound and lasting difference.

Major features of the memorial include: a memorial viewing plaza surrounding the crash site; a wall set along the final flight path of Flight 93 inscribed with the names of the 40 passengers and crew; a visitor center and learning center; an entry portal also set along the final flight path that reaches the elevation of the plane when it careened into the area before crashing; 40 memorial groves that will each contain 40 trees as a living memorial and to help restore the land after previous debilitating uses; and a tower of voices containing 40 wind chimes.

The development of the Flight 93 National Memorial is a public-private partnership among the National Park Service, Families of Flight 93, Flight 93 Federal Advisory Commission and the National Park Foundation. Approximately half of the $62 million in funding needed for the memorial has been committed from the commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the federal government. The remaining $30 million is being sought from private sources, which is where the campaign (and my job) comes in. Since 2006, the campaign has raised more than $20 million to support the creation of the memorial, but $10 million remains to be raised as of August 1, 2011. More than 70,000 individuals, corporations and foundations have donated and continue to generously support our efforts to create the nation’s permanent memorial to the heroes of Flight 93.
American Spirit: What can visitors expect to see and experience?

Tagliabue: Today, visitors to the site are directed to an area called the western overlook to hear the story of Flight 93, learn about the people on board the plane and view construction of the memorial. Upon arrival, visitors can read a series of panels detailing the events of September 11 and Flight 93, the investigation that followed, biographies of each of the people on board and information about the campaign. National Park Service rangers and volunteers are available daily to answer questions and share additional information with visitors.

Some memorial features are already under construction and on schedule for dedication on September 10, 2011, when the Flight 93 National Memorial will be permanently opened to the public. A view from the overlook can be seen on our live webcam (www.honorflight93.org/webcam).

American Spirit: How have the families of Flight 93 been involved with the development of this memorial and national park?

Tagliabue: A nonprofit organization called Families of Flight 93, composed of the family members of the 40 passengers and crew, has been involved since the beginning. Family members serve as federally appointed commissioners on the Flight 93 Advisory Commission, on the juries during the design competition and in advisory capacities as necessary for other supporting organizations and activities.

American Spirit: What are the plans for the dedication?

Tagliabue: The Flight 93 National Memorial will be dedicated in a public ceremony on September 10, 2011, one day before the nation observes the 10th anniversary of the September 11 attacks. The ceremony is open to the public and will also be attended by more than 600 family members of the passengers and crew, national and local public officials, project partners, our campaign leadership and donors to the campaign whose generous contributions helped to make the construction of the memorial possible.

American Spirit: How do your DAR experiences tie in with your passion for your job?

Tagliabue: My mother has been a member of the Lady Washington Chapter, Houston, Texas, since I was very young, and I was a member of the San Jacinto Society of the Children of the American Revolution. I fondly remember my experiences in C.A.R. and attending DAR functions with my mother. Some of the women who came into my life through this organization have been like mothers to me and are still a huge part of my and my family’s life.

I have always known that DAR has the influence to do great things and the portfolio to prove it. But I was most recently inspired by the organization’s mission when I attended the 2011 Continental Congress as a guest accompanying a family member of the first officer on Flight 93.

DAR events have always been about remembering who and where we came from and the sacrifices that have been made by veterans and heroes who have defended our great nation in times of peril. But this DAR event honored the people I work for every day—not just people in history books. Opening Night brought the mission of DAR into a different light for me. On that night, more than ever, I felt pride in what I do because of whom I came from—my freedom-respecting ancestors who left a legacy for us all to carry out, including the people on Flight 93.

I believe the only way the legacy of Flight 93 will live on is if the place of their final sacrifice is permanently preserved, and the proper educational tools are available. We can visit places like Gettysburg, Valley Forge and the National Mall to honor great American heroes and remember their sacrifice. Flight 93 should be no different.

As I often contemplate what would have happened if they didn’t do what they did, I feel honored to do what I do every day.

To learn more about the Flight 93 National Memorial campaign, visit www.honorflight93.org.

A rendering showing the area of the memorial currently under construction: the crash site (the grassy area in front of the tree stand), a memorial plaza that runs along the perimeter of the crash site, the Wall of Names, and a Field of Honor that will eventually be surrounded by 40 memorial groves.
Smithfield Plantation

SOPHISTICATION ON THE FRONTIER

By Stacey Evers
Photography by Mallory Hoffman | Courtesy of Historic Smithfield Plantation
In 1755, a young man named William Preston narrowly escaped being killed by Shawnee American Indians in the vicious Draper’s Meadow Massacre in southwestern Virginia, at what is present-day Blacksburg.

Less than two decades later, relations between the frontier settlers and American Indians remained tense as the British incited the Cherokees to threaten pioneer settlements. Increasingly, Loyalist and Patriot neighbors eyed each other with suspicion.

That was the case in 1774 when Preston moved his family—seven children and a wife several months pregnant with an eighth—from a comfortable home in Botetourt County, Va., over the Eastern Continental Divide to their new home, Smithfield Plantation, at the infamous Draper’s Meadow.

Though Preston left no written explanation for why he relocated his family to a dangerous area at a politically tense time, most historians believe it was a business decision. He had obtained thousands of acres in Kentucky and western Virginia when he took over the land company of his uncle, Colonel James Patton, who was murdered in the 1755 massacre. (Patton had sent Preston on an errand the morning of the attack, inadvertently saving his life.) People were moving over the mountains, heading toward better land, and Preston wanted a well-situated headquarters that would let him play a leading role in westward expansion.

