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The American Orchid Society's 14-month Calendar

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Our Patriots
Master Gardener of West Point
While building the fortifications at West Point during the Revolution, Thaddeus Kosciuszko took the time to include a quiet place for “rest and repose.” The garden he created was recently restored by West Point cadets and friends.
BY NANCY MANN JACKSON

What’s This Worth?
Ensure successful appraisals for your most treasured items with a few guidelines from experts.
BY NANCY COOPER

The President Takes a Ride
Horse-drawn vehicles added beauty and spectacle to the inaugurations and official ceremonies attended by our earliest presidents.
BY KAREN SUTHERLAND

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BY MAUREEN TAYLOR

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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.

Preserving the American Spirit
www.dar.org
(202) 879–3224
From the President General

The Old Farmer’s Almanac has been published continuously since George Washington’s first term as president, and our front cover presents an image inspired by the iconic publication. The almanac remains popular for its calendar pages, planting and harvesting advice, witty stories and proverbs, and especially for its weather predictions. Alas, we’ll never know the secret behind those forecasts: Founder Robert B. Thomas’ secret weather formula remains locked away in the almanac’s offices in Dublin, N.H. The publication’s editorial mission remains guided by Thomas’ main objective: “to be useful, with a pleasant degree of humor.”

History students might know that Thaddeus Kosciuszko was the lead engineer at West Point, responsible for creating its Revolutionary War-era fortifications under orders from George Washington. But few realize that Kosciuszko was also known as a master gardener for his dedication to carving out a place of rest and repose on the grounds of what became the United States Military Academy at West Point. This issue’s Our Patriots department uncovers the recent hard work by volunteers and cadets to restore Kosciuszko’s beautiful garden terrace there.

In keeping with our mission to bring you stories of little-known Revolutionary patriots, we profile Agrippa Hull, a free black who served with several Revolutionary generals, including Kosciuszko. After his six-year service to the Patriot cause, he returned to his home in Stockbridge, Mass., where he became a landowner and used his status as a veteran to advocate for his race.

This issue also features the Sibley House, the home of Henry Hastings Sibley, the first state governor of Minnesota, and Sarah Sibley, a fervent preservationist who helped raise money for the restoration of Washington’s Mount Vernon. The home, taken care of by the Minnesota State Society DAR for more than 80 years, is now owned by the state and has been managed by the Minnesota Historical Society since 1996.

Though your home might not be quite as historic as the Sibleys’, chances are your attic or garage contains its own valuable objects. How does one determine whether those objects are trash or treasure? If they are valuable, how can owners protect and insure their collections? We explain the role of an appraiser in fairly assessing treasured family heirlooms and give tips on ensuring a successful appraisal process.

As the nation gears up for the bicentennial of the War of 1812, we outline commemorative events in our Whatnot department and consider its epic naval battles in the Bookshelf. Future issues will bring you more stories of the sometimes forgotten but significant war.

Merry Ann T. Wright
**Tackling a Man’s World**

A lifelong football fan, sports agent Angela Hales helps young men achieve their dreams of playing in the NFL.

By LENA ANTHONY  Photography By JULIA STUDIO

When it comes to how she feels about football, Angela Hales says the word “fan” doesn’t fully describe it. Her parents raised her to root for the University of Alabama, a school whose football program is often ranked among the best in the nation, and she grew up in New Orleans, home of the Saints. In fact, she went to the very first game the Saints played in 1967.

It was during one of these football weekends four years ago that Mrs. Hales got an idea: “I turned to my husband and said I wanted to be the first female NFL referee,” says the member of the Boeuf River Chapter, Rayville, La. “He immediately said that it was too dangerous but asked why didn’t I become an agent instead.”

So she did. Armed with an MBA (either that or a law degree is a prerequisite), Mrs. Hales applied and was invited to take the licensing exam.

Today, Mrs. Hales (or Big Mama, as her players know her) runs the Angela Hales Sports Agency in Rayville, La. She is the only female NFL agent in Louisiana and one of 750 licensed sports agents in the country. Mrs. Hales estimates that no more than 10 percent of the agents nationwide are female. “I’ve always found myself working in a man’s world,” says Mrs. Hales, who had previously been the first female supervisor for State Farm’s Monroe, La., office. “I feel comfortable there. I like to go places that women haven’t gone before.”

Her son, Myrt Hales III, also is a licensed NFL agent. Together they are the only mother-and-son pair of agents in the history of the NFL. “There are a lot of fathers and sons, but we’re the first mother and son,” she says.

As an agent, Mrs. Hales spends a lot of time on the road, attending the NFL’s annual scouting and pre-draft events in Indianapolis and Mobile, Ala. She attends NFL games across the country, visits training facilities and accompanies her clients to tryouts. When she’s not on the road, she’s on the phone—talking to players, coaches and team personnel. “It’s a lot of PR and marketing,” she says. And, she admits, success has a lot to do with being in the right place at the right time. “It’s extremely competitive,” she says. “Think about it. There are 750 agents, thousands of players, but only 224 spots in the draft each year.”

She finds her players mostly by word of mouth, as a strict collective bargaining agreement places restrictions on when agents can contact prospective clients. Currently, she is representing 17 players, many from the South but one as far away as British Columbia, Canada.

She makes it clear that she doesn’t do it for the money—she does it for the love of the game. “I love to see these young men achieve their goals,” she says. “That’s really why I love this job—it’s about the people.”

Mrs. Hales, who has been attending NFL games for more than 40 years, says she has noticed that there are more women in the stands today. “If you look around, about half of the fans are women,” she says. “Women are also talking about football more. That was never the case before.”

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Birthday Wishes

The Elijah Clarke DAR Chapter, from Athens, Ga., proved that you can have your cake and eat it too! The theme of the chapter’s first fall meeting celebrated American Spirit and its recent 10th anniversary. Copies of the magazine decorated the table of refreshments, which also held a special cake with a photo of the July/August 2011 magazine cover imprinted on the icing. Member Sherry Caven came up with the idea for the photo cake.

“Thanks for the American Spirit. I give mine to the grandchildren [to use] for school projects,” says Charlotte Nicely, We-Ah-Tah-Umba Chapter, Germantown, Tenn.

“American Spirit is always very well written and interesting,” writes Judy Holcomb, Commodore Perry Chapter, Memphis, Tenn. “The best thing you have done!” declares Virginia Whitworth, Glover’s Trace Chapter, Camden, Tenn.

Thanks to the Tennessee Daughters for their thoughtful gesture, and thanks to all American Spirit readers for their continued support.

Two of a Kind

I found the Battleship Silver article in the July/August Whatnot section of the magazine very interesting. This article caused me to recall another set of battleship silver, this one a little closer to home. Our very own U.S.S. Iowa battleship silver is on permanent display in the Iowa State Historical Building.

In 1896, in commemoration of our 50th year of statehood, the Iowa General Assembly appropriated $5,000 for the proper recognition of the battleship U.S.S. Iowa. J.E. Caldwell & Co. of Philadelphia made a 40-piece silver service that weighs 2,100 troy ounces, or 145 pounds.


There is an inscription on one of the large platters: “In all that’s good, Iowa affords the best.” I wonder how many other states that have battleships named after them have other silver sets.

Beverly Neuroth, Magazine Chairman
Jean Marie Cardinell Chapter
Des Moines, Iowa

A Tribute to St. Paul’s Chapel

As I was reading the very interesting article on St. Paul’s Chapel in the September/October issue, it reminded me of my grandson’s visit there. After 9/11, his fourth-grade class at Ezell Harding Christian School, in Nashville, Tenn., made a banner of the American flag. Their teacher took it to New York and hung it on the fence in front of St. Paul’s. This spring his senior class visited New York and stopped in St. Paul’s. Imagine how surprised they were when they saw their banner still on display in the chapel after all this time. There were eight of them, now 18-year-olds, whose handprints were on the banner. He said some tears were shed, and that it was a very moving experience for all them.

Martha Gann
French Lick Chapter
Nashville, Tenn.
On a Quilt Quest

Thank you for the article about the beautiful quilts made by Amelia Heiskell Lauck. My family descends from her youngest son William Cunningham Lauck, for whom she created one of her quilts. When my sister and I traveled to the DAR Museum in Washington, D.C., [in November 2007], curator Alden O’Brien enthusiastically showed us the Lauck quilts on display. We thought they were featured beautifully.

Dee Christensen
Cumberland County Chapter
Carlisle, Pa.

Not So Common Cents

Two articles in the September/October issue appealed to me because of my interest in numismatics of the Colonial era. First was Nancy Mann Jackson’s excellent article “A Penny Saved.” It should be noted, however, that the Edwin Lamasure painting of the first U.S. Mint was an idealized portrait of the mint facilities. The first mint never existed in the condition presented in that painting. It was always located in a crowded urban setting. For more information, I would refer readers to Joel Orosz and Leonard Augsburger’s book, The Secret History of the First U.S. Mint.

Second, the article on Robert Morris was also well done. However, the caption writer inadvertently labeled the coin illustrated on page 47 as a Colonial penny. The coin pictured is not a penny and is not from the Colonial period. It is a federally issued cent known popularly as a chain cent on the reverse side.

This particular coin is sometimes called a flowing hair cent. However, because there are two 1793 cents that can be called flowing hair cents, usually this coin is referred to as a chain cent. The other cent is referred to as a wreath cent since it has a wreath on the reverse instead of the chain.

Gene Anderson

Up the Wrong Staircase

This letter is to notify you of an incorrectly labeled photograph in your article on Wilmington, Del., in the September/October issue. The top left photograph on page 30 states that it depicts “The grand staircase at Eleutherian Mills” in Wilmington. However, the photograph in question actually depicts the Montmorenci Stair Hall located on the fifth floor of Winterthur Museum Garden and Library building in Wilmington.

Deborah D. Cannon, First Vice Regent
Cooch’s Bridge Chapter
Newark, Del.

Rutledge vs. Walton:
A Battle of Youth

While reading the July/August 2011 article on Declaration of Independence signers, I noticed Edward Rutledge of South Carolina was named the youngest signer of the Declaration of Independence. This is incorrect. George Walton of Georgia was the youngest signer. Rutledge was born on November 23, 1749. Walton was born in either 1749 or 1750. Dr. Edward Bridges, chief archivist from the state of Alabama, did his doctorate dissertation on George Walton. A copy of his dissertation is in the Stribling Room at Meadow Garden, the farm home of George Walton, located in Augusta, Ga.

Catherine Derst Miller,
Georgia State Historian
Lachlan McIntosh Chapter,
Savannah, Ga.

Editor’s Note: When we took Mrs. Miller’s question to the experts at the National Constitution Center and Independence National Historical Park, we managed to puzzle them, too:

The youngest signer of the Constitution was Jonathan Dayton, and, according to the National Archives, the youngest signer of the Declaration was Edward Rutledge: www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_signers_gallery.html.

Sarah Winski, Exhibit Developer
National Constitution Center,
Philadelphia

I have tried to resolve the perplexing and conflicting information about George Walton’s birth. Some sources give 1751, which would make him the youngest signer, but others date his birth to 1749/50, which brings him close to Edward Rutledge’s November 23, 1749, birth. The Congressional Biographical Directory, a source online that I favor, gives Walton the later birth date. They cite as sources the Dictionary of American Biography and a Ph.D. dissertation on Walton. If that date is the most reliable, then I’d say Walton and Rutledge were the two youngest, with birthdates only months apart.

