Shaping the Role of

First Lady

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About the cover:
Oil on canvas of Dolley Payne Madison in one of her famous turbans, circa 1817, about the time her second term as first lady ended. Formerly attributed to Ezra Ames, the portrait is now considered to be the work of Bass Otis.
THE GRANGER COLLECTION, NEW YORK

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BY NANCY COOPER

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Explore the remarkable story of Thomas Jefferson and James Hemings’ culinary adventures, as well as two books about the ever-fascinating Dolley Madison.
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.

Preserving the American Spirit
www.dar.org
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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 as Patriots not only soldiers, but also anyone who contributed to the cause of American freedom. To find out if your ancestor is recognized by the DAR as a Revolutionary Patriot, use the request form available online. Visit www.dar.org and click on “Membership.”

How many members does the National Society have?
DAR has 173,000 members in nearly 3,000 chapters worldwide, including chapters in 13 foreign countries and one territory. Since its founding in 1890, DAR has admitted more than 900,000 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 this vital, service-minded organization.
From the President General

As part of American Spirit’s War of 1812 commemoration, we take a closer look at the remarkable life of Dolley Madison, whose charm and political savvy made her one of America’s most beloved and influential first ladies. Her gifts of diplomacy and hospitality are well known—who wouldn’t have wanted to be invited to one of her weekly gatherings?—as was her courage in risking capture to save national treasures during the British invasion of Washington, D.C. Our story shows how Dolley’s resilience and fortitude in the midst of great personal tragedy are less-familiar testaments to her strong character.

This issue also brings to light other stories of favorite Revolutionary personalities who aren’t always discussed in history class. In our profile on Patriot Ethan Allen, we learn that Vermont’s charismatic leader was a controversial military figure whose tactics weren’t always appreciated by his superiors. And we delve into the sad tale of a Patriot father and Loyalist son’s broken and irreparable connection. When Ben Franklin’s son William, who was royal governor of New Jersey, refused to support independence, his father made it very clear: Their relationship was over. William’s story highlights the divide that often occurred within families during the Revolution.

DAR members have long been lauded for their work to help immigrants become naturalized citizens. Although many of us know about the experience of millions of immigrants who passed through Ellis Island, fewer are aware of the distinctively different experience of the 500,000 immigrants processed at the Angel Island Immigration Station, located in San Francisco Bay. We’re proud to highlight this restored immigration station, once called the Guardian of the Western Gate.

Our Historic Homes department travels to the circa-1781 Oliver Ellsworth Homestead in Windsor, Conn. Unusually for such an old home, it has been owned only by the Ellsworth family and the Connecticut Daughters of the American Revolution, and now offers visitors a unique window into the life of a prominent Patriot and Chief Justice. For the Spirited Adventures department, we journey to Fredericksburg, Texas, where German culture still thrives, and in the Whatnot section, we explore 10 American Indian sites well worth visiting.

How can you find out more about those treasures—whether a piece of furniture, a locket or a few pieces of china—that have been passed down in your family? The Genealogy Sleuth department shows you how to use probate records, family stories and antique experts to create an important record of the history of ownership.

As we’ve done in previous November/December issues in honor of Veterans Day, American Spirit once again salutes three military Daughters who are selflessly serving their country.

Merry Ann T. Wright

Merry Ann T. Wright
Don’t miss even one issue of this great publication.

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After completing her first year at the United States Military Academy at West Point, Captain Lorilyn Woods took a ride in a Blackhawk helicopter. It was that ride during summer training that set her sights on pursuing aviation. After graduation in 2004, Capt. Woods went directly to Fort Rucker in Alabama, where she learned to fly the AH-64D Apache Longbow helicopter.

In 2008, Capt. Woods spent 11 months as company commander in Iraq, where she flew in support of the ground troops stationed at COB (Contingency Operating Base) Speicher. “When the Apaches were around, the ground troops knew they wouldn’t get shot at,” she says. “It was so rewarding to know that, by being their eyes in the sky and giving them a better idea of what was going on around them, I was protecting them and keeping them out of harm’s way.”

Capt. Woods, who was the only female pilot in her unit in Iraq, says many of the troops were surprised to hear a woman’s voice on the radio. One time she even got asked out over radio. “I was escorting a convoy when one of the guys asked if I would eat breakfast with him,” she recalls. “The whole convoy could hear the conversation. Needless to say, I turned him down.”

Following her deployment, Capt. Woods went to graduate school to prepare for her current post—teaching military movement to cadets at West Point. “It was a course I enjoyed when I was a cadet,” she says. “It helps develop coordination, agility and greater confidence to navigate obstacles that they might encounter in combat,” she says.

Capt. Woods enjoys being back at her alma mater, because she believes in its mission. “I find a lot of purpose being in the military,” she says. “I deeply love this country and what it stands for and the values it protects.”

That’s also why being a DAR member is important to her: “Sometimes it’s easy to forget about all of the things we’ve gone through as a country,” she says. “But the DAR works hard to make sure we don’t forget about the sacrifices of the Founding Fathers and those before us.”

In honor of Veterans Day, we salute three military Daughters who are selflessly serving their country at home and abroad.

Active-Duty Daughters

By Lena Anthony

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A

s a member of the 27th Infantry Brigade of the New York Army National Guard for the past 19 years, Major Roberta Comerford has been deployed three times: First to Fort Drum, N.Y., then she was sent to Iraq, and now she’s in Kuwait, where she serves as director of emergency services and provost marshal in Northern Kuwait. She oversees hundreds of military and contract police and fire and EMS personnel charged with protecting U.S. military facilities in Kuwait.

When asked what a typical day is like, Maj. Comerford laughs before explaining that “a typical day is an atypical day.” But, she says, it shares many similarities with her civilian job as a sergeant supervisor in the North Syracuse, N.Y., police force. “Stolen property is stolen property, whether it happens back home or on a military base,” she says.

Maj. Comerford knew she wanted to go into law enforcement after completing a college internship and getting hired full-time at the district attorney’s office. “I really love law, and I found it so interesting,” says Maj. Comerford, who became a military police officer in 1993 and joined the North Syracuse Police Department five years later.

Back home in New York, Maj. Comerford also serves as chapter regent of Tioughnioga Chapter, Cortland, N.Y.