Preston served in the Virginia House of Burgesses, but when he lost re-election in 1771 he began buying property that had been part of his uncle’s portfolio, accumulating 1,860 acres to create Smithfield. It would become the homestead of one of the most influential families in 18th- and 19th-century Virginia, producing governors, congressmen, state legislators, military leaders, an ambassador, a secretary of the U.S. Navy and a cofounder of the Olin and Preston Institute, which later became Virginia Tech.

The site he selected for the house had a prime defensive position, sitting on a hill near several springs and palisaded by a 13-foot fence. Preston had surveyed these lots for Patton, so “he knew where the good ones were,” says Hugh Campbell, editor of the annual Smithfield Review, dedicated to southwest Virginia’s history. Despite threats on Preston’s life and general hostilities, Smithfield was never attacked.

Smithfield, named for Preston’s wife, Susanna Smith Preston, was no ordinary Trans-Allegheny home. Unlike the log cabins that dotted the Appalachian landscape, Preston’s tidewater plantation-style manor was built of framed timbers covered with beaded clapboard siding. The two-story, L-shaped house sat on a brick foundation laid in Flemish bond. Small transom windows, believed to be the first of their type to be used in the mountains, topped the double entrance door on the southern side of the house.

The grandness of the house is a testament to Preston’s wealth. “You have to wonder what people thought when they rode by here [during construction],” says David McKissack, museum administrator for Historic Smithfield Plantation. Trees had to be cut and cured for lumber, bricks had to be molded from the clay and then fired in a kiln, the basement had to be dug by hand. “Everyone out here is in a cabin ... and [this] is basically Williamsburg on the frontier.”

Nearly all the exterior is original. Inside, visitors can admire many surviving features that introduced sophistication to the mountains: Chinese Chippendale railings on the
Historic Homes

Clockwise from top left: Military drill manuals and an early map of Virginia remind visitors that Colonel Preston was the militia commander and surveyor for early Montgomery County, Va. • Smithfield house, front and back. • The demonstration garden includes 18th-century plants, many mentioned in Preston family documents. • Interlocking diagonal slats connect top and bottom rails of Smithfield’s staircases in a style known as Chinese Chippendale. Only wealthy homeowners could afford such a luxury.

house’s quarter-turn staircases, formal wainscoting in the drawing room, a Rumford fireplace surround painted glossy Prussian blue, one of the first-ever synthetic paints.

Two highlights of the original décor are a portrait of Susanna, painted before she was married, and a George II looking glass featuring a gilt harp and heart motif on the crest. The mirror was one of a pair, possibly given to Preston’s parents as wedding gifts; its twin was destroyed in a fire. The two walnut and olive wood mirrors came to the New World from Ulster, Ireland, with Preston’s family when he was 8 years old.

The house also holds a rocking chair that belonged to Edmund Randolph, the first U.S. attorney general and father-in-law of the Prestons’ son Thomas Lewis. In the on-site museum is a snuffbox given to Preston by George Washington. The two are believed to have met when both served in the militia during the French and Indian War. Later, they surveyed and hunted together.

Few of Preston’s personal belongings survive: The Prestons had 12 children, and 11 survived to adulthood. The original estate has long since been divided and redivided. Smithfield officials have stocked the house with authentic period pieces, including a circa-1720 looking glass in the dining room and a circa-1780 Chippendale chair with lattice legs, both gifts from the Virginia Society Daughters of the American Revolution.

Strong DAR Ties to Smithfield

The Alleghany Chapter, Blacksburg, Va., has long had a vested interest in Smithfield, says Judith Jones, Ph.D., chapter regent and board member of the Montgomery County, Va., branch of Preservation Virginia and of the Smithfield Preston Foundation, which acts as Smithfield’s fundraising arm. Many chapter members volunteer at Smithfield or serve on its board. Joann Sutphin, director of the Preservation Virginia Montgomery Branch, which owns and manages Smithfield, is a Daughter. Some Preston descendents are both Daughters and members of the Smithfield Preston board. Because of ties like these, Smithfield has benefited from DAR members’ financial and volunteer support.

“Smithfield is the Alleghany Chapter’s primary focus when it comes to historic preservation,” Dr. Jones told American Spirit. “We want to emphasize the historic significance of Smithfield. We’d love to have anyone come and visit and see what a treasure it is.”

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Very little is known about Susanna’s life at Smithfield. She’d been raised in Hanover County north of Richmond and tutored by Patrick Henry’s uncle. She now lived in no-man’s-land, managing a dozen children and more than 40 slaves while her entrepreneurial husband surveyed; sold land, grass seed, whiskey and hemp; and served as the county surveyor, county lieutenant and justice of the peace. Preston also lived in Cherokee settlements in Tennessee for months while trying to negotiate a peace treaty.

“I find her personal story fascinating, to just come out here under those conditions,” McKissack says. “He was leaving her to go off and do stuff constantly. They move here to this magnificent home and right away he’s off again, but I don’t know how much peace they ever really had.”

Less than a year after they settled at Smithfield, Preston participated in the creation of the 1775 Fincastle Resolutions, in which the signatories vowed “never to surrender” their liberties, even if they had to pay with their lives.