It’s hard to be precise when one man’s birth date is not exact, but I hope this helps.

Cazy Toogood, Historian
Interpretation and Visitor Services
Independence National Historical Park,
Philadelphia

Editor’s Note: In the July/August review of Betsy Ross and the Making of America, the author’s name was incorrect. It is Marla R. Miller, not Marla Stewart. We regret the error.

Send your letters to americanspirit@dar.org.
THE WAR OF 1812 often is called America’s second war of independence. Almost as soon as the powder smoke lifted over Yorktown, Great Britain and rival European powers plotted to weaken or break the fragile new nation. When President James Madison asked Congress to declare war on Great Britain on June 1, 1812, he saw the conflict as crucial to establishing the United States’ right to exist without meddling and skulduggery from abroad.

When President James Madison asked Congress to declare war on Great Britain on June 1, 1812, he saw the conflict as crucial to establishing the United States’ right to exist without meddling and skulduggery from abroad.

The war had widespread support, but the nation was far from ready to wage it. Many of the Revolutionary generation had feared the creation of a large, permanent military force. They wondered what checks and balances would keep an ambitious president from using the military to make himself dictator or king.

As a result, the regular army was undermanned and ill-equipped. As in the Revolution, unreliable state and local militias would be called up to supplement the professional force.

Conditions at sea weren’t much better. Even during the Revolution, Congress had recoiled at the enormous cost of building and maintaining a navy. Resistance had softened somewhat, but compared with the mighty British navy, America’s squadrons seemed woefully inadequate.

But the fledgling U.S. Navy had advantages that would surprise, infuriate and ultimately impress the British, as renowned naval military historian George C. Daughan wonderfully illustrates in his new work, *1812: The Navy’s War* (Basic Books, 2011).

Though small, the American Navy of 1812 had an outstanding generation of leaders and young officers commanding well-built, well-armed and well-crewed vessels. Morale was high: American sailors were treated and paid much better than British seamen, called jack-tars. In the war to come, the U.S. Navy would often outshine the army and help keep hope of victory alive.

While the War of 1812 had many causes, the two primary reasons came from the sea: British restrictions on maritime trade and insistence on the right to stop American vessels to take away, or “impress,” seamen into service. Locked in battle with Napoleon from 1803 to 1815, Britain needed every man she could get for her ships. British seamen often deserted for the friendlier American vessels, and Britain claimed it sought only those runaways, but His Majesty’s captains took Americans away as well.

Daughan chronicles in great detail Madison’s fruitless diplomatic efforts to persuade Britain to end impressment and conveys the president’s growing sense of frustration. Finally, Madison called for war, declaring that the country must stand up for its rights or be dismissed as a weakling among other nations.

The Navy fought its war on both freshwater lakes and saltwater seas. Madison pinned much of his strategy on invading Canada, which required control of the Great Lakes. The British planned to use their American Indian allies to help gain control of the Northwest Territory—essentially today’s Upper Midwest—to protect the Canadian flank and re-establish control over a large chunk of American territory.

Starting almost from scratch, the navy built a small but powerful and fearless force. Cruising over the Atlantic and Pacific, American ships harassed merchant ships and delivered stunning defeats to the overconfident British. The victories psychologically staggered the British, who were aghast that an upstart former colony could humiliate their finest sailors.

In the Great Lakes, American ships also scored major victories. Though the U.S. forces failed to take Canada, the freshwater navy helped thwart British dreams of invasion as well.

Daughan’s love of the sea and naval history is infectious. The book’s glossary helps readers understand nautical terms, but the detail and clarity of his writing allow readers to get the gist of the action without having to understand all the nuances of sailing ships.

Those who are familiar with C.S. Forester’s *Hornblower* tales or Patrick O’Brian’s stories of Captain Jack Aubrey will enjoy this narrative of the American side of the Napoleonic wars and thrill to the progress of an underdog along the route to world power.

—Bill Hudgins

**The Bookshelf**

A naval military historian sets his sights on the surprising successes of the fledgling American navy during the War of 1812.
Isn’t It Romantic?

THESE THREE LATE VICTORIAN VALENTINES chosen from more than 40 in the DAR Museum collection are lavishly romantic and in pristine condition. Lacy cutouts frame all three examples: Cupid perched in a bower of flowers surrounded by turtledoves, a young girl reading and another young girl with a bouquet. No less flowery are the verses written inside.

Inside the valentine featuring the diligent young reader is a poem titled “Undying Love.” After repeating “love” eight times, it concludes:

“I love thee!
With undying love,
Immortal,
And Sublime!”

The recipient noted that this valentine, received on February 14, 1880, was her first one. Daisy E. Stickney donated it to the DAR Museum in 1935. The remaining two, dating to about 1880–1900, are from a collection of 29 valentines donated by Ruth G. Stimson in 2002. They were sent or received by various family members over a number of years. $
Thomas Paine became well known in America for writing “Common Sense” in January 1776 and “The American Crisis” series of pamphlets that steadied the American troops during Revolutionary War. But what did he do before he came to America? How did he go from lowly tax official in Lewes on the south coast of England to an influential voice of independence in America 18 months later? Where did he develop the political will to advocate such radical ideas?

Until recently, not much was known about Paine before he emigrated to Colonial America. Born in 1737 in Norfolk, England, to a Quaker father and Anglican mother, he attended grammar school before serving a seven-year apprenticeship in his father’s corset-making shop. After years of drift, false starts and failures, he finally settled down in Lewes, where he served as an excise officer from 1768–1774.

Lewes, a politically active town, had no royal charter, which meant all male householders could vote. Paine became a member of the town’s civic governing body and served on the parish council of St. Michael’s Church, where he administered the English relief system called “poor law”—civic acts that taught him how a republic could work.

It was in this republican environment that Paine honed his debating skills and where, in 1772, he wrote a 21-page pamphlet, “The Case of the Officers of Excise,” demanding better pay and conditions for his fellow officers. Addressed to both Houses of Parliament, the pamphlet was accompanied by a petition signed by all 2,700 excisemen, the first mass campaign of this kind, according to researcher Paul Myles.

Until recently this pamphlet was dismissed as a failed bit of early rabble-rousing by Paine. However, Myles and his team discovered that Paine was instructed from the highest level to write this pamphlet. Research points to this directive coming almost certainly from George Lewis Scott, one of nine commissioners of excise and previously Latin tutor to King George III. It was Scott’s letter of introduction to Benjamin Franklin that accelerated Paine’s progress on arrival in Philadelphia in December 1774.

“The Case of the Officers of Excise” not only foreshadowed the lobbying system of the British parliament, but it also clearly points to Paine’s later humanist philosophy. Readers can see in it the urgent, witty and elegant prose that he used with such devastating effect when he penned “Common Sense.”

Finding His Political Voice

In addition to Myles’ recent discovery about Paine’s early literary effort, additional research into Paine’s local newspaper from the years he was in Lewes reveals where he first practiced his writing skills. He wrote for
‘This Old House’
Takes on the 1720 Nathaniel Page Homestead in Bedford, Mass.

Homeowners Joe and Rebecca Titlow revel in the charm of their historic Bedford, Mass., home. They love its exposed timber beams and its period built-ins, but there’s one crucial detail that makes their house a rather daunting space: It’s nearly 300 years old.

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Titlows, “This Old House” general contractor Tom Silva and a crew of renovators formulated a strategic plan to give the home a much-needed update while adding space and maintaining its centuries-old character.

The new plan included two additions: an expansive 480-square-foot family room on the back of the house and a smaller mudroom and powder room at the front.

Other major projected renovations included removing a cumbersome brick fireplace from the middle of the kitchen and using the salvaged bricks to build a raised-hearth fireplace in the new family room, restoring the peeling clapboard and taking out a wheelchair ramp in order to remodel the home’s front entrance. The to-do list also included weatherproofing, installing a new HVAC system, restoring the 19th-century windows and sashes and—if the budget allows—transforming the garage into a workshop for Joe.

To maintain the home’s character, the team planned to build the new family room with cathedral ceilings featuring exposed wooden beams, and they also hoped to uncover and refinish the wide-strip pine floors throughout the house.

At press time, the team had made impressive progress, building the family room addition and removing the colossal fireplace from the kitchen. They have repaired rotting windowsills and cleared all the brush from the backyard, even building raised beds for Becky’s vegetable garden.

Parts of the house have been weatherproofed and insulated, as new hardware has made the outside more durable, and the window sashes have been completely restored. In the garage, electrician Allen Gallant updated the electrical service and prepared the space for conversion to a workshop. Inside, the 200-year-old pine floors have been deemed salvageable.

Check www.thisoldhouse.com to watch online episodes of the transformation as the historic 18th-century homestead reclaims its original beauty and gains modern-day functionality at the same time.

Research on Paine’s early life continues. Myles’ team is now establishing a transatlantic project with Rutgers University and the University of Sussex to closely examine and compare Paine’s work in Pennsylvania Magazine and the Sussex Weekly Advertiser, or Lewes Journal.

War of 1812 Bicentennial

The War of 1812 Bicentennial celebration begins this year and will include visits of tall ships to U.S. and Canadian ports along the Atlantic and the Great Lakes, as well as air shows, battle re-enactments and exhibitions in both nations.

America will celebrate the war that affirmed its hard-won independence from Britain and raised its standing among other nations, while Canada celebrates its successful defense against several attempted U.S. invasions that were a chief part of President James Madison’s war strategy.

The unifying theme for the American events is “Our Flag Was Still There,” a reference to the flag that flew over Fort McHenry in Baltimore. The Star-Spangled Spectacular 2012 in Baltimore will be the official kickoff of the bicentennial.

Running from June 13–19 to coincide with the 200th anniversary of the U.S. declaration of war against Great Britain, the event will feature an international fleet of tall ships and naval vessels from around the world.

More than 120 countries have been invited to send combat ships as well as sail-powered tall ships for the events. The vessels will be open to the public during their port visits.

The U.S. Navy and OpSail, the congressionally chartered, nonprofit producer of tall ship events, are coordinating the maritime festivities. The Star-Spangled Spectacular 2012 website, http://starspangled200.org, includes an interactive calendar listing port visits and other activities. Also visit www.opsail.org for further details.

“It is remarkable that 200 years ago, one of the first wars in our country’s history was fought against nations who have become our closest allies,” said U.S. Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus when announcing plans for the observances.

Re-enactments will include the Battle of Queenston Heights and General Brock’s Burial to be held October 12–14, 2012, at Queenston Heights Park, Queenston, Ontario. It will be the largest re-enactment in Canada, marking the 200th anniversary of the first major battle of the conflict.

Looking ahead, the Battle of St. Leonard Creek Re-enactment on June 21–22, 2014, at Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum, St. Leonard, Md., commemorates the battle between the U.S. Chesapeake Flotilla and British forces in the Patuxent River.

The Star-Spangled Spectacular 2014 to be held September 6–14, 2014, will mark the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Baltimore and the writing of “The Star-Spangled Banner.” Events include re-enactments, fireworks, parades, a maritime festival and a televised event at Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine.