“I love being a Daughter, especially doing what I do,” she says. “It makes me proud, knowing that one of my ancestors fought for our freedom and that I’m doing the same. And the support I get from other Daughters has been great—I’m always getting cards and care packages thanking me for my service.”

Maj. Comerford says she hopes to be home in time for Christmas and looks forward to spending time with family and friends—and eating a good meal. On her list of must-eat foods when she gets back: “Crab legs, a good pizza, homemade macaroni and cheese, and a banana split.”

W

hen Diana Arnold received an Army recruitment letter in February 2005, she threw it away, thinking it was a joke. “Why would the Army want me?” thought Captain Arnold, a registered dietitian at the time. But the more she learned about being in the Army Reserves—from friends and the Army recruiter with whom she met—the more she realized that it was a good fit.

Once she joined, she threw herself into being a reservist. “I celebrated both my 25th wedding anniversary and my induction into the Army the same day,” Capt. Arnold says. “I was in an Armed Forces Parade on my 50th birthday, and celebrated my 30th anniversary doing field training.”

Climbing the ranks quickly, Capt. Arnold became a company commander of her unit four years ago, but stepped down earlier this year when the opportunity came up to spend nine months in Kuwait as the nutrition care officer in charge of the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations.

“When I got this opportunity, I took it because there aren’t many missions for dietitians, so I didn’t know if another one would ever come up,” says Capt. Arnold, who is one of two Army dietitians currently deployed (the other is in Afghanistan).

As part of her deployment, which started in August, Capt. Arnold offers nutrition education to the 30,000 Americans, including members of all military branches, Department of Defense personnel and American contractors who are stationed in Kuwait and Qatar.

Capt. Arnold says she works long hours (typically 12 to 13 hours a day), but does get one day off a week. She fills the day with a variety of activities, including country western dancing (yes, even in Kuwait), watching movies and participating in some of the fun runs held on base.

Capt. Arnold says serving her country is something she’s extremely proud to do. “Next to marrying my husband, it’s the best decision I’ve made,” she says.

She’s also proud of being a DAR member, and appreciative of the support fellow members provide her while she is deployed. “My chapter is devoted to patriotism, and we were always packing care packages or writing thank-you cards to soldiers overseas,” says Capt. Arnold, whose daughter, Tessa, also is a member. “I never thought I’d be the soldier on the receiving end of that package, but now I know just how special that is.”
Traveling West to Go Back in Time

In honor of November’s Native American Heritage Month, explore 10 lesser-known American Indian cultural and historical sites, illuminating the landscape from Indiana to Montana. By Elizabeth Anderman

1. Starting in Indianapolis, visit the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indian and Western Art. Founded by Indianapolis businessman and philanthropist Harrison Eiteljorg, the museum collects and preserves art of the American Indian and features works by Andy Warhol and Georgia O’Keefe. For more information, visit www.eiteljorg.org.

2. Driving southwest to Spiro, Okla., visit the Spiro Mounds Archaeological Center, located on a bend of the Arkansas River not far from the Arkansas border. The site interprets 12 mounds of the prehistoric and mysterious Spiro people, who settled in the area from A.D. 800 until about A.D. 1450. For more information, visit www.okhistory.org/sites/spiromounds.

3. West of Albuquerque, N.M., the Petroglyph National Monument is one of the largest petroglyph sites in North America. The symbols carved into the volcanic rock were made by American Indians and Spanish settlers 400 to 700 years ago. For more information, visit www.nps.gov/petr/index.htm.
4. About an hour from Santa Fe, N.M., is the **Bandelier National Monument**, which protects more than 33,000 acres of canyon and mesa country. The area has evidence of human presence going back more than 11,000 years. Camping is available, and there are 70 miles of hiking trails. For more information, visit www.nps.gov/band.

5. Travel near the border of New Mexico and Colorado to see the **Aztec Ruins National Monument**. The Pueblo people describe this site as part of their migration journey. A self-guided tour takes visitors through a 900-year-old ancestral pueblo with more than 400 masonry rooms. Learn more at www.nps.gov/azru.

6. In Wyoming, visit the **Devils Tower National Monument** in the rolling prairies near the Black Hills. According to the National Park Service, more than 20 American Indian tribes have potential cultural affiliation with the monument. Some tribes call it Mateo Tepee, meaning Grizzly Bear Lodge. For more information, visit www.nps.gov/deto.

7. Northern Montana features the **cultural centers of the Blackfeet and Flathead Indian Nations**. Learn more about visiting the Blackfeet’s 1.5 million-acre reservation bordering Glacier National Park at www.blackfeetcountry.com. The 1.2 million-acre Flathead Indian Reservation, between Missoula and Kalispell, invites visitors to fish, animal watch or attend immersion school. For more information, see visitmt.com/places_to_go/indian_nations.

8. Montana’s **Big Hole National Battlefield** is a memorial to the people who died in the battle August 9–10, 1877. The Nez Percé were fleeing from the U.S. Army troops charged with moving them to a smaller reservation. Visit www.nps.gov/biho for more information.

9. While in Montana, don’t miss the **Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument**. It commemorates the battle on June 25–26, 1876, in which 260 soldiers and personnel died fighting the Lakota and Cheyenne American Indians. For more information, visit www.nps.gov/libi.

10. **Rosebud Battlefield State Park**, another Montana site associated with the battle of Little Bighorn, tells the story of a time when the Sioux and Northern Cheyenne combined as an army to defend their land. For more information, visit fwp.mt.gov/mtoutdoors/HTML/articles/2004/RosebudSP.htm.
FOR 42 YEARS, Rhode Island’s Christmas in Newport festival has been a community-wide celebration of the season that also annually raises thousands of dollars for charity. In seeking to recapture the candlelit holidays of the past, only clear bulbs illuminate Newport's scenic harbor and wharves, the restored Colonial homes of the Point and Historic Hill sections, and the Victorian mansions of Bellevue Avenue. Visitors can tour some of these 19th- and early 20th-century mansions built by America’s richest families, such as the Vanderbils and Astors. The decor of the Breakers, The Elms and Marble House is especially festive during the holidays.