After the Colonies declared independence, Preston was designated a colonel in the Virginia militia. His time was consumed by activities such as resolving conflicts with local Tories and thwarting constant Tory plans to seize the local lead mines that served as major ammunition sources. He suffered a fatal stroke during a regimental muster in June 1783, just three months before the Treaty of Paris was signed. Susanna lived in the house another 40 years, and son James Patton Preston, the child with whom she was pregnant when they moved to Smithfield, inherited the property.

The plantation remained in the family until 1959, when Janie Preston Boulware Lamb, the Prestons’ great-great-granddaughter, deeded it to the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA), now called Preservation Virginia. (Although it was still owned by the Prestons, the house had been rented out or vacant since 1890. At one point, the Virginia Tech Agricultural Department had stored hay in the house.) Lamb presented Smithfield to the APVA on the condition that the house be restored, maintained and opened to the public.

The biggest alterations during the two-year restoration were returning Civil War-era porches to their Colonial appearance and replacing the front passageway floor. Today, Smithfield welcomes visitors and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is also the site of the Preston family reunion, held every five years.

Surrounded by the Virginia Tech campus, the current 11-acre site includes the manor, a demonstration kitchen garden, an orchard, a field of flax, a weaver’s cabin, a miller’s cabin and mill ruins, and a cider house. An archaeological dig looking for evidence of a rumored secret

Clockwise: Butter paddles and presses and a mortar rest beneath herbs hanging from the rafters of the winter kitchen. Slaves prepared daily meals for William and Susanna Preston, their 12 children and visitors. • At other times, they spun wool on the large walking spinning wheel located in the same room. • A child’s tea set in the above stairs chamber would have been used by the Prestons’ seven daughters to practice serving tea, but their parents also insisted they receive the same schoolroom education as the sons.

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“The sprawling Preston family tree

When Colonel William Preston died, his will stipulated that his wife, Susanna Smith Preston, could continue living at Smithfield under two conditions: that she didn’t remarry and that she provided an equal education for their seven daughters and five sons.

Such progressive thinking about education “may show why this family was so successful,” says Judith Jones, Ph.D., regent of the Alleghany Chapter and board member of both the Montgomery County, Va., branch of Preservation Virginia and the plantation’s fundraising arm, Smithfield Preston Foundation.

“Successful” almost understates the size and scope of the Preston family’s influence through the end of the Civil War. Preston himself is the namesake of Colonel William Preston Chapter, Roanoke, Va. The names and accomplishments of a sampling of Prestons follow; it is by no means a complete list.

Daughter Elizabeth married William Strother Madison, a cousin of James Madison.

Son John served in the Virginia House of Delegates, the Virginia Senate, as treasurer of Virginia and as a brigadier general in the Virginia militia.

Son Francis served in the Virginia House of Delegates, the Virginia Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives. He married a daughter of Colonel William Campbell, a hero of the Battle of Kings Mountain. George Washington presented one of four specially made...
tunnel from the basement to one of the property’s springs came up empty, but the search continues. “There are some tantalizing leads that we hope will prove the existence of a tunnel soon,” McKissack says.

The family cemetery includes the Prestons’ stacked grave. Stones for the previously unmarked grave sites of two slaves—a woman named Virginia Fraction Capers and a second, unidentified individual—were dedicated at this year’s Juneteenth celebration. Soon, thanks to a new $2,000 NSDAR Special Projects Grant, a blacksmith’s cabin will grace the grounds.

For the July/August 2010 issue, Stacey Evers wrote about the havoc wrought by the plants colonists carried to the Americas.

Masonic ladies to Francis. His son, William Campbell Preston, was a U.S. senator from South Carolina.

**Daughter Sarah** married Colonel James McDowell, an officer during the War of 1812, and their son James McDowell became Virginia governor. Their daughter Susan McDowell married U.S. Rep. William Taylor of Virginia, and daughter Elizabeth McDowell married Thomas Hart Benton, the powerful five-term U.S. senator from Missouri. The Bentons’ daughter, Jessie, became a famous writer. She married explorer and military leader John C. Frémont, who also was a founding member of the Republican party and its first presidential candidate, as well as territorial governor of Arizona.

**Daughter Letitia** married John Floyd, who served in the U.S. House of Representatives and as secretary of Virginia. Their son, John Buchanan Floyd, served in the Virginia House of Delegates, and as governor of Virginia, U.S. secretary of war and a brigadier general in the Confederate Army.

**Son Thomas Lewis** served in the Virginia General Assembly and married the daughter of Edmund Randolph, the first U.S. attorney general.

**Son James Patton**, the first child born at Smithfield, served in the Virginia Senate, the U.S. Army (attaining the rank of colonel) and as governor of Virginia. A law establishing the University of Virginia passed during his gubernatorial term.

**Grandson William Ballard Preston**, son of James Patton Preston, co-founded the Olin and Preston Institute, which became Virginia Tech, and served in the Virginia House of Delegates, the Virginia Senate, the U.S. House of Representatives and as secretary of the U.S. Navy. He was part of a three-man delegation that met with Abraham Lincoln in Washington, hoping to find a compromise that would keep Virginia in the Union. Dissatisfied with the outcome and learning about the firing on Fort Sumter, Preston submitted the motion to secede, the Preston Resolution. It passed, Virginia seceded and Preston became a Confederate States senator.

**Grandson William Preston** served in both houses of the Kentucky legislature, the U.S. House of Representatives, as ambassador to Spain and as brigadier general in the Confederate Army.