For more information on bicentennial events, visit the following websites:

• www.washingtondcwarof1812bicentennialcommission.org
• www.seawaytrail.com/warof1812
• www.sacketsharborbattlefield.org
• www.warof1812.ca/1812news.htm
• www.1812niagaraonthelake.ca
• illinoiswarof1812bicentennial.org
The Elizabeth Ludington Hagans-Colonel John Evans Chapter, Morgantown, W.Va., resulted from the merger of two existing chapters. The Elizabeth Ludington Hagans Chapter was named after the daughter of Judge John Marshall Hagans and Sarah Barnes Willey, daughter of Senator Waitman T. Willey. In 1890, “Bessie” became one of the first women to integrate West Virginia University. The Colonel John Evans Chapter’s namesake served in Dunmore’s War in 1774 as well as in the Revolutionary War, under Generals Washington and McIntosh. Evans was a trustee named in the Act of the General Assembly of Virginia that established Morgan’s Town, now called Morgantown.

Gaspar de Portolá Chapter, Stanford, Calif., is named for a Spanish soldier and explorer who served as governor of Las Californias from 1768–1770 and commanded an expedition sent from New Spain to colonize Alta California. In January 1769, a combination of soldiers, settlers and missionaries departed with instructions to create bases up the California coast in San Diego and Monterey. The group was divided into four parts: two traveling overland and two by sea. All four parties reached San Diego by early July. Due to navigational difficulties, Portolá reached the San Francisco Bay area during the subsequent search for Monterey, which the group later successfully located.

The name of Minisink Chapter, Goshen, N.Y., commemorates a battle fought July 22, 1779, at Minisink Ford, N.Y. Joseph Brant, a captain in the British army and a Mohawk warrior, led a force of Loyalists and Iroquois raiders to seize supplies and demoralize colonists in the Delaware Valley. About 120 militiamen led by Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Tusten and Major Samuel Meeker organized to ambush Brant’s forces as they crossed Minisink Ford. A shot fired by a scout alerted Brant of the trap. During the ensuing battle, at least 45 militiamen died, while Brant lost fewer than 10 men. The chapter commemorates the battle each July 22 by placing wildflowers at the base of the Minisink Monument, on which the names of 45 lost militiamen are inscribed.

Meetings of the Transylvania Chapter, Lexington, Ky., initially were held in Forrer Hall on the campus of Transylvania University. Transylvania means “across the woods” in Latin. School founders chose the name because the territory now known as Kentucky was across the woods, and the Allegheny Mountains, from Virginia. The school’s establishment in 1780 was supported by notable figures including George Washington and Thomas Jefferson.

Discover the meanings behind some of the DAR chapters’ names.

The current climate of historical illiteracy in America is disheartening, but not hopeless. Through the Center for Advancing America’s Heritage, the Sons of the American Revolution is keeping patriotism alive. With the completion of our new genealogical library in Louisville, Kentucky that houses over 58,000 items — including family histories, state genealogy materials, federal censuses, Revolutionary War pension applications and CD collections, we’re making great strides. But more is yet to come. To find out, visit us at www.sar.org.

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Remembering the Man Who Helps Us Remember Black History

Even as the country celebrates February as Black History Month, few know exactly how the commemoration started. The man behind the monthlong remembrance is Carter G. Woodson, known the “Father of Black History” for his efforts to preserve the history of African-Americans.

Born in 1875 in Canton, Va., to former slaves, Woodson was largely self-taught until his family moved to West Virginia, where he was finally able to attend school at age 20. He received his high-school diploma two years later and went on to teach and act as principal at schools in Fayette County, W.Va. He earned a bachelor’s degree from Kentucky’s Berea College in 1903 after taking classes part-time. Woodson also earned degrees from the University of Chicago before graduating with a Ph.D. from Harvard in 1912, the second black American to do so after W.E.B. DuBois.

In 1915 in Chicago Woodson founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History to bring attention to the contributions of African-Americans in American history and highlight the work of black scholars. His contributions were far-reaching. He started the Journal of Negro History, now called the Journal of African American History, which has been published continuously since 1916. In 1922 Woodson moved his home and the association to a three-story brick rowhouse in Washington, D.C.’s historic Shaw neighborhood, called the “heart of the African-American community in Washington.” There in 1926 Woodson established the second week of February as Negro History Week to coincide with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. Today this commemoration has become Black History Month.

After Woodson’s death in 1950, his home at 1538 9th Street NW continued to serve as the national headquarters of the association, now known as the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH), until the early 1970s. In 2005 the home, by then a National Historic Landmark, was acquired by the National Park Service, but it is in need of rehabilitation and restoration before it can be opened to the public.

Today, ASALH and the National Park Service are working cooperatively to plan the home’s restoration and create a new educational visitor center. For more information, go to www.nps.gov/cawo.
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BY CREATING YOUR LEGACY TODAY, YOU CAN EDUCATE GENERATIONS OF TOMORROW’S LEADERS.
Putting a Hobby to Work

History teacher Michael Bell uses his experience as a re-enactor to explain the visceral impact of war

By LENA ANTHONY

PAPER WADS ARE usually a teacher’s worst nightmare—but not for Michael Bell. A history teacher at Monacan High School in Midlothian, Va., Bell actually uses them as a teaching tool in his annual Revolutionary War demonstration. That’s the day Bell comes to school dressed in authentic uniform as his Revolutionary War ancestor, Richard Lane. He takes his students—juniors who receive college credit for taking his class—to an open field where he arranges them by rank and file. When Bell yells fire, the paper wad fight begins. Each student gets three paper wads, and they’re instructed to fire three times—one by rank, once by file and once by company.

“I try to engage students in a meaningful way and communicate history in a way that’s relevant to their lives,” he says. “I try to prepare students to realize that decisions made in the past affect the future and that it’s important to learn from our mistakes. It’s how we grow as a people and as a nation.”

To instill these concepts, Bell creates visually appealing lessons that include charts, graphs, paintings and photographs. He also shares anecdotal stories about his family’s own history and incorporates hands-on learning when he can, whether it’s in the open field for the Revolutionary War demonstration or later in the year when his students create dioramas of the World War II era. Bell was recently awarded the Teaching American History grant, a five-year commitment that teaches him how to become a resource for other teachers to deepen and broaden their teaching abilities. As part of his training, he traveled to Boston, where he visited many Revolutionary War sites.

“It’s my favorite period to teach because it’s such a unique experience that the world had never seen,” he says. “The Constitution was created to protect the people from the government. We take for granted today how new of an idea this was.”

Bell credits his late grandmother for inspiring his love of history. Growing up in a close-knit family in Independence, Mo., Bell recalls spending summers in the Ozarks with his grandmother, listening to stories about his ancestors and visiting nearby historical sites like the Pea Ridge National Military Park, site of a Civil War battle.

His interest in history grew even more when a friend recruited him to participate in an historical re-enactment at Jamestown. Since then, Bell has participated in historical re-enactments spanning the Colonial period to World War II.

“It’s a hobby that he says helps in the classroom: “My experiences as a re-enactor help me explain how the style of fighting evolved from the Revolutionary War to the Civil War to World War II and what impact that had,” he says. “For example, the battlefield injuries during the Civil War were so much more severe because they had rifles that could fire 600 yards.”

For Bell, history extends even farther beyond the classroom and re-enactment battlefield—it’s also a passion he shares with his wife, Karen. Their wedding was carried out in traditional 17th-century style. They were married in St. Luke’s Church in Smithfield, Va., which dates to 1632 and is among the country’s earliest churches. While the minister read from an original 1599 Geneva Bible, 17th-century music played in the church’s balcony. Instead of a white dress with a veil, Bell’s bride wore a brocade dress with a floral wreath in her hair. After the ceremony, Bell’s father-in-law threw a shoe at him, a 17th-century tradition signifying the transfer of the bride from the father to the husband.

“It was fun,” Bells says, “but I spent a lot of time after the ceremony giving the guests a history lesson.”

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It was 1541 when Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto is said to have reached the treasured thermal waters that many American Indian tribes had long before discovered. Dubbed the "valley of the vapors," the peaceful pools springing up at the foothills of the Ouachita Mountains became—and continue to be—a natural gathering spot.

Father Jacques Marquette and Louis Jolliet claimed the area for France in 1673, and it wasn’t until the Treaty of Paris was signed in 1763 that the land was ceded back to Spain. While control was returned to France in 1800, Hot Springs became United States territory in 1803, thanks to the Louisiana Purchase.

Soon the thermal springs had people seeing dollar signs. “The first permanent settlers to reach the Hot Springs area in 1807 were quick to realize the springs’ potential as a health resort,” writes Sharon Shugart, author of The Hot Springs of Arkansas Through the Years and museum specialist at Hot Springs National Park. “By the 1830s, log cabins and a store had been built to meet the needs (albeit in a rudimentary way) of visitors to the springs.”

The Quapaw Indians relinquished the land around the hot springs to the United States in an 1818 treaty. After Arkansas officially became its own territory in 1819, the locals saw a need to safeguard the springs. “The people of the territory of Arkansas petitioned the federal government as early as the 1820s to help protect the springs so that access would be available to everyone,” says Josie
Fernandez, superintendent of Hot Springs National Park. “That protection has been afforded since 1832 when President Andrew Jackson signed the legislation establishing Hot Springs Reservation.” The reservation, which predates Yellowstone National Park by 40 years, was renamed Hot Springs National Park in 1921.

Despite the care taken to preserve the area, a lack of zoning laws allowed people to continue to settle and build businesses around the natural waters. Today, the national park surrounds the north end of the city. The National Park Service (NPS) takes seriously the task of preserving “The designation of the reservation as a national park ushered in the final phase of construction culminating in the Bathhouse Row of today.” — Sharon Shugart, museum specialist at Hot Springs National Park

continued on page 20

“While eight eclectic bathhouses still stand (Buckstaff, Fordyce, Hale, Lamar, Maurice, Ozark, Quapaw and Superior) Buckstaff is the only spa still in active use where you can relax in a traditional bath. However, tours of the others (along with their lush gardens) are not to be missed. Many are heavily influenced by decadent Spanish architecture—an unexpected sight in small-town Arkansas.

Located at the north end of Bathhouse Row, the Arlington Resort Hotel & Spa offers three restaurants, a full-service spa and live music and dancing. Even if you don’t stay here, the site visited by politicians, actors and gangsters alike is worth a look. www.arlingtonhotel.com

Inside the historical Ozark Bathhouse you’ll find the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA). www.museumofcontemporaryart.com
this historic landmark. “The NPS cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage,” Fernandez says. “This is what we do at Hot Springs National Park, and we take great pride in it.

“Our mission is to protect the springs, ensure the thermal water is available to the public for their enjoyment and help visitors learn about this part of American history by preserving the buildings and artifacts associated with this national park,” she adds.

“The designation of the reservation as a national park ushered in the final phase of construction culminating in the Bathhouse Row of today,” Shugart explains. The Civil War took a major toll on Hot Springs, but after extensive rebuilding, multiple bathhouses and hotels stood tall on Central Avenue by 1875. The town took another hit from a massive fire in 1913 that caused $10 million in damages and destroyed as many as 60 blocks. Surprisingly, Central Avenue, including the luxurious Arlington Hotel, went unharmed. The atmosphere of opulence that continued to grow would soon usher in a new type of resident: the American gangster.