From December 1 until the end of the month, the celebration will feature open houses, holiday lantern tours, a Polar Express Train Ride and Children’s Christmas Story Hour, choral and band concerts, theatrical productions, and other holiday programs. Any event listed in the annual program must be either free of charge or benefit a nonprofit institution or charity.

For more information, go to www.christmasinnewport.org.

24/7 News: Accessing The Associated Press

“There are only two forces that can carry light to all the corners of the globe—only two—the sun in the heavens and The Associated Press down here.”

—Mark Twain, September 19, 1906

The owners of five of the most powerful daily newspapers in New York City created the Associated Press in 1846 to provide news dispatches from the distant Mexican War via Pony Express, ship and telegraph—faster than the mail could carry it.

Newspapering then was a cutthroat business, and scoops meant big profits; the AP’s unusual deal allowed them to restrict the flow of news to their presses and also hold down costs. It’s not hard to imagine those press barons, brandy and cigars in hand, relishing being the first to know about a breaking story.

Though they originally formed the AP to serve just their papers, the owners quickly realized they could sell the articles to other papers and defray the cost of gathering the news. Today, AP staffers report news from more than 100 countries. The AP estimates that nearly half the world’s population sees or hears its stories.

As an independent, nonprofit cooperative owned by more than 1,500 news organizations, the AP has a deserved reputation for the highest standards of objective and factual reporting—as well as a profound commitment to freedom of the press. More than 30 of its reporters have died in the line of duty: One of the first was Mark Kellogg, who wrote, “I go with Custer and will be at the death,” shortly before perishing at Custer’s famous last stand.

Starting with the telegraph in the late 1840s, the AP has adopted new technologies to speed the collection and distribution of material. It continues to be a knowledge-sharing pioneer, recently launching a new archive research experience at www.aparchive.com. The collection includes more than 1.3 million global news and entertainment stories dating back to 1895 sourced both from AP’s own coverage and from its content partners.
Discover the meaning behind some of the DAR chapters’ interesting names.

Betsey Hager Chapter, Grand Island, Neb., shares the name of a Boston woman who was born in 1750 and orphaned at the age of 9. Young Elizabeth Hager was bound into the service of a farming family that cared for her in return. She became proficient not only at household tasks but also at working with tools and machinery, skills she put to use during the Revolution. Betsey and blacksmith Samuel Leverett worked in secret to refit and repair weapons, including six British cannons abandoned after the Battle of Concord, for use by the Continental Army. She also made bullets and ammunition and helped treat the sick and wounded. After the war Betsey married John Pratt. She lived to be 93.

The namesake of Caesar Rodney Chapter, Wilmington, Del., is best remembered for his overnight ride from Dover, Del., to Philadelphia, Pa., to cast the deciding vote for the Declaration of Independence on July 2, 1776. The Delaware state quarter features an image of Rodney on horseback. Born in Dover on October 7, 1728, Rodney trained as a lawyer, spent a decade managing the family farm and entered public service in 1755 as sheriff of Kent County. He went on to become a leading Patriot in the colony, serving as a member of the Stamp Act Congress, a Continental Congress delegate, a militia leader and president of Delaware. At the time of his death in 1784 he was the speaker to the Upper House of the Delaware Assembly.

The name of Colonel John Mitchell Chapter, Anchorage, Alaska, pays tribute to Organizing Regent Helen Crowe’s Revolutionary ancestor. Born in Ireland, by 1776 Mitchell had settled in Philadelphia, where he joined the Pennsylvania Navy. He later served as a deputy quartermaster general in the Continental Army, attaining the rank of colonel. Mitchell was an original member of the Society of the Cincinnati and one of the early commissioners of the Orphan House in Charleston, S.C. Founded in 1790, it is one of the oldest publicly funded orphanages in the United States. Mitchell, as a senior commissioner, received President George Washington when he visited the Orphan House in 1791. He died in Charleston on January 27, 1816.

Susannah Lee Barlow Chapter, Oregon City, Ore., was named for the ancestor of its organizing regent, Imogen Harding Brodie. Susannah’s father was Captain William Lee of the South Carolina Militia, who lost a leg at the siege of Charleston. He had seven children with his second wife Sarah McMellum; Susannah, born March 17, 1791, was their fourth child. After the Revolutionary War the family moved to Kentucky, where Susannah married Samuel Kimbrough Barlow. The couple had six children. In the spring of 1845 the Barlows departed for the Oregon Territory. They finally arrived on Christmas Day after braving cold, hunger, barely passable roads and steep mountain grades. Samuel is credited with building the first road over the Cascade Mountains. Susannah died December 24, 1852.

If your chapter has an interesting story, send it to americanspirit@dar.org.
National Treasures

Step inside the DAR Museum for a closer look at its fascinating collection.

Strong Set

THE BRITISH CERAMICS FACTORY WEDGWOOD made this bone china cream pot and covered sugar bowl between 1812 and 1831. Wedgwood did not invent bone china; Josiah Spode II is credited with developing it in 1799. Bone china, a form of porcelain, actually has bone ash mixed into the formula. Other ingredients include china clay, feldspathic rock and flint. The high percentage of bone ash in the formula produces a superior product that is whiter in color, lighter in weight and less brittle.

Wedgwood was slow to introduce bone china wares, only doing so in 1812. In this early period, Wedgwood bone china was limited to tea sets and dessert services. Many of the early designs were influenced by Chinese styles, as seen on these examples. Though considered to be of high quality, consumers considered Wedgwood’s bone china designs old-fashioned and too expensive. Wedgwood stopped producing bone china in 1831, although production resumed in 1878.
WHEN MANY young people hear the word “doughboy,” they think of a puffy, giggly creature from Pillsbury advertising. But not the students in Frank Mazzi’s high-school history classes at St. Helena High School in St. Helena, Calif. When they think of a doughboy, they have a personal understanding of the history behind the nickname for a World War I infantryman. In 2008, Mazzi, who earned his Ph.D. in history from the University of Southern California, set out to create a U.S. history elective class zeroed in on students’ interests and talents. Previous classes created films on the Revolution, World War II and the French and Indian War.

About the time Mazzi was envisioning such a class, he and his wife met Corporal Frank Buckles who, at 107, was the last surviving U.S. veteran of World War I. “By then I was thinking that my elective class could have World War I as its topic, and perhaps Mr. Buckles would permit students in my proposed class to interview him,” he says.