**Grandnephew Francis Preston Blair’s** home in Washington, D.C., became part of the Blair House, which is located across the street from the White House and is used as a guest house for foreign heads of state visiting the U.S. president.
Clockwise From Top Left:
- The grand staircase at Eleutherian Mills, Wilmington’s original du Pont family home
- Wilmington’s Riverfront
- Longwood Gardens
- The exterior of Eleutherian Mills at Hagley Museum and Library
- The DuPont Environmental Education Center
- The Chihuly exhibit at the Wilmington Art Museum
WILMINGTON, situated midway between New York City and Washington, D.C., may appear to be an outlier among the East Coast power cities of the I-95 corridor. Although the city covers only 17 square miles, Wilmington's ample supply of history, public gardens and corporate clout belies its modest proportions.

Today the heart of Wilmington occupies a triangle of land between the Brandywine Creek and the Christina River, which flows into the Delaware. These waterways carried the first permanent European settlers to the area in 1638, aboard the Swedish ships Kalmar Nyckel and Vogel Grip, and subsequently fostered the industrial growth of the city.
Fluctuations in Power

Led by Peter Minuit, the collection of Swedish, Finnish, German and Dutch colonists landed in an area populated by the Lenni Lenape American Indians. The newcomers dubbed their settlement New Sweden and named both the river and Fort Christina, built about a mile from present-day Wilmington, for the queen of Sweden.

The brief period of Swedish rule lasted only until 1655, when Peter Stuyvesant seized control for the Dutch. In 1682, Delaware’s three counties became part of William Penn’s Pennsylvania domain. As a result, many of Wilmington’s earliest buildings reveal Swedish or Quaker influences.

The log cabins that settlers built at Fort Christina are some of the oldest in America. Old Swedes Church, dating to 1698, survives as one of the oldest Protestant churches in the country. Next door sits Hendrickson House, a Swedish Colonial home originally constructed in Chester County, Pa., in the late 17th century. The home was relocated to its present site for preservation as an example of a typical Swedish Colonial farmer’s household.

More early churches, dwellings and businesses inhabit the Quaker Hill Historic District. The Wilmington Friends Meeting House, erected in 1816, still stands just a block away from the Cathedral of St. Peter, built the same decade.

Famous residents of the meeting house graveyard include John Dickinson, a signer of the Constitution, and Thomas Garrett, a prominent abolitionist active in the Underground Railroad. (For many escaping slaves, Wilmington was the first free stop on their route.)

The city known today as Wilmington was established in 1731, when developer Thomas Willing designed the footprint of Willingtown. Eight years later the name was changed to honor the Earl of Wilmington.

Having already created its own legislature separate from Pennsylvania’s in 1704, by 1776 Delaware also had declared its independence from England. Troops and officers quartered at Wilmington during the Revolution remained close to Philadelphia while also removed from actual fighting. The only battle fought in the state took place at Cooch’s Bridge, and the Battle of Brandywine was waged in Pennsylvania. On December 7, 1787, Delaware famously became the first state to ratify the U.S. Constitution.

Industry Flourishes

While the area’s early economy had focused on farming and trade, by the 1740s, colonists such as Quaker miller Oliver Canby learned to use the power of the local rivers to turn raw materials into refined products. Wilmington, along with the upriver settlement Brandywine Village, which it has since absorbed, became a milling center. Flour mills...
proliferated, as grain from nearby farming communities could be transported in easily via water, then out again as flour bound for the Colonies and Europe.

More dynamic commodities were produced in Wilmington as well. “Along a scenic stretch of Brandywine Creek, French emigrant E.I. du Pont founded his namesake gunpowder works in 1802,” writes W. Barksdale Maynard in Buildings of Delaware (University of Virginia Press, 2008). “From this seed would grow the gigantic DuPont chemical corporation of our times.”

The launch was well-timed, as gunpowder was in demand for military, mining, manufacturing and construction purposes. By 1811, DuPont was the largest manufacturer in the United States.

A combination of geographic advantages, shrewd business practices and luck fueled the area’s industrial boom. “Milling of grain brought wealth to Revolutionary-era Wilmington. Later, it was fortunate to lie directly along the line of one of America’s first railroads, the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore (1837),” notes Maynard. Shipyards, tanneries, and carriage and railroad car factories rounded out the manufacturing landscape.

At the turn of the 20th century, Wilmington contained more than 40 percent of the state’s population on less than 1 percent of its land area and ranked among the nation’s wealthiest cities per capita.

Wilmington Today

“As with all American cities, Wilmington has changed profoundly over the years, building and rebuilding in a pattern of ceaseless change,” Maynard writes. In the 1950s industry declined and population shifted to the suburbs. But the following decades brought renewed historic preservation efforts, and Delaware’s commercial tax codes lured large banking operations and Fortune 500 companies to the city. Wilmington, still a railroad hub, is also home to Amtrak’s National Operations Center.

An array of recreational options is available for exploring local history, enjoying nature and appreciating world-class art.

Wilmington’s throng of museums includes the Delaware Museum of Natural History, Delaware Art Museum, Delaware Historical Society, the recently added Delaware Children’s Museum and the New Sweden Centre.

The hybrid museums-gardens-libraries at the historic du Pont residences enhance the selection further. (See sidebar below.) At the Riverfront, visitors can stroll through the waterside park dedicated to abolitionists Garrett and Harriet Tubman or explore the marshy ecosystem at the Russell W. Peterson Urban Wildlife Refuge.