In the late 1800s, the Flynn and Doran families wrestled for control of Hot Springs. The feud fostered corruption and guided the town into a period dominated by organized crime, gambling, prostitution and bootlegging that ran wild through the mid-1900s. During this time Hot Springs became a national gambling haven and hideout for some of America’s most notorious criminals, such as Al Capone, Owney “The Killer” Madden, Lucky Luciano and Bugs Moran.

An Arkansas native, freelance writer Larissa Arnault attended college only 35 miles from Hot Springs. She spent many nights watching for shooting stars above the West Mountain tower.

Visit the National Park
With more than 5,000 acres, there’s plenty to do at Hot Springs National Park. “We want to promote healthy living by encouraging people to take advantage of the great outdoors just as earlier visitors to the park did,” says Josie Fernandez, park superintendent. The opportunities include:

> Taking in panoramic views of lovely Hot Springs, the surrounding lakes and the Ouachita Mountains from Hot Springs Mountain Tower, a 216-foot lattice steel structure.
> Walking the Grand Promenade, a half-mile brick trail that runs parallel with Central Avenue and Bathhouse Row.
> Stimulating your mind, body and spirit by hiking nearly 30 miles of scenic trails.
> Viewing the city lights at night from the West Mountain overlook.

For more information, visit www.nps.gov/hosp.

Hot Springs Culture
> An outdoorsman’s paradise, Hot Springs offers the Diamond Lakes area and the Ouachita River for boating, fishing, swimming and canoeing.
> Explore the 210-acre Garvan Woodland Gardens, a world-class botanical garden on Lake Hamilton. www.garvanguardens.com
> The Gangster Museum of America (recently visited by Deirdre Capone, the great niece of Al) provides a look into the lives and times of the country’s most notorious mobsters. www.tgmoa.com
> On the first Friday of every month the Victorian downtown district hosts Gallery Walk, the best way to see local art and meet the artists.
> The Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival (HSDFF) began in 1992 and returns to the historic Malco Theater each October. www.hsdfi.org.

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In early America, those who could afford the cost and upkeep of the horses, livery and equipment traveled in horse-drawn carriages. The purchase of a carriage was not just the solution to a transportation problem: It also proclaimed the purchaser’s social status and fashion sense—and served as a vehicle for pomp and circumstance, especially for our presidents. From George Washington’s inauguration until the inaugural parade of Warren G. Harding in 1921, horse-drawn vehicles added beauty, nobility and spectacle to presidential events.

The first carriages in America were ox-drawn, covered wagons used by the Spanish colonists in the 16th century. By the 18th century, carriages became more flamboyant and colorful—and manufacturers on both sides of the Atlantic presented a bewildering array of choices. Arthur Ingram’s *Horse Drawn Vehicles Since 1760* lists 325 types, including barouche, chaise, buggy and stagecoach. Most people with resources had either the crane-necked coach or the perch coach. The crane-necked model had two parallel iron bars bent to allow the front wheels to pass under the bars. The perch version had one straight or, at times, slightly bent iron pole under the carriage itself.

When George Washington was elected president, he traveled to the then-capital city of New York in a closed coach led by a team of fast horses. However, the London-made coach used in the inaugural parade was quite different. Washington chose a round bottomed, crane-necked one—pulled by six white horses and carrying a coachman, footman, valet, secretary and servant.
The governor of Pennsylvania gave the coach to Martha Washington in gratitude for her husband’s service to the nation. The yellow-and-white coach became known as the Penn coach of 1771. On state occasions Washington’s coach was accompanied by cavalry.

John Adams was the first to establish a state carriage for use by the president, though he chose one drawn by only two horses and without painted panels or a coat of arms. He described his crane-necked coach as “simple but elegant enough” and his horses as “young, but clever.” It’s probable that he often drove it himself. His coach cost $1,500 and the two horses that pulled it (named Caesar and Cleopatra) together cost $1,000. As the president’s annual salary at the time was $25,000, the cost was considerable.

His successor, Thomas Jefferson, rode a horse from Monticello and then walked to his first inauguration in 1801. He was the first president to be inaugurated in Washington, D.C. He walked because the “coach and four” he had ordered didn’t arrive in time. He did, however, ride to his second, setting the precedent of parading down Pennsylvania Avenue after the inauguration.

Jefferson loved animals and owned several horses. And at Monticello, he kept many vehicles—phaetons (a type of carriage with four very large wheels), landaus (a type of convertible carriage), wagons and carriages—some of which he designed himself. Some of his coaches were constructed near Monticello using iron forged there.

James Madison’s first coach was an elegant model with a silver “M” monogram on each door. The glass windows could be covered with Venetian blinds and lamps on either side of the coach held candles. After Dolley complained about the quality, he returned it to the manufacturer and had an even more elegant coach, called a coachee, built at a cost of $1,500.

C-shaped metal springs supported the coachee at the front and back—a much more comfortable design for its six passengers than the crane-necked coach. When the British burned Washington in 1814, Dolley used the coachee to escape from the White House carrying trunks of important papers and the Gilbert Stuart portrait of George Washington.

The White House was still unlivable when James Monroe became president, so he rode to Washington every Monday from his home in Oak Hill, near Leesburg, Va., and returned there on Saturday. Nothing is known of the coach he used to ride to his first inauguration in 1817, but he used a plain carriage drawn by four horses at his second in 1821. It is known that he campaigned for the presidency in a red-and-green pleasure wagon. The handmade wagon was open and had movable seats that allowed the space to be used for anything from hauling cargo to carrying children.

Several years before Monroe became president, one of his carriages was used as an important...
diplomatic symbol. In 1794, Adrienne de Lafayette was in prison in Paris awaiting execution because authorities accused her husband, the Marquis de Lafayette, of treason. The American minister to France, Gouverneur Morris, pointed out to the French government that America, one of France’s few friends at the time, would be unhappy if she were to be put to death. Her execution was postponed, though she remained in prison.

Within weeks, Morris was succeeded as minister to France by James Monroe. Elizabeth Monroe traveled in her husband’s most elaborate carriage bearing his official seal to the prison where Madame Lafayette was kept, demanding to visit her. This diplomatic pressure, together with the fall of Maximilien Robespierre, brought about Madame Lafayette’s release in January 1795.

In Europe in 1815 John Quincy Adams purchased a $3,000 carriage that he eventually used at the White House. When he arrived in Washington, D.C., for his 1825 inauguration, he rode in an “open carriage drawn by four bays of fine appearance.” In his will dated January 18, 1847, he left “all my carriages and horses, china, plate and plated wares” to his wife, Louisa Catherine Adams. His carriage survived until 1870 when a Cincinnati coach maker disassembled it for material.

Because of the extremely rough roads, most early presidential vehicles were rattled to pieces, and few are still in existence. The National Museum of American History has a side panel from the Penn coach bearing the inscription: “This painted copper plate was taken from the state coach belonging to Genl. G. Washington when President of the U.S. of America.”

“From the earliest time horses and carriages were associated with the ceremonies and honor of being head of state,” says Neil W. Horstman, president of the White House Historical Association. “Horses can still be seen at the White House during official ceremonies and state occasions, at anniversaries and funerals, and each December, when a horse-drawn cart delivers the White House Christmas tree to the first lady.”  

Freelancer Karen Sutherland consulted Herbert R. Collins’ Presidents on Wheels and the White House Historical Association for this article.

MORE NOTEWORTHY PRESIDENTIAL RIDES
Did you know that in 1951, Congress officially eliminated horses and stables from the White House budget? Here are some additional bits of presidential vehicle trivia.

• The Studebaker company made carriages before it made cars. Abraham Lincoln took a Studebaker carriage to Ford’s Theater April 14, 1865, the evening of his assassination.
• During his presidency, William McKinley took a drive in a Stanley Steamer, a steam-engine-powered auto, making him the first president to ride in an automobile. In 1901, an electric ambulance transported him to the hospital after he was shot. He died eight days later, and his vice president Theodore Roosevelt became president. It is said Roosevelt preferred horses to cars.
• William Taft was the first president to switch to cars from the horse and buggy. His was also the first administration to supply vehicles for official presidential use. He owned a Baker Electric, an electric vehicle that didn’t require any cranking and was virtually maintenance-free.
• Warren Harding was the first to ride to his inauguration in a car, a Packard, in 1921.
• Calvin Coolidge was the first to be chauffeured in a limousine.
• Harry S. Truman owned the first car assembled after World War II—the 1945 Ford Super DeLuxe Tudor Sedan.
• John F. Kennedy’s assassination ended the tradition of U.S. presidents riding in open-top limousines.
• Ronald Reagan was given a 1952 Army Jeep, Model M-38A1 as a gift.
• Barack Obama rode to his swearing-in ceremony in a new Cadillac presidential limo referred to as a “rolling tank with windows” and nicknamed “The Beast.”

—From Hagerty Insurance, an insurance agency for collector vehicles, and HistoryChannel.com
The Mount Vernon of Minnesota

By Sharon McDonnell

Historic Home

Daughters of the American Revolution
One of Minnesota’s earliest stone dwellings, Sibley House was the home of Henry Hastings Sibley, Minnesota’s first state governor. Sibley was one of the state’s most prominent 19th-century politicians and military leaders, and an occasional journalist who wrote about American Indian and Western topics for local and New York publications.
Sibley pushed for the adoption of the name Minnesota, which means “cloudy waters” in the Dakota Indian language. He also changed the motto on the state seal—depicting a white man plowing, an Indian on horseback, the setting sun and the Falls of St. Anthony in the background—to L’Etoile du Nord (the North Star) to honor the call of the North for explorers as well as the French-Canadian heritage of many early fur traders.

Both Sibley and his wife, Sarah Steele Sibley, came from families of Patriots. Sarah launched Minnesota’s first historic preservation campaign—not for a building in Minnesota, but for George Washington’s estate in Mount Vernon, Va. The Minnesota State Society DAR, which rescued Sibley House from decay and maintained it for nearly 90 years, dubbed the home the “Mount Vernon of Minnesota.”

From Fur Trader’s Office to Gracious Home

Sibley was born in 1811 to distinguished New England Puritans in Detroit, which was then in the Michigan Territory. Sibley’s mother, Sarah Whipple Sproat, was the granddaughter of Commodore Abraham Whipple, a Revolutionary War hero credited with what is sometimes called the first act of the Revolution: burning a British schooner, the HMS Gaspee, in 1772. His father, Solomon Sibley, was the first mayor of Detroit and a judge on the Michigan Territory Supreme Court.

But a life of adventure out West held more allure for him than following his father into the practice of law, so he became a fur trader. After working for the American Fur Company in Mackinac, Mich., for five years, he was made a partner in 1834. He headed up the company’s fur trade with the Dakota Indians in the Northwest, and his territory stretched from the British-owned Canadian border to the headwaters of the Missouri River.

When Sibley first arrived in 1834, he climbed up Pilot Knob, a sacred site for the Dakota, and looked out over the Mississippi River Valley, admiring the endless prairies that later developed into the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. “When I reached the brink of the hill overlooking the surrounding country I was struck by the picturesque beauty of the scene,” he recalled.

Because of the site’s strategic location at the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers, the Dakota called the area Mendota, which means “meeting of the waters.” Sibley made Mendota (then called St. Peter’s) his headquarters—and chose it as the site where he would build his home.