Buckles agreed, and the class traveled from California to interview him at his home in Charles Town, W.Va. “During the interview, Mr. Buckles shared with us his remarkable World War I experiences and his memories from before the war and after,” Mazzi says. “I feel certain that the interview experience will prove, for each of us, a very special occasion in our lives.”

The press also took note of the occasion: The December 30, 2008, issue of the San Francisco Chronicle ran a front-page story on Mazzi’s World War I class interviewing Buckles. “Because our filmed interview has been accepted by the Library of Congress Veterans History Project and is digitized for online viewing,” Mazzi says, “we are gratified that our experience with Mr. Buckles will be available to inspire anyone doing research on the American experience in World War I.” (Buckles died in February 2011 at age 110.)

The Chronicle and other newspaper articles set off a snowball effect as the class began receiving letters and emails from around the country. Many readers sent materials from the World War I period, including letters, diaries, photographs, scrapbooks, uniforms, maps, military equipment and the personal effects of American men and women who served in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Red Cross and YMCA during the war.

The donations inspired Mazzi to transform his class into an ongoing research institute devoted to the American experience in World War I. The St. Helena High School World War I Research Institute Museum opened in January 2011 in the school library, which displays the donated and loaned items. A website (http://ww1institute.org) includes a photographic record of the artifacts, as well as the students’ original research and a growing number of biographies of service members. Up to now, their stories have never been told, Mazzi says. The class is now producing a World War I documentary.

“Ninety-four years after the end of World War I there is still no memorial in Washington, D.C., to the 4.7 million American men and women who served and the 116,000 Americans who died in that war,” Mazzi says. That’s why he decided to form The World War I Memorial Project, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit foundation. “The project’s mission is to raise public awareness about American participation in World War I and promote the construction and dedication of a national World War I memorial in our nation’s capital,” he says.

The inspirational Mazzi, who was named the 2012 Outstanding Teacher of American History by the California State Society DAR and was a finalist for the national award, is leading the charge. ☀️
German Immigration in Texas

After Texas won its independence from Mexico in 1836, news of job opportunities and the vast amount of land available seized the imagination of many Germans, whose country was experiencing political and social unrest. The Republic of Texas allowed 1,000 German, Dutch, Scandinavian and Swiss immigrant families to settle more than 3 million acres between the Llano and Colorado rivers under the Fisher-Miller Land Grant of 1842, according to the Texas State Historical Association. Henry Francis Fisher, one of the original petitioners, was appointed the Texas consul to Bremen, a city in northern Germany, and visited Germany to promote the chance to start a new life in Texas.

Fredericksburg was founded in 1846 by Baron Otfried Hans von Meusebach, the leader of the Society for the Protection of German Immigrants (SPGI), an idealistic group of German noblemen formed to spur immigration to Texas. Choosing the site for its plentiful building stone, wood and water, the baron purchased 10,000 acres, and arrived with 120 German men, women and children in 20 wagons and two-wheeled carts.

Named for Prince Frederick of Prussia, an SPGI member, Fredericksburg was the second town the society established. The first was New Braunfels, 80 miles to the southeast, the year before. The SPGI sent more than 5,000 Germans to Texas from October 1845 to April 1846.

“The plan was to bring thousands of Germans to establish a whole string of settlements, much like the Spanish missions. But they didn’t realize [that the] Comanches controlled much of the territory, or understand the huge distances involved,” says Ernie Loeffler, director of the Fredericksburg Convention and Visitors Bureau. “So their grand vision was never fully implemented. Most settlers preferred to live in Fredericksburg or New Braunfels, not on the frontier by themselves.”

Fredericksburg, Texas, has always been famous for its German history, which survives in a National Historic District filled with 19th-century homes of German pioneers as well as German restaurants and residents of German descent. But today this small town 65 miles northwest of San Antonio and 70 miles west of Austin draws visitors for more recent attractions, such as the National Museum of the Pacific War and President Lyndon B. Johnson’s birthplace and ranch, and a location in the heart of winery-filled Texas Hill Country.

Fredericksburg, German Heritage, Texas Hospitality

By Sharon McDonnell
The year after founding the town, the baron—now known as John O. Meusebach—negotiated a treaty with the Comanches that ensured the future stability of his new town. The tribe promised not to harm the colonists in Fredericksburg in exchange for $3,000 worth of gifts.

A Growing Town and a Hometown Hero

Almost 1,000 people lived in Fredericksburg by mid-1847. Each settler was given a town lot plus 10 acres nearby. A wagon road to Austin had opened, and more than a dozen stores were introduced—the first by J.L. Ransleben, who traded goods to the American Indians for furs and skins.

Many farm families built “Sunday houses,” which were weekend lodgings for their visits to town to shop, attend church and socialize. These small stone or frame houses—built from the 1890s to 1920s and found almost exclusively in Gillespie County—generally had two rooms. The room on the second floor was reached by an outdoor staircase.

Charles H. Nimitz, a Bremen native, opened the Hotel Nimitz, popular for its German food and for its theater, casino, dance hall, brewery and bathhouse, in 1852. The Nimitz was the last real hotel between El Paso and San Antonio before the 1870s, when El Paso expanded. Originally four rooms, it later expanded to 45 rooms after a large steamboat-shaped addition was grafted onto it. The addition came complete with a pilot house, deck and crow’s nest, giving rise to its nickname, “The Steamboat Hotel.”

Nimitz was elected captain of the Gillespie Rifles, a group he formed to protect the German settlers from the American Indians. His grandson later would outrank him: Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, the commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet after Pearl Harbor was attacked in December 1941, was one of the nation’s top naval leaders in World War II. Born a block away from the family hotel where he
often played, Chester Nimitz grew up in nearby Kerrville.

The former Nimitz Hotel is now the National Museum of the Pacific War, which features exhibits about the World War II campaign in the Pacific, as well as artifacts and battle re-enactments.

**Thriving Tourist Industry**

Today, this town of 10,000 boasts more than 700 historically significant structures, including early settlers’ log cabins and half-timbered houses, which were built of wood and diagonal beams filled in with fieldstone, a common European medieval building style. Of special interest is the Vereins Kirche, or Peoples Church, a replica of the town’s first public building, which served as a town hall, school and church.