Collectively, the unique blend of attractions proves Wilmington to be a destination in its own right.
Daughter Rebecca’s quilt contains the initials of Rebecca and her husband in the center medallion with the words “Made by Amelia Lauck in the 62 year of her age” quilted in an outer border.
Revolutionary Patriots are remembered for their actions and honored for their service, but the women in their lives are often known only as connective parts of the family tree. Amelia Heiskell Lauck, wife of Revolutionary War soldier Peter Lauck, left behind a legacy created with her sewing needle.

by Virginia Vis
MELIA HEISKELL, the daughter of Christopher and Eve Heiskell, who were among the first settlers of the Shenandoah Valley, was born in 1760 in Winchester, Va. Winchester was then an important crossroads. The young George Washington spent considerable time there as a surveyor, and Winchester served as his headquarters during the French and Indian War from 1754–1758, making him a familiar figure around the growing town. In 1775 when the call came that Washington needed troops to fight against the British, his Winchester neighbors swiftly responded.

A CONNECTION TO MORGAN’S RAIDERS
Within 10 days Daniel Morgan, a teamster by profession, mustered 96 men to report to Washington for duty. Amelia’s brother Adam Heiskell and her future husband Peter Lauck were among them. Many, including Lauck, had served during Lord Dunmore’s War in 1774. Lauck and a small cadre of the group organized themselves as the “Dutch [Deutsch/German] Mess,” forming bonds that would outlast the war. Lauck would later name one of his sons “Morgan” in admiration of his commander.

Morgan’s Raiders were dispatched by Washington as part of an attempt to capture the city of Quebec. After enduring a long trek through winter storms with depleted supplies, on December 31, 1775, Morgan’s troop took part in a three-pronged attack of Quebec. After successfully breaching the city walls, they discovered the other two attacks had failed, leaving them no choice but to surrender. (For more on the Canadian battles, see the September/October 2008 issue.) The battle resulted in Lauck’s imprisonment for almost a year and left him permanently deaf in one ear.

AMELIA’S FAMILY LIFE
Details of Lauck’s courtship of Amelia after his release are unknown, but the couple married on October 27, 1779. In 1783 Lauck built the Red Lion Inn in Winchester, providing food and shelter to travelers, and a large room for public gatherings. The family lived at the inn until about 1800 when they built a house nearby called Edgehill. They had 11 children, six of whom survived to adulthood. It is thought each of these six children received a special gift from their mother—a quilt of exquisite beauty and workmanship.

EXPRESSIONS OF AFFECTION
Four quilts made by Amelia are known to still exist. Two of these masterpieces have been generously donated to the DAR Museum, and two others are in the collection of Colonial Williamsburg. The four quilts are remarkably similar in appearance.

All of the quilts feature a prominent center medallion formed with motifs cut from the same block-printed cotton fabric reconfigured into floral wreaths. Due to Winchester’s position on an important trade route for goods of all kinds, Amelia would have had an excellent selection of fabrics available. She chose several in delicate pink prints. Fabrics from one quilt carry over into others, but not all the quilts use the same combination of prints. Whether her supplier...
did not have the yardage she required or she chose to mix and match is unknown. The center wreaths are surrounded by progressively larger pieced and solid borders. All of the pieced borders are arranged in a configuration now known as Delectable Mountains.

One of the DAR Museum’s quilts is missing the outermost pieced border, which was removed by a previous owner. The solid white areas of the borders are heavily and elaborately stitched with swirls of feathers along with a multitude of floral designs. Some of the areas are stuffed with extra batting to create further dimension. Several of the borders have corner blocks made of eight-pointed stars. A curved seam splits half of the diamonds in each star for extra flourish.

Three of the four quilts contain inscriptions identifying the maker and recipient. Daughter Rebecca’s quilt contains the initials of Rebecca and her husband in the center medallion with the words “Made by Amelia Lauck in the 62 year of her age” quilted in an outer border. Son William’s quilt is inscribed “Presented by their Mother to W and E Lauck.” One of the quilts at Williamsburg is dedicated to son Morgan and his wife, along with a notation indicating it was made the same year as Rebecca’s. The other can be attributed to Amelia only by fabric and design. All of the quilts appear to have been constructed about the same time, but since the inscriptions acknowledge spouses, they may have been bestowed when a child married.

Any one of these quilts is an example of astonishing design and skill. Creating four—or six, as suspected—within a short time span seems to be a feat beyond the capability of just one person. According to census records, the Lauck household included hired help and slave labor. “We know quilting was a cooperative activity among women, and that many African-American women working in Southern white households were skilled needlewomen,” says Alden O’Brien, curator of costumes and textiles at the DAR Museum. “It’s safe to surmise that if we know a certain quilter had enslaved women in the house, they were involved in the quilting to a greater or lesser degree.”

In the Lauck family papers, family members recall Amelia “sitting there with her work, teaching a slave to sew,” indicating this was a common pastime for her and supporting the possibility that she utilized available helping hands to complete her extravagant expressions of maternal affection.

Will two more of Amelia’s quilts rejoin those of her siblings? Two of the quilts resurfaced after their owners saw another one on public display. Perhaps the others have been equally treasured and are only waiting to be rediscovered.

Virginia Vis is a textile conservator and historian based in Arlington, Va.