Two years later, in 1836, Sibley moved into his two-story house made of large blocks of limestone. Wood beams, floors, braces and window sills were joined by wooden pegs; laths were made from willows; and rushes were woven with reeds and grasses. The house, which overlooked the Minnesota River, was insulated by a mixture of mud, clay and straw.

Before his marriage to Sarah Steele in 1843, the front room served as an office and supply store, selling blankets, gunpowder, lead, tobacco, beads and trinkets to fur traders and American Indians. Sibley’s bedroom and a guest room located six miles from St. Paul in Mendota, the state’s oldest town, Sibley’s home served as temporary headquarters for the Minnesota Territory. His home was a social center for pioneer life in the region, entertaining guests like writer Henry R. Schoolcraft, whose book on Minnesota American Indians inspired Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s “Hiawatha.” During his stay at the home in the winter of 1836–1837, French astronomer Joseph N. Nicollet created the first extensive map of the region between Lake Superior and the Missouri River, awakening public interest in the area.
were on the second floor, reached by an outdoor staircase, and the kitchen, where he probably dined, was in the basement. His dozen hunting dogs stayed in a storeroom.

After his marriage, the business office in the front room was converted to an elegant and cozy parlor with a piano, a stove from Quebec, a Brussels carpet, fine chairs and a sofa. Original Sibley furnishings on display in the house today include his walnut writing desk and music box in the parlor, as well as a stove and a mahogany dining table. Sarah’s peach-colored wedding china, bed, wardrobe and sewing table are also on view. A birdcage is believed to be a gift from a Dakota woman.

A two-story addition includes a kitchen, dining room, two more second-floor rooms, and an office on the east side. The office served as the temporary quarters for the Minnesota Territory’s first governor, Alexander Ramsey, when he was the Sibleys’ guest in 1849. Sibley’s beloved books, including histories of the French Revolution and Spain’s Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand, still line the office shelves. A digital reproduction of an original portrait of a favorite dog, Lion, hangs above the fireplace.

“The main thing to remember is that the changes to the house are all about retrofitting a commercial building into a residence,” said David M. Grabitske, a tour guide at Sibley House from 1995–2004 and author of Six Miles from St. Paul, a book about Sarah Sibley and her role in frontier society. “Think about remodeling a Home Depot as your house, and then you will have a sense of what the Sibleys had to do.”

**Sibley’s Political Rise**

Nicknamed “tall trader,” Sibley became a friend and advisor to the Dakota tribe. He learned their language and appealed to the federal government on their behalf. He also helped negotiate two treaties to acquire their land in 1837 and 1851.

According to the Minnesota Historical Society, “fur traders like Sibley often relied on kinship networks to maintain trade with particular Dakota communities.” In the winter of 1839–1840 (three years before he married Sarah), Sibley entered into such a kinship relationship with some of the Mdewankanton Dakota and had a daughter with a Dakota woman named Red Blanket Woman. Their daughter, Helen Hastings, was raised in St. Paul by missionary William Brown and his wife and was educated in a missionary school.

The Dakota name for Helen was “Mysterious Metal Woman.” The name referred to guns owned by her father, who penned stories on hunting and American Indian customs for a New York sports magazine, *Spirit of the Times*, under the pseudonym “Hal-a-Dacotah.”

The first lawyer in the region, Sibley was appointed a justice of the peace in 1838, when Mendota was still part of Iowa Territory, and served as a delegate to Congress when Mendota became part of the Wisconsin Territory. He helped push through the act organizing the region as the Minnesota Territory in 1849 from the remnants of Iowa and Wisconsin, which were states by that point. As a delegate to Congress until 1853, Sibley won grants to build roads and public buildings and set aside land for schools in every township in Minnesota, which was growing rapidly.

“The country is so beautiful,” Henry Hastings Sibley wrote in a letter to encourage his sister to visit Minnesota. “Everything wears an air of so much freshness and novelty, that a residence of even a few months here, would set like a charm upon you, and add years to your life.”
“The country is so beautiful,” he wrote to encourage his sister, Sarah Augustine Sibley, to visit Minnesota in the summer of 1851. “Everything wears an air of so much freshness and novelty, that a residence of even a few months here, would set like a charm upon you, and add years to your life. Opportunities are constantly presenting themselves to come west,” he added, noting the new train connection from Chicago to Rock Island on the Mississippi River in 1854. The connection made the trip from New York possible in two days, spurring an economic boom in the Upper Midwest.

Elected the first state governor of Minnesota in 1858, Sibley administered a so-called “$5 million loan” to sell bonds to finance railroad construction and kept order by maintaining the militia during his single term. He became commanding officer of the military district of Minnesota, was appointed brigadier general by Congress during the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 and—despite their previously strong ties—ended up driving the Dakota from Minnesota. He and Sarah moved to St. Paul’s Lowertown neighborhood in December 1862.

After he retired from the military, Sibley served one term as a state legislator. He also wrote character sketches for the St. Paul Pioneer. Sibley died in 1891.

Sarah Steele was called Minnesota’s first lady of preservation for her efforts to save George Washington’s Mount Vernon.

In the decade before Minnesota became a state in 1858, its population experienced a meteoric rise of 3,300 percent. More than 5 million acres of land were sold from 1853-1857. Much of the land was sold to Easterners from New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio and immigrants from Germany and Ireland, who joined the original French-Canadian fur trade employees, discharged soldiers from Fort Snelling and Swiss immigrants.

Sarah was praised for her hospitality. “In the evening we chatted in the library, till about 9 o’clock, when two of the Gov’s friends, with whom I was acquainted came in, where we played whist. We had our cigars, & about 10 o’clock refreshments were served by Mrs. S. & her sister Mary,” wrote Minnesota Attorney General Charles Berry after his stay, noting that his bed sheets were heated by “warming pans,” that the fireplace in his room was lit before he awoke, and that his boots were polished. “I read whatever I chose of the hundreds of books at hand. The library is a good one.”

Still, Sarah complained of social isolation in Mendota, and she yearned to move to more cosmopolitan and much bigger St. Paul, across the river and six miles downstream.

After the Mount Vernon Ladies Association was formed in 1853 to save and restore Washington’s deteriorated estate and tomb in Mount Vernon, Sarah was appointed to lead fundraising in Minnesota. Originally formed for Southern women by a South Carolinian, Ann Pamela Cunningham, the organization later expanded to include women nationwide. After it was given a charter to hold title to the estate, the group set a fundraising goal equivalent to millions of dollars in today’s currency to buy and restore it.

Sarah started her campaign in 1858, but soon faced several obstacles—derisive remarks in local newspapers, worries about the potential for commercialization of Washington’s estate, and fundraising difficulties caused by Sarah Steele Sibley was called Minnesota’s first lady of preservation for her efforts to save George Washington’s Mount Vernon.
the lingering effects of the financial panic of 1857. These concerns, coupled with her chronic poor health, led her to resign her post the next year.

**DAR Rescue From Ruin**

After the Sibleys moved to St. Paul in 1862, their home was sold to St. Peter’s Catholic Parish, which Sibley, though a Protestant, helped establish in 1841. It became a Catholic girls’ school from 1867 to 1878. Artist Burt Harwood, later famed for his paintings of American Indians, rented Sibley House as an art studio and school for outdoor painting in the summers of 1897 to 1899. In 1905, a local merchant leased it to use as a warehouse. But soon it was abandoned, and homeless people used it as a shelter, ripping up floors and staircases for firewood.

After noticing the ruined house on a river trip in 1909, Minnesota DAR members decided to acquire and restore it. Sibley House was purchased for $1 from the archdiocese the next year through the efforts of the St. Paul DAR Chapter, which disbanded in 1970. Member Lucy Shepard McCourt led the effort. She was aided by Julia Johnson, dean of women at Macalester College in St. Paul. (Julia’s husband, Major General Richard Johnson, was first married to Sarah Sibley’s sister Rachel. After he married Julia, she acted as a step-aunt to Henry and Sarah Sibley’s children.)

After restoring the home and acquiring Sibley family possessions with help from DAR chapters statewide, the Minnesota State Society DAR, which assumed ownership of in 1910, opened Sibley House to the public, calling it the “Mount Vernon of Minnesota.” Members helped preserve the memory of Sarah Sibley, who died at age 46 in 1869, calling her “the most romantic, the most distinguished pioneer of early Minnesota ... she will be remembered, admired and loved best.” DAR members also ensured she was included in a 1924 “Who’s Who” of prominent Minnesota women, and the Sarah Steele Sibley DAR Chapter was formed in 2005 in St. Cloud.

“Until the 1980s when a manager and tour guides were hired, members of the Twin Cities DAR chapters were actively involved in caring for this site and keeping it open for the public,” says Dorothy Bennett, Honorary State Regent of Minnesota.

When the Sibley House Association was formed, all Minnesota DAR members automatically became members, and the State Regent became its president. In 1996 the association turned over ownership to the state and management to the Minnesota Historical Society.

A “Gems of the DAR” exhibit in Fairbault House, also on the grounds of the Sibley Historic Site, describes the time period after the Sibleys moved to St. Paul through DAR involvement. Other exhibits in this former house and hotel once owned by French-Canadian fur trader Jean-Baptiste Fairbault, a Sibley neighbor, display items owned by pioneers and American Indians, from women’s hair combs to Fairbault’s sword cane. Sibley’s general’s uniform coat also is on display in the house.

Sharon McDonnell explored the John Rutledge House for the November/December 2011 issue.
YEARS OF WIT AND WISDOM

By COURTNEY PETER
IN 1792, THE UNITED STATES WAS 16 YEARS OLD. GEORGE WASHINGTON WAS PRESIDENT. AND ROBERT B. THOMAS INTRODUCED THE FARMER’S ALMANAC. IT WAS NEITHER THE FIRST NOR THE ONLY ALMANAC OF ITS KIND, YET IT OUTLASTED ALL COMPETITORS. ALONG THE WAY THE ALMANAC BECAME ENMESHED IN THE NATION’S HISTORY AND ADDED “OLD” TO ITS TITLE.

According to legend—and immortalized by Norman Rockwell’s illustration for The Saturday Evening Post—Abraham Lincoln used the almanac’s moon phase charts to prove a man’s innocence during a murder trial in 1858. The most serious threat to the almanac’s uninterrupted publication streak came in 1942, when a German spy whose U-boat landed near Long Island was found to have a copy of The Old Farmer’s Almanac on his person. The government feared that the almanac’s weather predictions were supplying information to the enemy, so it banned publication of nongovernment-issued forecasts, a setback the almanac sidestepped by rechristening its predictions “weather indications.” The streak was saved.

The 2012 edition of The Old Farmer’s Almanac is the 220th consecutive annual release, a feat achieved through a commitment to Thomas’ mission—“to be useful, with a pleasant degree of humor.”
A Time-Tested Format

The first edition released in October 1792 was a 48-page pamphlet that cost about nine cents and sold approximately 3,000 copies, a figure that tripled the next year. The initial cover page advised that the almanac was “fitted to the town of Boston, but will serve for any of the adjoining States,” and promised to contain “besides a large number of astronomical calculations and farmer’s calendar for every month in the year, as great a variety as are to be found in any other Almanac, of new, useful and entertaining matter.” So began a singular national tradition that continues to delight readers today.