More than 150 specialty shops lining Main Street—from art galleries selling paintings, sculpture and textile arts to food shops like Fischer & Wieser, to clothing and gift boutiques—make it a popular day-trip destination for urban Texans. Fredericksburg also is popular for its many festivals, such as Oktoberfest, German-style Christmas celebrations, and a food and wine fest. Free monthly outdoor concerts featuring polka, country and swing music take place in Marktplatz from April to August. A Roots Music series is held in the Pioneer Museum complex from May to September. There are monthly classical concerts, and even two choirs that sing in German, including the Arion Mannerchor, founded in 1908.

**Today, this town of 10,000 boasts more than 700 historically significant structures.**

**Fredericksburg’s Must-Sees**

**National Historic District:** The Pioneer Museum is a cluster of nine historic structures, including the 1904 Weber Summer House and the 1849 Kammlah House, which includes a smokehouse and barn. The Vereins Kirche, less than two blocks away on Marktplatz, displays exhibits about Fredericksburg history.

www.visitfredericksburgtx.com
www.pioneermuseum.net

**National Museum of the Pacific War:** The museum is the only one in the nation dedicated exclusively to the story of World War II in the Asiatic Pacific Theater. It has more than 900 artifacts on exhibit, including five Japanese Midget Subs used in the attack on Pearl Harbor, a B-25 bomber and one of the last wooden PT boats that saw combat during World War II.

www.pacificwarmuseum.org

**Lyndon B. Johnson State and National Historical Parks:** The LBJ ranch, Texas White House, LBJ birthplace and Sauer-Beckmann Living History Farm are near Stonewall, 16 miles east of Fredericksburg. The living history farm teaches the sausage-making, canning and sheep-shearing traditions of German farmers. The LBJ boyhood home and visitor center are in Johnson City, about 15 miles further east on Highway 290.

www.nps.gov/ljjo

**Wineries:** Several wineries on U.S. Highway 290 offer tastings and wine-and-food pairing events. Becker Vineyards has a tasting room in a replica 19th-century German stone barn next to lavender fields. Grape Creek Vineyards also has a tasting room on Fredericksburg’s Main Street. Messina Hof offers four themed houses.

www.wineroad290.com

**Luckenbach:** Founded in 1849, this town 10 miles from Fredericksburg offers live country music daily, weekend dances and monthly events at its old-fashioned dance hall and bar. Willie Nelson and Waylon Jennings immortalized it in their hit song, “Luckenbach, Texas.”

www.luckenbachtexas.com

**Wildseed Farms:** The nation’s biggest wildflower farm is a beautiful spot to stroll (especially in spring) and shop for seeds. Visitors can eat and drink at the Brewbonnet Biergarten.

www.wildseedfarms.com

**Enchanted Rock State Natural Area:** This 1,643-acre park offers panoramic Texas Hill Country views from the summit of its rosy pink granite dome, sacred to American Indians. The site 18 miles from Fredericksburg features hiking trails and rock-climbing cliffs.

www.tpwd.state.tx.us/parks
Getting colder now, time for fresh oysters, followed by a slow evenings in front of the fire. On these dark evenings, our family enjoys watching films together. For starters, a light cooking show, followed by a filling documentary, topped off with an animated discussion. With this ritual in mind, we made our films suitable for the entire family. Last week, we received a lovely email from a mom of four boys,

“For the past year, we’ve been reminding each other to check PBS on Memorial Day to see if your shows were on again. Sure enough, they were there. This time, we paid attention to the website. Our 14-year anniversary is next week. I told my husband, “No flowers, no card, no gift. I know exactly what I want, let me handle it.” Then, I ordered from you. I will tell you that my boys, ages 4 to 11, never lost interest. I consider myself a history buff, but your series blew me away. There was so much I didn’t know. Keep up the great work!”

For Christmas giving, we decided to add something special to The American Road to Victory series. We created special maps for each campaign so viewers can follow along while watching the film, or reference them when visiting the areas in person.

And, we had a wonderful challenge coin made, in the USA, by the same company that mints the Medal of Honor. The coin features images from each campaign and celebrates our proud partnership with the National Infantry Foundation. These extras are housed, with the three films, in a handsome, embossed folio; kept safe with a satisfying, magnetic clasp. The exclusive Collector’s Edition provides a meaningful Christmas gift for someone who appreciates both history and travel. The collection retails for $79.95. Please mention the DAR to receive a set of gift cards.

If you wish to order a Collector’s Edition of our film series, please contact me, Heidi Lanni at 917-231-1231 or heidi@livingbattlefield.org. You may also order online www.livingbattlefield.com.
Like an enticing buffet, Crème Brûlée brims with anecdotes ranging from a short history of French cooking to the dining preferences of French kings, to the respective heat distribution properties of cast iron and copper.

and he used his time in France to educate himself about them.

“Whatever was best in Europe, he wanted for his own nation—and that included foodstuffs, recipes and kitchen utensils,” the author writes.

Food was abundant in late 18th-century America—the average American ate much better than his English cousins—but it was also ... boring, at least to Jefferson. Not that he didn’t enjoy plantation fare with its mixture of African, American Indian and British dishes. But he was determined that his new nation should have only the best, and he knew that France was especially esteemed for its haute cuisine.

When he was appointed to the commerce post in 1784, Jefferson decided to take a slave, James Hemings, to France and apprentice him to the finest chefs. To ease the pain of leaving family behind, Hemings was promised freedom once he had mastered the art and taught it to other cooks at Jefferson’s home, Monticello.

Jefferson meanwhile set out to learn all he could about French agriculture and agricultural products. As a gardener, farmer and scientist, Jefferson was uniquely qualified to absorb this knowledge and to share it once back in America.

Monticello would serve as his laboratory for a number of experiments, ranging from creating a vineyard from French grapevines (a failure, thanks to a tiny mite that thrived on the foreign plants), to growing olives and dozens of varieties of vegetables and fruits.

Jefferson traveled widely while in France. He was keen to see how the people lived and generally avoided lavish dinner parties and soirees hosted by the elite. He and Hemings spent more than three months on a coach tour of the country, sampling foods and wines, inspecting farms, and arranging shipments of seeds and cuttings to send back home.