**More About Amelia**

Amelia Lauck’s quilts are featured in the book *Historic Quilts of the DAR Museum* (Martha Pullen Company, 2011), available from the DAR Museum Shop. To order, call (202) 879-3208 or e-mail museumshop@dar.org. The entire quilt collection is viewable online on the Quilt Index website: www.quiltindex.org.
Utility and Innovation

AMERICAN FOLK ART AT THE DAR MUSEUM

The DAR Museum’s first-ever exhibition devoted entirely to folk art showcases a facet of the collection that evolved largely by accident. The Museum was never intended to be a repository for folk art. But over time, as DAR members donated family heirlooms to the collection and the popularity of American folk art increased, a varied selection of folk art objects came to be represented among the Museum’s holdings. “By, For and Of the People: Folk Art and Americana at the DAR Museum” illustrates the talent and imagination of those who turned everyday objects into works of art. Collectively, the items on display portray a sampling of American tastes and cultures of the 19th and early 20th centuries.
The unique exhibition’s varied yet cohesive presentation offers something for every visitor. Typical household items salute the American craftsmen who united utility and innovative design, from the chair makers, tinsmiths and potters who enlivened their wares with painted flourishes to the blacksmiths who transformed simple iron trivets into decorative kitchenware. In addition to traditional portraits, the exhibition contains a selection of profile portraits, less expensive pieces often rendered by aspiring artists just beginning their careers. Samplers illustrate typical schoolgirl art, frakturs demonstrate the use of family records in decorative settings, and children’s objects recall early American youngsters.

“By, For and Of the People: Folk Art and Americana at the DAR Museum” will be on display October 7, 2011, through September 1, 2012.
A Penny Saved...

By Nancy Mann Jackson

Colonial Americans and Their Money

Daughters of the American Revolution
As the United States creeps out of the “Great Recession,” many Americans face the hard realities of evaporated nest eggs, lower salaries and the possibility of delaying retirement. While modern Americans are known for spending beyond their means and saving little, if any, living thriftily has, since the 18th century, been a robust part of the American vision of economic freedom and social abundance.

“THRIFT, OR ‘INDUSTRY AND FRUGALITY’ as it was more commonly known, was a value strongly developed among the Puritan faithful in New England who believed in a religious calling to productive work and in the stewardship of material goods as gifts from God,” says Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, co-author of Franklin’s Thrift: The Lost History of an American Virtue (Templeton Press, 2009). “Benjamin Franklin stood within that tradition but transformed thrift from a Puritan religious value to a secular practice that would lead to wealth. For Franklin, who personified and promoted the idea, thrift meant working productively, consuming wisely, saving proportionally and giving generously.”

Other Founders such as John Adams shared Franklin’s strong belief in working hard and living within one’s means. “Adams’ letters to his family are full of thrift advice and admonitions,” Whitehead says. “In 1774, he wrote [his wife] Abigail: ‘Let Frugality and Industry be our Virtues, if they are not of any others.’ Adams believed that the way to an independent life was to earn one’s own income through productive work, ideally in the law and public service.”

While living thriftily was widely admired in Colonial America, like today, it wasn’t always feasible. But throughout American history, thrift has been held up as the ideal. That common value has helped shape the nation’s institutions and the lifestyle that Americans return to again and again. “Thrift has had its ups and downs throughout our history, but it is now enjoying a comeback,” Whitehead says. “Partly this is due to our efforts to recover from the Great Recession. Partly it is due to a larger reappraisal and reappraisal for thrift as a pathway to freedom. Americans who embrace thrift are able to free themselves from over-indebtedness and anxiety about the future. Younger Americans, who have grown up with plastic and mounting credit card debt, are now realizing that thrift is an alternative way of life, deeply grounded in American tradition.”

**CREDIT IN THE COLONIES**

Even though American colonists believed in living thriftily, they “faced economic forces that militated against thrift,” Whitehead says. “Colonial America was part of a mercantilist economy. Settlers depended on borrowing money in order to engage in trade or plant crops. Planters in the South were constantly in debt to British interests. Even in thrifty New England, colonists took loans in the hopes of success, but often their businesses, land deals or crops failed, and they landed in debtors’ prison.”

Most colonists’ lives reflected both thrift and debt; even Thomas Jefferson, who deeply espoused living thriftily, was constantly in debt. “Thrift was the aspiration and goal, but even those who worked hard and practiced frugality sometimes fell short of achieving that goal,” Whitehead says.

For early Americans, the attitude toward credit was much the same as today. “Merchants may have grudgingly accepted it, but they did accept it,” says David Flynn, an economics professor at the University of North Dakota College of Business and Public Administration, who has studied credit in the Colonial American economy. “Stores provided customers with credit, and the types of goods may have depended on the form of payment, but customers made good use of it. Credit was then, and remains now, part of doing business. Also, much as we have seen in the years since the housing market bubble, there was a sense that too much credit was a bad thing, a character flaw.”

While depending too much on credit may have been frowned upon, the use of credit was “foundational” for building an American economy, according to Flynn. “Consumers and producers alike were able to make use of it to expand production and consumption,” he continues.

“Credit with merchants also became payment to others at times, an early form of account book intermediation [that is, credit provided by third parties rather than by a
merchant-customer relationship]. This credit was also connected in a chain from English merchants. In fact, the entire payments systems of the Colonies and England were intertwined to such an extent that the attitudes that were put in place over that length of time did become custom and led to some of the rebellious attitudes [of the colonists]."