Editor-in-chief Judson Hale is one of few people who have read each of the almanac’s first 200 editions, an undertaking completed in the name of research for the book The Best of The Old Farmer’s Almanac: The First 200 Years. “I came to understand [that] the almanac’s first and foremost annual responsibility was to present the astronomical structure of the forthcoming year as it relates to us here on earth,” Hale writes. “While for 200 years the almanac has served as a weekly, monthly and annual calendar, it has at the same time offered a sort of human agenda in harmony with the earth’s place in the universe.”

For members of an agrarian society who took cues for planting, harvesting and many other typical farming tasks from the natural world, this information was invaluable. Many readers referred to the almanac daily, as they would a calendar—a hole is punched in the upper left corner of the almanac so it can be hung on the wall for easy access. Pertinent data for each month was presented in the almanac’s calendar pages, in a format that has not changed since the late 18th century.

The calendar pages make up the core of The Old Farmer’s Almanac. Two facing pages are dedicated to a specific month. The left page contains detailed tables charting the phases of the moon and the timing of high tides, sunrise and sunset, among other calculations. (The left-hand calendar pages are so complex that each edition includes a key to help readers decipher the grid of symbols.) Proverbs, folklore, holidays, historical events, the projected measurement of high tides and a brief farmer’s calendar essay are found on the right-hand page. A weather prediction rhyme also appears there (for example, in January 2012, “Fields aglitter, snowflakes flutter, neither deep nor awfully bitter”). A separate chart explains how to calculate sunrise, sunset and high tide for various locations by adding or subtracting a certain number of minutes from the master calculations based on a set location, which is still Boston for the classic bookstore version.

Early editions also served as practical reference guides listing dates when local courts would convene, mail routes running from Boston throughout New England, postage rates, currency conversion tables, census data and even colleges’ holiday schedules. If comparable exhaustive lists were attempted in modern editions the almanac would reach encyclopedic length. While The Old Farmer’s Almanac no longer chronicles the postal routes that crisscross the nation, tables estimating growing seasons and the pH preferences of various plants can be found in the 2012 edition. The fact that the almanac’s format remains largely recognizable may be even more remarkable than its continuous publication streak.

Change was not undertaken lightly. “Old” first appeared in the almanac title in 1832—at a mere 40 years of age—but was abandoned three years later, before becoming a permanent fixture in 1848. Similarly, The Old Farmer’s Almanac’s iconic four seasons cover illustration that debuted in 1851 has adorned every edition released since. Two men who never met—almanac founder Robert B. Thomas and Benjamin Franklin—stare at each other from opposite sides of the illustration. (The only other person to appear on the almanac cover was President Franklin Roosevelt, included on the 1943 cover as a sign of support for the World War II effort.) Today’s editors theorize that Franklin, whose Poor Richard’s Almanac was published from 1732–1758, was included in hopes that his likeness would add credibility to The Old Farmer’s Almanac.

But with a leader like Thomas, the almanac didn’t need an honorary figurehead. Born in Shrewsbury, Mass., in 1766, Thomas was a lifelong science lover. From the almanac’s beginning, Thomas showed an aptitude for wrangling wide-ranging content into a concise, organized pamphlet. His editorial voice conveyed a respect for readers, or “patrons,” as he called them; the message...
to patrons that begins each edition still concludes with his signature. Thomas presided over every edition until his death in 1846. The publication’s stability and strong sense of identity undoubtedly can be attributed to his consistent leadership.

“Robert B. Thomas has a lot to do with our successes,” acknowledges senior research editor Mare Anne Jarvela. “We have kept pieces that we believe our readers want to look at.”

Secret Formula Meets Science

One almanac standby that never fails to draw attention is the weather forecast. Thomas showed unshakable confidence in his weather predictions from the very first edition. He wrote in the preface to the 1793 almanac, “As to my judgment of the weather, I need say but little; for you will, in one year’s time, without any assistance of mine, very easily discover how near I have come to the truth.”

He devised a secret formula for predicting the weather. The formula, which is kept in a locked box at the Yankee Publishing offices in Dublin, N.H., centered on his belief that weather on Earth was influenced by sunspots. Today the forecasts are compiled with the help of professional meteorologists who base their predictions on solar science, climatology and meteorology—the studies of solar activity, prevailing weather patterns and the atmosphere, respectively.

The projections stretch far beyond the typical five-day forecast. The Old Farmer’s Almanac for the upcoming year goes to press the previous July and is released in September. (For example, the 2012 edition came out in September 2011.) Because the almanac attempts to forecast the weather more than a year in advance, the meteorologists prefer to “look at the bigger picture, not day to day, and how weather patterns move across the country,” Jarvela explains. “General trend is what our weather is about. We truly believe in cycles.”

To add to its already enormous task, for the past 30 years the almanac has published Southern, Western and Canadian editions in addition to its classic version. Each copy contains weather forecasts for 16 geographic regions of the United States. According to Jarvela, “Coastal regions are harder to predict. [There are always] hurricanes and nor’easters that we didn’t see.”

The almanac boldly claims that its forecasts are 80 percent accurate. Some readers make a point of tracking
the almanac’s predictions throughout the year, and editors frequently receive feedback. Fortunately, they’re not all sticklers for pinpoint accuracy. “If we’re a few days off, people forgive us,” Jarvela says.

Not everyone appreciates the appeal of this integral almanac feature, however. The Old Farmer’s Almanac 200th anniversary edition included “A Colorful Collection of Candid Commentaries by a Conglomeration of Conscientious 20th-Century Celebrities,” for which various personalities were asked to answer five questions, including “What is your favorite part of The Old Farmer’s Almanac? The most useful? Most useless? Dumbest?” Former U.S. senator and presidential candidate Eugene McCarthy named the weather forecasts the almanac’s weakest segment, while according to columnist Ann Landers, “The most useful is the weather.”

Divergent views of the weather forecasts aside, it is undeniable that the almanac would not be the same without them. One unfortunate editor learned that from experience. Editor Roger Scaife’s tenure, already marred by plummeting circulation and financial uncertainty, was effectively doomed by his decision to print temperature and precipitation averages in place of the weather forecasts in the 1938 edition.

“The Old Farmer’s Almanac yields to none of its predecessors or competition in the public’s estimation... or in the quantity of original matter it contains.”
—Robert B. Thomas, in the 1828 almanac’s “To Patrons” message

The Entertaining and Eccentric

Sometimes the mind welcomes a diversion from data and scientific facts. Notorious for its wit and humor, The Old Farmer’s Almanac never fails to deliver original material. The proportion of the almanac devoted to miscellany has expanded greatly over the years, and editorial possibilities are limited only by the imagination. “We don’t want to write about something people can find in a Google search,” Jarvela explains.

Such unique content may appear in the form of a special report on the customs, concerns and curiosities of spit, to borrow an example from the 2012 almanac, or the following, listed under “Conundrums” in the 1912 edition: What is the difference between 16 ounces and a small boy at a piano? (Answer: One weighs a pound, and the other pounds away.)

When planning content for an upcoming issue, editors try to include a story or two with an anniversary hook to it while also keeping the material unique, says Jarvela. The 2012 almanac features a survival quiz included to mark the 100th anniversary of the Girl Scouts and the awarding of the first Eagle Scout badge by the Boy Scouts. Several pages later the reader encounters a list of pioneer remedies. Among its gems: To relieve a toothache, spit into a frog’s mouth and ask it to leave with the toothache.

The publication so closely linked to astronomy also dabbles in astrology, predicting the best days for various activities—from quitting smoking to making sauerkraut—based on the positions and aspects of the stars and planets. “People still believe in those days,” Jarvela says. “People call to ask when are the best days to do things—’I’m having foot surgery. When is the moon sign best for that?’ There is an idea that you shouldn’t have surgery under the full moon.”

Amid the medley of unusual facts and riddles, relevant information lurks. If you’re wondering how the months of the year and days of the week got their names, what those numbers printed inside the recycling symbol really mean, or how to determine when Easter will fall, turn to the almanac.

Or, those in need of sound advice or a sense of perspective can consult the farmer’s calendar essays from the right-hand calendar pages. For example, the conclusion of the July 1812 essay proclaims, “The wise man cultivates his mind with knowledge; the improvement of arts is his delight, and their utility to the public crowns him with honor; but the attainment of virtue he accounts as the highest learning, and the science of happiness is the study of his life.”

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The almanac used an illustration of Father Time for 190 years until 2000, when he was replaced with this engraving of Ceres by Randy Miller, who was inspired by an 18th-century almanac engraving.
Modern Adaptations

Even a publication as venerable as The Old Farmer’s Almanac cannot survive on tradition and quirkiness alone; it also must adapt to current times. To connect with customers more than just once a year when the latest almanac is released, numerous companion products have been introduced, including cookbooks, gardening guides and The Old Farmer’s Almanac for Kids, now in its fourth volume.

Modern printed editions already trump early almanacs with regard to the volume of information they contain, but the difference is dwarfed by the amount of content available at www.almanac.com, the online home of The Old Farmer’s Almanac. The site was introduced in 1995 and relaunched in late 2009. A full 220 years of content, and tools that provide customized weather forecasts, moon phases and planting dates for any location, are available online. Free digital newsletters have attracted approximately 250,000 subscribers.

Jarvela, who was part of the team that coordinated the initial website launch, says it’s only natural for the almanac to explore new ways to share information. “The almanac’s very essence is about its ability to link the past with the present and portend the future. We link the old and new.”

To that end, an e-book version of the almanac has been produced, and The Old Farmer’s Almanac is active on Facebook and Twitter as well. Jarvela says the website and social media presence allow the almanac team to “reach out to people who didn’t grow up with the almanac and pull them in via social media.”

As the almanac explores new ways to reach out to the public, interest in its core subjects remains high. “For 2012, we’re seeing renewed interest in old practices,” says Janice Stillman, who in 2000 became the first female editor of The Old Farmer’s Almanac. “People are returning to basics like cooking at home and picking up ‘lost’ kitchen arts like pickling and sausage making. The do-it-yourself craze continues to grow, and the trend toward a simpler time is turning nostalgic.”

It is difficult to pinpoint just how The Old Farmer’s Almanac separated itself from its peers. Maybe readers found its forecasts more reliable and its advice more amusing. Or perhaps the almanac was successful from the start because it identified a winning formula and stuck with it. We may never know for sure, but we can count on the appearance of the latest edition of The Old Farmer’s Almanac each fall.

As Jarvela says, “Just as there are still 60 minutes in an hour and 24 hours in a day, the almanac always comes out the second week in September.”

Courtney Peter wrote about Wilmington, Del., for the September/October 2011 issue.
FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS, the cadets at the United States Military Academy at West Point, along with local volunteers and faculty members, have been restoring the campus garden overlooking the Hudson River. One of the oldest gardens in the United States, it was built in 1778 by Thaddeus Kosciuszko, the chief engineer commissioned by General George Washington to design and build the fortifications at West Point during the Revolution. Although he was on a tight deadline to design and build fortifications to protect the Colonies’ supply chain along the Hudson River, Kosciuszko felt it was important to create a quiet place for “rest and repose,” so he made the garden a priority.
With his own hands, Kosciuszko built garden steps, a circle of rocks planted with flowers that reminded him of his Polish homeland, and a fountain built upon a natural spring. “The garden represented for this military man a place of contemplation in the midst of great pressure and chaos,” says Betsey Blakeslee, Ph.D., volunteer project manager for the restoration of Kosciuszko’s Garden at West Point. “And it has been used that way ever since by cadets and officers.”