Craughwell relates that Jefferson was particularly interested in how the French could clean hulls off rice without breaking the kernels, as typically happened in America, thus killing the market for American rice exports. He discovered on a side trip into Italy that the Italian growers used a different, more robust strain of rice.

However, Italian law forbade exporting the rice, and imposed the death penalty on those who tried. Undeterred, Jefferson added rice smuggler to his long list of accomplishments.

Hemings became a master chef during the years in France, which had plunged into the growing horror of its
own revolution when he and Jefferson left. At Monticello, Hemings amazed guests with his creations. Jefferson did grant Hemings his freedom, and he went on to a career as a chef. Meanwhile, he had taught his skills to a relative who, in turn, passed them on to others in the extended Hemings family who cooked for Jefferson until his death.

Only a handful of James Hemings’ recipes survive and are reproduced in Thomas Jefferson’s Crème Brûlée, including the title’s luscious dessert. Naturally, many of the dishes he prepared are typical of the subtly flavored and sauced repasts common to French cuisine.

But some that were exotic in 1790s America are staples today, notably macaroni and cheese, ice cream and pommes frites—French fries.

Like an enticing buffet, Crème Brûlée brims with anecdotes ranging from a short history of French cooking (then undergoing one of many nouvelle cuisine revolutions) to the dining preferences of French kings, to the respective heat distribution properties of cast iron and copper.

Sadly, Jefferson’s enthusiasm for French cooking failed to catch on widely in the austere atmosphere of post-Revolutionary America. Americans clung to their plainer fare; “Frenchified” became a derogatory term for hoity-toity behavior and tastes.

Not until the Golden Age of the late 19th century, when well-to-do Americans looked to Europe for chefs, did some of the contempt begin to wear off. When Julia Child’s cookbook became a staple in every American kitchen, Jefferson’s dream of making fine food democratic finally came to pass.

—Bill Hudgins

The Queen of America
Mary Cutts’ Life of Dolley Madison
Edited by Catherine Allgor

The Queen of America (University of Virginia Press, 2012), a newly annotated edition of Mary Cutts’ memoir of her famous aunt Dolley Madison, helps readers flesh out some of the details of Dolley’s life that her loyal niece might have wanted to ignore or gloss over. Dolley biographer Catherine Allgor presents two versions of Cutts’ manuscript along with an introductory essay and other explanatory notes, giving readers more insight into Dolley’s relationship with a difficult father, her overindulgence of a profligate son and the iron will behind her charming political facade. Allgor also theorizes how Mary Cutts, in a time when 19th-century women were supposed to be private and domestic, might have used the memoir to carve out a place for herself as a respected historian.

Though Allgor explains that Cutts is not always the most dispassionate and accurate biographer, she acknowledges how much the memoir honored the life and built the legend of Dolley Madison.

— Jamie Roberts

See feature on Dolley Madison on page 32.
A Closer Look at the History of Eyeglasses

By Maureen Taylor

Although the genesis of eyeglasses is unclear, it is said that explorer Marco Polo observed elderly Chinese using spectacles in 1270. The Chinese themselves claim that spectacles originated in 11th-century Arabia, according to the American Academy of Ophthalmology.

In the Western world, 13th-century Italians are credited with inventing modern spectacles, or eyeglasses—a pair of convex glass disks to sharpen vision close up, helping people with tasks such as reading and sewing. The inventor is disputed—some believe it was a Florentine optical physicist named Salvino Armato, while others credit Friar Alessandro della Spina of Pisa—but it is known that in Venice there were guild regulations governing the sale of eyeglasses in 1301, according to Vincent Ilardi in Renaissance Vision from Spectacles to Telescopes (American Philosophical Society, 2007).

Heavy Duty

For centuries spectacles sat on the bridge of the nose held in place by a band that tied around the head. Wearers continually had to push them up the nose to readjust them. The side pieces that held glasses in place weren’t introduced until after 1730. Spectacles with a handle—known as lorgnettes—were believed to have been invented around 1770 by Englishman George Adams. Lorgnettes were often used more for fashion than for vision correction. In fact, owning any kind of eyeglasses became an indicator of intelligence and wealth.

As there were no lightweight lenses available, our early American ancestors wore real glass lenses that were sold in different optical powers. The frames, constructed from bone, horn, ivory, tortoiseshell or metal, also were heavy, but in style and function they resembled the ones we wear today. Spectacles were worn primarily by the elderly, but after the Revolution, shops like Hubert Van Wagenen’s New York City hardware store advertised that they sold “temple spectacles to suit persons of different ages.”

Ben's Bifocals

Eye strain was a common complaint in Revolutionary times. When soldiers visited military hospitals during the war, one of the reasons for visiting the medical staff was sore eyes.
John McAllister Sr. is thought to have started one of America’s first optical shops in Philadelphia in 1799. McAllister imported all his eyeglasses until a trade embargo with Great Britain brought about by the War of 1812 forced him to begin making his own frames in 1815. By the 1820s and 1830s there were more than 300 eyeglass retailers in the United States.

Once lenses were invented for nearsightedness and farsightedness, individuals with both vision problems had to carry two pairs of glasses with them. Ever resourceful, Benjamin Franklin found a solution to the problem: He cut two lenses in half, keeping the top lens for distance and the bottom lens for close-up work. His invention didn’t become popular until the 19th century, probably because of the high cost of producing the special glasses.

**True Colors**

Europeans wore a wide variety of colored lenses, including green (first available in 1561), blue (following in 1672), yellow, violet and even pink. The 17th-century diarist Samuel Pepys wore green glasses to help with eyestrain from working with candlelight. Smoky gray glasses were commonplace in 18th-century London.

According to J. William Rosenthal in *Spectacles and Other Vision Aids: A History and Guide to Collecting* (Norman Publishing, 1996), those with cataracts believed colored glasses helped them with their vision. Others believed colored lens protected the eyes. However, someone who wrote under the name “Pythagoras” in the May 23, 1791, issue of *The Federal Gazette of Pennsylvania* refuted the claims for colored lenses: “I have frequently observed, that those persons who are troubled with weak or defective eyes endeavor to remedy the evil by using spectacles with colored glasses.” He argued that colored glass actually damaged the eye by making the pupils constantly readjust between bright light and tinted lenses.