CLAMORING FOR CASH

One reason that credit and barter were used so extensively was that coins were scarce throughout the Colonies. But colonists loved to get their hands on real coins, whether they were Spanish dollars minted in Mexico or St. Patrick coppers from Ireland. "They used a little bit of everything, any coins that were available," says Erik Goldstein, curator of mechanical arts and numismatics at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. "It didn’t matter where the coin came from, as long as it had the right weight of silver or gold behind it."

While colonists appreciated the value of coinage, "there was never enough of it in the big cities, and even less elsewhere," Goldstein continues. Each Colony set its own exchange rate, and those with large cities set the exchange rates in a way that was designed to bring money into the city, he explains. For instance, a Spanish dollar would be worth more in New York City than in other places.

The inconsistency of exchange rates and scarcity of coinage led the Continental Congress to authorize its own currency in May 1775. Despite much resistance, the Continental Congress began printing paper money, known as "Continental." While the paper money "was seen as a distant second-best, a stand-in for coins," it was necessary to help the fledgling nation pay its soldiers and finance the Revolutionary War, Goldstein says.

While many colonists disliked paper money, Franklin, with his printing press, championed the change. And the New England Colonies, along with Virginia and South Carolina, authorized banks to issue notes on real property, Whitehead says.
“Money was both a blessing and a curse in Colonial and post-Revolutionary America,” Whitehead adds. “It fostered growth and paid for war, but at the same time, led to inflation, over-indebtedness, crashes and conflict. Paper money paid for the Revolutionary War but also led to such high inflation that the money became worthless—thus, the saying, ‘not worth a Continental.’

“But colonists and the Continental Congress increasingly had to rely on paper money in order to build an economy and win independence,” Whitehead says.

**REMNANTS OF THE COLONIAL ECONOMY**

The modern American economy bears resemblance to that of Colonial America, according to Flynn. Perhaps the most obvious link is the currency system we use, which remains the system envisioned by then-Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson with the Mint Act of 1792 (as secretary of state, Jefferson oversaw issues involving the mint and coinage). The major improvement Jefferson’s system had over European currency systems in place at the time was the inclusion of the decimal system, Goldstein says. The idea to make the dollar divisible by 100 units, rather than 60, as in some countries, made the system easier to use and is one reason it’s still in use today.

The currency we use isn’t the only holdover from the Colonial economy. “Credit remains a foundational element for many consumers and producers,” Flynn says. “And America remains a potent force in the world economy, though now we know it, and in the 18th century it was less clear.

“Intermediation has become centralized and professionalized, handled by third parties now at a higher frequency than before,” he says. “So, in that regard, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

“However, now the United States is at the center of the global financial system, not London,” Flynn continues.

“Clearly the complexity of the U.S. economy is higher now than in the 18th century, though the varied economic performance of the different regions that we saw then has abated somewhat. Clearly all regions have different growth drivers and patterns, but there is a sense that no area can be permanently in the lead.”

While the U.S. economy has evolved and changed over the past few centuries, perhaps the basic American ideal of living thriftily is once again coming into vogue, as more Americans are relinquishing their credit cards and exorbitant mortgages for a simpler way of life.

“Despite the challenges, thrift never disappeared as a value or as a worthy goal for families and for the nation,” Whitehead says. “It was particularly important in reform movements to help the poor and to help immigrants save and use their money wisely. Thrift helped to build cooperative institutions like building and loan associations, mutual savings banks and credit unions.

From the early to mid-20th century, thrift inspired school savings programs, war bond drives and a national thrift week celebration led by a coalition of organizations, including the YMCA, the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, the U.S. Postal Service, and the American Red Cross.”

In January, the city of Philadelphia celebrated National Thrift Week, the first celebration of a former national tradition in 45 years. Through such celebrations, Americans are remembering this basic value and its role in their national heritage. “It will take energy and effort to keep the recent enthusiasm for thrift alive,” Whitehead says. “But thrift has been part of the fabric of American life since Colonial days and therefore is likely to persist further into the 21st century.”

Nancy Mann Jackson wrote about the history of bicycles for the May/June 2010 issue.
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 170,000 members in nearly 3,000 chapters worldwide, including chapters in 12 foreign countries. Since its founding in 1890, DAR has admitted more than 875,000 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.
Money may not make the world go round, but no war has ever been won without it. And had it not been for Robert Morris, an often overlooked Patriot, the Colonies would never have had the money to fight and win the Revolutionary War.

by NANCY MANN JACKSON
Rather than a rebellious spirit, Robert Morris possessed a sharp financial mind, which proved to be equally important for the Revolutionary cause. Although he was “one of the most important Founding Fathers,” according to biographer Charles Rappleye, Morris has been long forgotten by American history. Before Rappleye’s book, *Robert Morris: Financier of the American Revolution* (Simon & Schuster, 2010), was released last year, the most recent biography of Morris was published in 1903. “The more I learned about Morris, the more I saw [his absence from history books] as an oversight,” Rappleye says. “He is a central figure in the Revolution.”

Born in Liverpool, England, in 1734, Morris left England at the age of 13 to join his father, a tobacco exporter, in Maryland. After limited schooling, Morris joined a large banking and importing firm in Philadelphia, and at the age of 20, he became a partner in the firm. He joined those opposing the Stamp Act in 1765, but it wasn’t until 10 years later, when war broke out, that he fully committed himself and his fortune to the Revolutionary cause.

On March 2, 1769, the 35-year-old Morris married 20-year-old Mary White, who came from a prominent family in Maryland. Mary’s brother was the well-known Bishop William White, and Morris worshipped at his church, St. Peter’s in Philadelphia, until Morris’ death. Together, Morris and his wife had five sons and two daughters.