While Kosciuszko’s Garden has been restored at various times over the past two centuries, it had fallen into disrepair in recent decades. For 20 years, erosion had blocked the garden’s connection to Flirtation Walk, a historic rocky foot trail that follows the bank of the Hudson River. “To have a place to sit uninterrupted and contemplate decisions, and to be connected with nature, was a very important function here at West Point that was being lost,” Blakeslee says.

So with the help of West Point cadets and others, Blakeslee has led a restoration that leaves the garden in full bloom, with fixtures repaired and the entire path of Flirtation Walk open again. “It wouldn’t have happened without the support of West Point Garrison Commander Colonel Michael Tarsa and his staff,” she says.

“Many groups and individuals have made their mark on the garden over the years, and this is what makes them so great,” says West Point Cadet Sean Flynn (class of 2012), who worked on historical research in partnership with The West Point Museum and the Department of Military History at the Academy. “Cadets, staff and faculty have their own ideas of what Kosciuszko’s Garden and Flirtation Walk mean to them, and there is no intent to take any of that away. The main goal of the renovations is the continued maintenance of the locations for the enjoyment of their visitors. Making the locations more inviting enables more people to share in their incredible story.”

Today, it’s not unusual to see cadets in the garden making phone calls, or to see professors and their students racing to hold class in the garden on sunny days, Blakeslee says. “Sometimes I go there in the early morning and see where someone has left cigars and an empty bottle of wine in the garden,” she says. “I think that’s neat, because it means the garden is being used again.”

While Kosciuszko’s Garden continues to provide respite for West Point cadets and officers, the garden is hardly Kosciuszko’s only contribution to American history. He lobbied hard for the establishment of a U.S. Military Academy in America and was instrumental in the Colonies’ victory in the Revolutionary War. Additionally, Kosciuszko took the ideas and practices he learned in America back to Europe, bringing democratic ideals to Poland, Lithuania and other European countries.

**Early Life**

A Polish-Lithuanian, Kosciuszko was born in Poland in 1746 and trained as a military engineer at the Royal Military Academy in Warsaw. He fled his home country when he was sentenced to die for falling in love with a
woman who was considered above his station. He was studying in Paris when the Revolutionary War broke out. As a student of the Enlightenment, Kosciuszko was enamored with the idea of freedom and liberty for all people, and he came to America with the intention of fighting for those ideas.

Unlike some foreign officers who came to America seeking higher-level military commissions from the Continental Congress, “Kosciuszko’s motivations [were] purely altruistic and solidly founded on ideals of the European Enlightenment, which proposed that men were born free and that governments ought to be founded by the will of the people and not the whim of the few,” says Anthony J. Bajdek, retired associate dean and senior lecturer in history at Boston’s Northeastern University and the national vice president of American affairs for the Polish American Congress. “Every aspect of his life substantiated the selflessness of his motivations, both in America and in Poland. Indeed, he may be placed properly among our nation’s earliest secular saints in company with George Washington.”

**Serving in America**

Kosciuszko arrived in America in 1776, “literally showing up on Benjamin Franklin’s doorstep with little more than a revolutionary spirit and a genius for engineering,” says Alex Storozynski, president and executive director of the Kosciuszko Foundation and author of *The Peasant Prince: Thaddeus Kosciuszko and the Age of Revolution*. He began serving in the Continental Army as a volunteer. But within a couple of months, Congress commissioned him as the Army’s head engineer. His first duties were in Pennsylvania, where he was tasked with the fortification of Philadelphia.

In Pennsylvania, Kosciuszko first read the Declaration of Independence. Moved by the document and its espousal of his own beliefs, he set out to meet its principal author, Thomas Jefferson. A few months later, when the two met in Virginia, they spent a day discussing philosophy and other common interests, and became good friends. On many occasions during his time in America, Kosciuszko was a guest at Jefferson’s Monticello.

Kosciuszko developed a reputation as an excellent engineer as he fortified military camps along the Canadian border, repaired Fort Ticonderoga in New York, and helped develop the strategy that led to the defeat of the British Army at Saratoga, N.Y. “Kosciuszko’s strategy won the Battle of Saratoga. Thus he was responsible for the turning point of the American Revolution,” Storozynski says.

After the victory at Saratoga, George Washington took notice and appointed Kosciuszko to improve the Continental Army’s defenses at West Point. He stayed
there from early 1778 until August 1780, and his plans for fortifying West Point were quite valuable, as protecting the Hudson River was crucial for the Continental Army. In fact, “it was Kosciuszko’s plans for West Point that Benedict Arnold tried to sell to the British,” Storozynski says. Kosciuszko was instrumental in determining West Point’s future as the home of the United States Military Academy. “He planted the idea with both George Washington and Thomas Jefferson that the United States needed a national military academy to serve as an educational entity, not only for promoting study of state-of-the-art military science, but also for fostering advanced intellectual pursuit, both being equally necessary in our new republic,” Bajdek says. Although Sylvanus Thayer went on to become known as the Father of the United States Military Academy, during the Academy’s early years, Kosciuszko was known as the Patron Saint of West Point, Bajdek says. “Proof of the admiration and reverence in which Kosciuszko was held by West Point’s Corps of Cadets occurred on July 4, 1828, when the Academy dedicated a monument to Kosciuszko’s memory for his service to America during our War of Independence,” Bajdek says. “Although George Washington had made West Point his headquarters at one point and went on to become known as the Father of his Country, the Academy did not raise a monument to him until 1913, some 85 years following the installation of a monument to Kosciuszko.”

After seven years of service, Kosciuszko was awarded the rank of brigadier general in the Continental Army. He also received American citizenship and a grant of land near Columbus, Ohio, and was admitted to both the prestigious Society of the Cincinnati and the American Philosophical Society. Along with Lafayette, Kosciuszko was one of only two foreign officers who served in the American Revolution to be honored with membership in the Society of the Cincinnati, Bajdek says.

His Lifelong Friendship With Jefferson

After the Revolutionary War ended, Kosciuszko went back home to pursue the same ideals of freedom and liberty for his own people. He became a “national leader and defender of Poland against Russia, Prussia and Austria, earning him secular sainthood among Poles as well [as Americans],” Bajdek says. “His life, in short, made him a role model on two continents. He was driven by a concern for the welfare of others, standing in America and in Poland as a believer in freedom, democracy and equality, and giving up comforts and personal pleasures in pursuit of those objectives.”

Kosciuszko’s lifelong correspondence with Thomas Jefferson, particularly concerning the immorality of owning African slaves, reveals his firm belief in freedom for all people, without exception. Some of his beliefs may have been influenced by his friendship with Agrippa Hull, a free black who served as his orderly and assistant during the war. (See related story on page 47.)
Kosciuszko’s attitudes on slavery were radical for his time. When he left America, he left his salary from the Continental Army (about $15,000) with Jefferson, instructing him to use the money to purchase and free slaves, Storozynski says. Kosciuszko even asked that Jefferson reserve some of the money to buy land, cattle and farming tools so former slaves would be able to support themselves.

“Kosciuszko fought not only for the freedom of the American Colonies, but also for black slaves, European serfs, Jews, American Indians, women and all people,” Storozynski says. “Thomas Jefferson even called Kosciuszko ‘the purest son of liberty I have ever known.’”

Kosciuszko died in Switzerland in 1817. Jefferson eventually withdrew from his promise to act as executor of the will after a bitter and expensive legal battle, and the money was given to Kosciuszko’s descendants.

A Living Reminder

At West Point, Kosciuszko’s Garden is a living reminder of the patriot and his contributions to a long history of American military strength.

“Kosciuszko’s Garden and Flirtation Walk, to me, represent an opportunity to grip hands with those members of the Long Gray Line that have gone before me,” says Cadet Flynn. “While our lives, as any old grad will not hesitate to tell you, are certainly different in many regards, we all share our membership in the Corps. An opportunity to spend a few hours, or even minutes, in the garden or on Flirtation Walk, is an opportunity to reach into that nexus for guidance or reassurance. Taking a few moments of contemplation there before selecting branches, making a big personal decision or even before an exam allows us to place things in perspective.

“While [restoring Kosciuszko’s Garden] is a great passion of mine, I understand that history is not for every cadet,” he adds. “However, it is my duty to provide the opportunity for my peers to learn about the institution they are a part of, and if they choose, to use those resources to aid them.”

Nancy Mann Jackson wrote about how design students are giving life to Witness Trees for the November/December 2011 issue.

New Bibliographic History of America’s Revolutionary Women

America’s Women in the Revolutionary Era 1760–1790: A History Through Bibliography, the newest publication from NSDAR, provides an exhaustive listing of sources pertaining to the women of the Revolutionary War period. The compilation of thousands of references in one place makes it easier than ever to locate information about our nation’s earliest female citizens. The hardbound, three-volume set will be an invaluable resource for any library or research center, especially those with collections pertaining to history and women’s issues.

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What’s This Worth?
How to Ensure a Successful Appraisal Process

By Nancy Cooper
These keepsakes tease us with their mysterious origins and uncertain value, triggering myriad questions: How did the object get here? Should it be cleaned or refinished? Is it valuable or a cheap reproduction? If it is valuable, should it be insured? For how much could it be sold?

Qualified appraisers can help you wade through the mystery and help classify objects as trash or treasure. When it comes to protecting and insuring your collection, or determining the value of an object you want to sell, a little research and expert consultation will pay dividends and ensure peace of mind.

WHAT TO DO FIRST

If you find something you think is an antique or has value, what should you do first? Accredited appraiser Sarah Hawlik, ISA, of Legacy Appraisal Services, Cookeville, Tenn., (http://legacyantiquesart.com), offers these dos and don’ts for handling objects:

✶ It’s OK to gently dust an item, but do not scrub, scratch or alter the surfaces in any way.

✶ Do not do any major cleaning. It’s easy to destroy years of wonderful patina in a few minutes.

✶ Do not refinish any piece of wood or furniture before consulting an expert. Refinishing is sometimes necessary when items have multiple layers of paint or a finish that is beyond restoration. However, don’t do anything that could alter the value of the item without expert advice.

✶ When handling paintings, maps or other paper documents, gloves are recommended to keep any oils from your hands from transferring onto the piece.

✶ Do not attempt to clean heavily soiled paintings. Leave cleaning to professional conservators and restorers.

✶ Try to find clues to the object’s age by asking family members or researching similar objects on the Internet. In 1966, U.S. Customs, for importation purposes, classified an antique as an object that was 100 or more years old. However, an object’s age is not the sole indicator of value. The characteristics that determine value are quality, condition, rarity and provenance—determinations that might necessitate a formal appraisal of the item.

WHEN TO GET IT IN WRITING

To properly insure valuables or collectibles, it’s necessary to obtain an appraisal that will hold up in court or be acceptable to an insurance company. That’s why it’s important to understand the differences between oral and written appraisals. When “Antiques Roadshow” experts appraise antiques on TV, or when a collector friend casually gives you an approximate price for one of your items, those are considered oral appraisals.