**Glasses for Less**

Glasses were pricey—as much as $200 in the early 1700s, some sources say—because of the materials used, such as silver for the frames. They were purchased primarily by academics and the learned community, as well as by the wealthy. Precursors to modern sunglasses, which were imported to the Colonies from Europe, were also expensive. Some men wore the glasses as a status symbol.

While many men and some women wore glasses for reading, few posed for portraits wearing them. Franklin was one of the exceptions, and there are several paintings of him in glasses, likely his bifocals. French-born Pierre-Etienne Du Ponceau (also known as Peter Stephen Du Ponceau), the former secretary to U.S. Secretary of Foreign Affairs Robert Livingston, wore tinted glasses for an unknown eye condition. In the early 1840s Du Ponceau posed for a daguerreotype by an unidentified Philadelphia photographer. Its ethereal quality is due to the studio’s uneven lighting, which highlighted his forehead and cheeks and the colored lens of his glasses.

As the price of a pair of glasses decreased and became affordable to an increasingly educated middle class, wealthy wearers switched from eyeglasses to the lorgnette, which could hold a single lens or a pair of lenses.
During the early 1900s, millions of immigrants came to the United States searching for a better life. While 12 million of them, mostly from Europe, passed through Ellis Island and entered a path to American citizenship, New York wasn’t the only immigration port. From 1910 to 1940, approximately 500,000 immigrants were processed at the Angel Island Immigration Station, located in San Francisco Bay. Many of those immigrants came from Asian countries, and their experiences entering the United States were distinctive from those of the Europeans arriving on the East Coast.

“Like Ellis Island, the Angel Island Immigration Station was one of the country’s main ports of entry for immigrants in the early 20th century,” says Erika Lee, co-author of Angel Island: Immigrant Gateway to America (Oxford University Press, 2012) and director of the Immigration History Research Center at the University of Minnesota. “But while Angel Island was popularly called the ‘Ellis Island of the West,’ it was very different from its counterpart in New York.”

For instance, while Ellis Island enforced laws that restricted, but did not exclude, European immigrants, the Angel Island Immigration Station was originally set up to enforce the laws that excluded immigrants from certain countries. Ninety-eight percent of immigrants who came to Ellis Island were admitted to the country, but “a smaller percentage was admitted at Angel Island, and many of these were successful only after long and expensive legal battles,” Lee says.

“While the story of Ellis Island and its neighboring Statue of Liberty has been one of a country welcoming newcomers, mostly from Europe, the story of Angel Island Immigration Station and other West Coast immigration ports of entry has not been one that immigrants have wanted to share,” says Kathy Turner, interim executive director of the Angel...
Clockwise from left: A circa-1915 panoramic photograph of the Angel Island Immigration Station, in San Francisco Bay
• Carvings of Chinese poetry found on the walls of Angel Island
• Chinese boys awaiting medical examinations at Angel Island circa 1910
• The sleeping area in the restored detention barracks
• Leftover luggage at Angel Island
Island Immigration Station Foundation. “Created in effect to enforce the Chinese Exclusion Acts of 1882 [see explanation below] and later laws targeting Asians and Southern and Eastern Europeans, Angel Island served as the ‘Guardian of the Western Gate,’ in the words of one government official, rather than as a welcoming place. For many years, most immigrants did not talk about their experiences on Angel Island because of their confinement, detention and interrogations.”

Defining the Angel Island Immigrants
During the 30 years that the Angel Island Immigration Station operated, immigrants from more than 80 different countries were processed there. While a majority of the immigrants detained were Chinese, many came from other countries and ethnic groups. For a number of years, many women from Japan and Korea were allowed to enter the United States only as “picture brides,” to marry Japanese-American or Korean-American men they had seen only in photographs, Turner says. Angel Island was the gateway to America for many of these Japanese and Korean women.

Others came through Angel Island from India, the Philippines, Mexico and Russia. “And in the late 1930s and 1940, several boatloads of Jewish refugees fleeing Germany and Nazi-occupied Austria also passed through Angel Island,” Turner says.

According to Lee, 300,000 immigrants were detained at Angel Island, including 100,000 Chinese, 85,000 Japanese, 8,000 South Asians, 8,000 Russians and Jews, 1,000 Koreans, 1,000 Filipinos, and 400 Mexicans. Most of the immigrants who came to Angel Island were allowed to enter the United States and did not have to stay on the island very long, but some were detained for weeks, months and even years.

To abide by immigration laws such as the Chinese Exclusion Acts, “Chinese immigrants had to prove their legal status, as merchants or sons and daughters of those born here, and that is why they were detained for such long periods,” Turner says. “Often there were lengthy appeals processes if they were initially denied admission.” Ultimately, 93 percent of Chinese were admitted to the country after their legal battles. During their detention, many of the immigrants housed at Angel Island carved inscriptions into the wooden walls of the barracks, writing poetry to describe their experiences and frustrations. (See page 25 for examples.)

Reviving the Memory of Detainees
After the Angel Island Immigration Station closed in 1940, the stories of the immigrants who entered there were largely forgotten. Angel Island was turned over to the U.S. Army, which housed Japanese prisoners of war there during World War II. In 1954, the site became a state park and a popular spot for hiking, biking and fishing. Gradually, the buildings that were part of the immigration station fell into disrepair and by 1970, they were scheduled to be demolished. That year, park ranger Alexander Weiss toured the old barracks building with a flashlight and noticed Chinese characters carved into the walls under layers of paint. Those hidden Chinese characters were the poems written by desperate detainees. Through the efforts of Weiss and members of the local Chinese-American community, in 1976 the California State Legislature canceled the demolition and provided funds to preserve and restore the former Angel Island Immigration Station.

More About the Chinese Exclusion Acts
“The influx of Asians into the United States, dating from the California Gold Rush, created tension between them and other immigrants. During the 1870s, an economic downturn resulted in serious unemployment problems, and led to outrages against Asian immigrants who would work for low wages. Restrictive immigration laws were passed that allowed entry only to those that had been born in the United States or had husbands or fathers who were citizens. Enforcement of those laws was assigned to the Bureau of Immigration.