In 1775, the Continental Congress contracted with Morris’ company to import arms and ammunition, and he was elected to serve on various committees, as well as in the Pennsylvania legislature from 1776–1778 and the Continental Congress from 1775–1778.

**Funding the Revolution**

At times during the Revolutionary War, the Colonial army lacked the funding to feed and clothe soldiers and buy the ammunition needed to pursue the British. Morris was the one who always came through. “Morris was considered the richest man on the continent,” Rappleye says. “Whether that was true or not, he was certainly the most successful and celebrated merchant and was engaged in international trade. He had lots of connections and was always able to raise capital. He supplied [General George] Washington with funding at several critical junctures during the war, such as just before the battles at Trenton and Yorktown. The Revolution would not have been successful without him.”

Working closely with Washington, he coaxed the states to donate money and supplies when they were needed, borrowed money from France and other foreign allies, as well as his own friends, and even took out personal loans to finance the Revolution. His ability to deliver capital to finance the war of a fledgling nation is admired by historians. “Morris managed to finance the successful conclusion of the Revolutionary War even though the new nation’s people were exhausted, its physical resources were strained, and its credit was nearly nonexistent,” says Robert Wright, professor of political economy and director of the Thomas Willing Institute for the Study of Financial Markets, Institutions and Regulations at Augustana College in Sioux Falls, S.D.

**Conceiving the American Future**

After the war was over, Morris continued to play an important role in America’s development. He served as a delegate from Philadelphia at the Second Continental Congress and signed the Declaration of Independence. He was also the dominant figure in the political
faction now known as the Nationalists, a group that included Hamilton, Washington and Madison.

After the war ended in 1782, the states basically governed themselves, and by 1787, “things were falling apart,” Rappleye says. That’s why Morris and others in the Nationalist party convened the Constitutional Convention in 1787, to draft a document that would create an active central government.

While there was a movement to oppose federal taxes, Morris was a convincing advocate of a broad central government and federal taxes for all Americans. “Without a central government, you couldn’t manage your debt,” Rappleye says, and America had run up significant debts to France and other countries during the war.

Morris also served as the new nation’s superintendent of finance from 1781 to 1784. It was in this capacity that Morris’ brilliant business mind laid the groundwork for the American economy. “Morris introduced to Americans the idea of debt financing for the government,” Rappleye says. “That doesn’t look like a blessing today, but it depends on how it’s applied. He knew that if you owed $100, you could either raise $100 and pay it today, or with 6 percent interest, you could raise $6 and pay it today. For early America, raising $6 was the best they could do.”

With connections all over the world, Morris was also a global capitalist at the very dawn of global capitalism, Rappleye says. “He had a real respect for the free markets and an understanding that price controls don’t work because the market will always correct them. His credo was, ‘commerce should be as free as the air.’”

In 1782, Morris opened the Bank of North America in Philadelphia. It was the first financial institution chartered by the United States. Washington offered Morris a Cabinet post as secretary of the treasury, but Morris refused it. Instead, he recommended his friend Alexander Hamilton, who became the nation’s first secretary of the treasury and the nation’s “financial architect,” Wright says.

“Thanks to financial Founding Fathers like Morris, his partner Thomas Willing and Hamilton, within just a few years of the ratification of the Constitution, America developed a modern financial system. This included a stable unit of account (the U.S. dollar defined in terms of gold and silver); a national bank; securities markets for U.S., state, and corporate bonds and corporate shares; networks of banks and insurers; and entrepreneurs who could form full-fledged, joint-stock business corporations,” he continues.

A Failure That Lasts

Unfortunately, Morris’ success didn’t last. At the end of his career, he lost everything in land speculation in New York state, which may be one reason he has been often overlooked. Morris invested in the District of Columbia
and purchased more than 6 million acres in the rural South. And although he owned more land than perhaps any other American at the time, the land market crashed after the Napoleonic Wars broke out, and the Panic of 1797 ruined the American, English and Caribbean financial markets. Morris’ company collapsed.

With plenty of land but no cash to pay his creditors, Morris “ended up broke, and his reputation was tarnished,” Rappleye says. He declared bankruptcy in 1798, spent three years in debtors’ prison and died in poverty in 1806.

The bankruptcy of someone known for his financial skills surely must have raised concerns for early Americans. “There was a notion that Morris, like others who did well for themselves financially, somehow looted the public purse or took advantage of consumers,” Wright says. “Such claims are misunderstandings. The U.S. economy was just beginning to grow, so many Americans still held the old-fashioned view that the rich must have gotten so at the expense of others.”

“Today,” Wright adds, “we realize that Morris created new wealth, until he went bankrupt, of course. I think his long-term incarceration for debt, although tragic, helped to show that the America of the 1790s was not an aristocracy but rather a meritocracy subject to the rule of law.”

Aside from his financial failure, Morris’ memory may have also faded because he didn’t fit the quintessential image of a rugged Patriot. “Even though it is the richest country in the world, Americans still don’t like to think of themselves as a moneyed people,” Rappleye says. “The idea of a rotund, [rich] founder is not one that Americans [are drawn] to; we’re more interested in generals and rebels, and he was neither. He doesn’t really fit the idea of the early American revolutionary.”

Morris may not have been a typical Patriot, but his sharp financial mind helped win the war and shape an American economy that would become the world’s largest and strongest. And that’s something worth remembering.  

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