Hawlik refers to an oral appraisal as an estimate or “approximation of value.” Oral appraisals are good for those curious about a ballpark value of an item and advice on pricing an item to sell. Carl Zehner, owner of the Harpeth Antique Mall in Franklin, Tenn., says a reputable antique dealer, who has been exposed to many different types of collectables, is likely to know if an antique is the real thing or an imitation as soon as he or she sees it.

However, the same due diligence is not put into researching an oral appraisal as a written appraisal. “Oral
appraisals are often subject to the appraiser’s individual market experience and sometimes even their mood,” Hawlik says. It’s best not to sell any item to someone who has given an oral appraisal; the value may have been altered to give the person an opportunity to profit from the sale.

An oral appraisal will give the owner an idea of the item’s value, but unless it is followed up with a written document from a person with the proper credentials, it will not hold up in court proceedings, according to Connie Sue Davenport, an accredited appraiser (conniesue.com) who has extensive court experience as an expert witness.

Written appraisals by certified or accredited appraisers carry both legal and professional weight. Appraisals can be used for insurance claims and coverage, divorce or estate settlements, moving and storage claims, and for charitable donation tax deductions. (Internet appraisals are not considered legal documents.)

Understanding the appraisal process will lead to a better valuation of your object, whether you choose to insure, sell or donate it. Make sure to follow these guidelines:

Choose a certified appraiser. Certified appraiser Miller Gaffney, AAA, of Columbia, S.C. (millergaffney.com), emphasizes that the Internal Revenue Service and the Appraisal Foundation recognize only three organizations for certification:

- American Society of Appraisers (ASA) www.appraisers.org
- International Society of Appraisers (ISA) www.isa-appraisers.org
- Appraisers Association of America (AAA) appraisersassoc.org

Certified experts in various areas can be found by contacting any of these three associations. Hawlik warns that because it is not illegal for anyone to call themselves an appraiser, fraud is rampant. If anyone claiming to be certified does not present the supporting documents for her certifications and other background information, she is likely not legitimate.

Know the rate. Before hiring an expert, be sure to ask for a written estimate of the appraisal process and how long it will take once the expert has seen the item, Gaffney advises. Appraisers usually charge by the hour, starting around $100 an hour. Many will come to a private home or office to start the process. If an appraiser says the cost of the documentation depends on the value of the piece in question, look for another appraiser. Gaffney warns. It is likely such an appraiser will inflate the value of the antique in order to charge more for the appraisal.

Depending on how much time and money you want to spend, it might be worthwhile to have a certified appraiser glance at other old items in your collection. Sometimes the most inconspicuous item may have the most surprising value. If the piece is portable enough, the appraiser may request to take it back to his office for closer inspection. If it is very large, photos will likely be taken prior to the research.

Ensure that the report answers all your questions. A certified appraiser’s document will include a description of the item, research into the item under consideration, the methods used to determine its value and sometimes comparison photographs, Davenport says. The expert also will need to know the purpose of the written appraisal—whether it’s for insurance, estate settlement or donation—so that information can be included in the document.

Let the appraiser know if the report is for replacement cost value or fair market value. Replacement cost is generally used for insurance purposes, and fair market value is used for selling the antique. A fair market value is one that is both fair to the buyer and to the seller, Hawlik says. Gaffney adds that the fair market value is also used for IRS purposes, such as determining estate taxes and charitable gift donations.

If you decide to sell the object, you’re more likely to receive the fair market value when selling to a private party, Hawlik says. If you decide to sell to an antique dealer or auction house, don’t be surprised if a dealer or auction house asks for a 25 percent to 50 percent discount and/or a separate fee to handle the sale.

Once completed, appraisals will need to be updated every five to 10 years as the value of items in the market changes.

Gaffney says certified appraisals protect people and their personal property. They also help families plan ahead and remove the drama and emotions when settling estates or making charitable donations. “Proficient and certified appraisals help ensure a good night’s sleep,” she says. ©

Nancy Cooper wrote about John Witherspoon for the November/December 2011 Our Patriots department.
A striking portrait of 85-year-old Revolutionary War veteran Agrippa Hull hangs in the Stockbridge Library Collection in Stockbridge, Mass. The oil painting was copied from a daguerreotype taken by Anson Clark in 1844. On the reverse is a note from Clark’s journal: “Col. Dwight came with Agrippa Hull to have his ‘Hull’s’ likeness taken & agreed to pay for it the next time he came over.” According to curator Barbara Allen, the portrait always draws comments from visitors who want to know more about the well-dressed, distinguished-looking man.

“It opens them up to a new way of thinking about blacks during the late 18th century,” she says. Hull was a free man, owned his own catering business and was a local celebrity known for his wit and intelligence. He once used the following metaphor about race: “It is not the cover of the book, but what the book contains that is the question … many a good book has dark covers.”

Hull, born in 1759 in Northampton, Mass., was the fourth child of Amos and Bathsheba Hull, free blacks who were members of the Congregational Church where the influential Jonathan Edwards preached. Hull’s father died when the child was 2, leaving his mother to endure financial strain. After losing her land, she asked Joab Binney (or Benny), a member of the Congregational church in Northampton and a free black, to take Hull to Stockbridge, a diverse community with economic opportunities for free blacks and American Indians. Bathsheba later married Philomen Lee, but soon found herself homeless and dependent on the support of her son for the rest of her life.

She moved to Stockbridge with her second husband and lived in close proximity to Hull. A strong dislike of his stepfather probably led Hull to enlist in the cause for American liberty, saying the “war could not last too long for him.” At 18 Hull went from working for the families of Stockbridge to living in the company of generals.

While most white soldiers enlisted for a single campaign, Hull, like many of his race, signed on for the duration of the conflict. Men of all races participated in the Battles of Lexington, Concord and Bunker Hill, but only free blacks who had already fought in Cambridge, Mass., could officially re-enlist as of 1777, a rule unit commanders often overlooked.

“The preference of many leaders was to exclude blacks from the Revolutionary army, but the need for manpower forced them to change their policies at different points in the war,” writes John Wood Sweet, author of Bodies Politic: Negotiating Race in the American North 1730–1830 (Hopkins, 2003). Hull served for General John Patterson of the Massachusetts Line until 1779, when he was reassigned to General Thaddeus Kosciuszko. (See related story on page 38). For 50 months, Hull was at Kosciuszko’s side in various roles, including messenger and orderly.

A Mischievous Prankster, A Loyal Friend

Both soldiers and officers noticed Hull’s mischievous personality. When people asked about his family, he claimed to be descended from African royalty. Once when Kosciuszko was thought to be out of town, Hull wore the general’s Polish uniform and held a dinner party for all the black servants in the camp. Unfortunately for Hull, Kosciuszko returned early and caught him in the impersonation.
Despite the practical jokes, the two men shared a mutual respect. According to Gary Nash, author of *Friends of Liberty: A Tale of Three Patriots, Two Revolutions, and the Betrayal that Divided a Nation: Thomas Jefferson, Thaddeus Kosciuszko, and Agrippa Hull* (Basic Books, 2008), Hull’s friendship influenced Kosciuszko in his attitudes on slavery. At the end of the war, Kosciuszko unsuccessfully tried to convince Hull to return to Poland with him. When Kosciuszko visited the United States in 1797, Hull traveled to New York for a reunion.

In 1831 Hull was part of a group from Stockbridge that traveled to the United States Military Academy at West Point to pay homage to Kosciuszko and visit the recently erected monument to the hero. When asked for stories of his long service with the patriot, Hull was quoted as saying, “If you wish it you ladies, you shall have a tale; for when it’s about the General, love and memory never fail.”

**A Local Celebrity**

After the war, Hull returned home as a local celebrity who was well respected for his war efforts. Word of his glamorous military service followed him to Stockbridge. Many of the officers he met during the war brought their families to meet him, and their grandchildren even stopped by when in the area. Hull became a legendary figure to the children who gathered around to hear his war stories and lectures on piety and temperance. The historian Francis Parkman recorded his impressions of Hull after a visit to Stockbridge in 1844, declaring that Hull “looked on himself as father to all Stockbridge.” And because he served with well-known generals, he was also known on the national stage, write Sidney Kaplan and Emma Mogrady Kaplan in *The Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution* (National Portrait Gallery, 1973).

**An Advocate**

Massachusetts abolished slavery in 1783, though racial divisions persisted. Fresh home from the war, Hull took advantage of his stature to become an advocate for his race. “Men like Hull used their status as veterans to bolster their claims for freedom and equal rights,” Sweet writes. “Sensitive to the causes regarding others of his race, Hull once stated that ‘our colored population seems like the red man of the forests, to be melting away.’”

In 1785 Hull purchased property in Stockbridge, where he later became the town’s largest black landowner. He became a caterer and worked in the household of Theodore Sedgwick, a lawyer who later became a judge, U.S. senator, and the fifth speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. Together they worked to free Jane Darby, a slave who sought refuge in Stockbridge. Darby later became Hull’s first wife and the mother of their four children. After Jane died, Hull married Margaret (also called Peggy). They adopted Mary Tilden, the six-year-old daughter of another runaway slave, around 1827.

Hull first applied for a pension under the Revolutionary Pension Act of 1818. A devoted patriot, he didn’t want to send in the original discharge papers in support of his pension application because they contained General George Washington’s signature. In 1828 Charles Sedgwick, a local lawyer who was clerk of the Massachusetts Supreme Court and son of Theodore Sedgwick, wrote letters of support asking for Hull’s pension without the signed documents because “he had rather forego the pension than lose the discharge.” Sedgwick’s petition was successful.

Despite the tragedies of his life—including the death of his first wife and early deaths of two children—Hull was resilient. Noted novelist Catharine Maria Sedgwick, Theodore Sedgwick’s daughter, knew Hull all her life, and found that he looked at other men’s problems “with a keen perception and the biting wit of wisdom.” Many incisive, satirical quotes are attributed to him, including one from an incident that happened when he accompanied his white employer to hear a “distinguished mulatto preacher.” Afterward the man asked Hull, “Well, how do you like his preaching?” Hull replied, “Sir, he was half black and half white. I like my half, how did you like yours?”

Shortly before Hull’s death, the local newspaper published a letter of admiration that said, “If thou art young, imitate this man’s example, and you will live many years upon the earth and rejoice in them all.” Hull died in 1848 at age 89, and he was buried in the Stockbridge Congregational Church cemetery.

His portrait is more than a simple painting—it’s a symbol of African-Americans’ contributions to the Revolution. While he lived, Hull recounted his war stories to generations of Stockbridge citizens, inspiring them with his tales. Now his picture prompts visitors to the Stockbridge Library to learn more about his life and pass on his legacy.

“Well, I finally did it. I finally decided to enter the digital age and get a cell phone. My kids have been bugging me, my book group made fun of me, and the last straw was when my car broke down, and I was stuck by the highway for an hour before someone stopped to help. But when I went to the cell phone store, I almost changed my mind. The phones are so small I can’t see the numbers, much less push the right one. They all have cameras, computers and a “global-positioning” something or other that’s supposed to spot me from space. Goodness, all I want to do is to be able to talk to my grandkids! The people at the store weren’t much help. They couldn’t understand why someone wouldn’t want a phone the size of a postage stamp. And the rate plans! They were complicated, confusing, and expensive… and the contract lasted for two years! I’d almost given up when a friend told me about her new Jitterbug phone. Now, I have the convenience and safety of being able to stay in touch… with a phone I can actually use.”

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