“When it opened in 1910, the new detention facility on Angel Island was considered ideal because of its isolation. There were buildings to house and care for detainees, a pier and regular boat service to the mainland. During the next 30 years, this was the point of entry for most of the approximately 175,000 Chinese immigrants who came to the United States. Most of them were detained on Angel Island for as little as two weeks or as much as six months. A few however, were forced to remain on the island for as much as two years.”

— From the California Department of Parks and Recreation website (www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=1309)
The first rediscovered poems were written in Chinese, but inscriptions have been discovered in Japanese, English, Punjabi, Russian, Korean, Spanish, Italian and German as well, Lee says. And the discovery of the inscriptions led to another discovery: Many of the poems had been documented in 1931 and 1932 by Smiley Jann and Tet Yee, two Chinese detainees who copied the poetry as they awaited rulings on their cases.

During the 1970s, local historians and the descendants of Angel Island immigrants began preservation efforts, collecting dozens of oral histories and launching restoration projects. As the stories of Angel Island were uncovered, a new story of U.S. immigration during the early 20th century came to light. While most Americans associate the country’s immigration history with an image of Europeans catching a first glimpse of the Statue of Liberty and its Emma Lazarus inscription (“Give me your tired, your poor,/Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free”), Angel Island tells another story.

“The poems carved into the barrack walls and former detainees’ stories of unjust treatment on Angel Island force us to confront America’s history of immigration restriction,” Lee says.

Commemorating Angel Island’s Past

Because Angel Island represents an important but little-known part of America’s immigration story, many historians have worked to preserve the site. In 1997, the National Park Service declared the Angel Island Immigration Station a National Historic Landmark, and the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation continually works to keep the station’s history alive. The immigrant detention barracks were completely restored in 2009, and the immigration station hospital is currently being restored with federal, state and private funding.

Currently, the station foundation is working closely with Angel Island State Park and the California State Parks to raise funds to renovate and restore the remaining buildings at the immigration station, Turner says. The foundation also holds programs on the island in which people tell the stories of those who passed through the immigration station, including historical recreations based on actual interrogation transcripts. Staff and volunteers are available to guide visitors through the barracks building and to interpret the history of the site.

The foundation has developed Immigrant Voices, a website (www.aiisf.org/immigrant-voices) where people can read about Angel Island and other immigration stories and even contribute their own; almost 90 stories are already online, Turner says. Traveling exhibits sharing the history of Angel Island have been featured at Ellis Island, the National Archives in Washington, D.C., and other locations across the country.

“The Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation remains extremely active in preserving the history of Angel Island and Pacific Coast immigration as well as making it relevant to today’s communities,” Lee says.

Nancy Mann Jackson wrote about book publishing in early America for the September/October issue.

To read more about Ellis Island, see American Spirit’s November/December 2006 issue.
A HOUSE DIVIDED

While Ben Franklin pursued American independence, his son William fought for British liberty.

BOTH CIVIL WAR AND REBELLION, the Revolution drove deep divisions between friends, neighbors and families. One of the most visible and notorious divides sundered Benjamin Franklin and his only son, William, the last royal governor of the New Jersey Colony.

The split developed gradually between two strong-willed men who for many years were devoted to each other, aided each other in business and politics, and shared much in the way of personality, determination and ambition.  

By Bill Hudgins
As the elder Franklin increasingly rejected reconciliation with Great Britain and embraced the idea of independence, his son remained steadfastly loyal to the Crown. When the break came, Ben became instrumental in declaring independence, securing crucial foreign support for the new nation and negotiating an extremely favorable peace treaty with Great Britain.

William, on the other hand, was driven out of office, arrested and spent the first two years of the war as a rebel prisoner. Once freed and sent to British-held New York City, William spent the rest of the war organizing and facilitating bloody Loyalist raids against Patriots in New Jersey and Connecticut.

After the war, William made overtures to renew a relationship, but his father spurned them. Ben declared his son had betrayed not only his country but also his father, and there could be no rapprochement. It was a story told many times in the Revolution.

A Team

Born sometime in 1731 in Philadelphia, William Franklin was the illegitimate son of Ben Franklin and a woman whose name was never revealed. Ben acknowledged paternity, and he and his wife, Deborah, raised the boy, writes Sheila L. Skemp in William Franklin, Son of a Patriot, Servant of a King (Oxford University Press, 1990).

Though Deborah was cold to the boy, Ben provided an excellent education for William. He indulged his son’s desire for military training and adventure and, when the youth seemed to be unsure of a career, arranged for William to study law.

As a member of the Pennsylvania Assembly, Ben wangled a clerk’s job for William. When he was named co-deputy postmaster general for North America, Ben appointed William as Philadelphia’s postmaster.

William cared greatly for his father and enjoyed what time the always-busy Ben could spend with him. William even assisted his father’s scientific pursuits, including the famous kite experiment.

In 1757, Ben was sent to England to try to secure a change to Pennsylvania’s Colonial charter. William went along as his secretary and assistant, and he also studied law at London’s Inns of Court while Ben conducted business.

Both Franklins loved London—the society, the countryside, the culture, the intellectual stimulation—and they enjoyed each other’s company. Both made a number of important friends and acquaintances in society, the arts and sciences, and politics. When Ben fell ill, William deftly pursued the mission while his father recovered.

Around 1759–1760, William fathered an illegitimate son, who was named William Temple Franklin. Like Ben, William acknowledged paternity, and Temple was cared for by foster parents. Meanwhile, William fell in love with an Englishwoman, Elizabeth Downes, whom he married in 1762.

During this period, William had been working their mutual network of acquaintances to land a government job. When the Board of Trade, which oversaw the Colonies’ operations, decided to replace the royal governor of New Jersey in 1762, William secured the appointment.

The Long Decline

William and Elizabeth moved to New Jersey in early 1763, and he eagerly assumed his new post, determined to repair relations with the Colonial Assembly. Meanwhile, Ben had returned home. He was re-elected to the Pennsylvania Assembly and plunged into his usual dizzying array of projects.

This period marked the high point of the Franklins’ adult relationship. They were devoted to each other and shared a common political philosophy and outlook. They believed in a British America, and thought that Colonial rule was the best possible system. Although there were certainly differences and friction between London and America, to the Franklins these were normal, natural and negotiable, Skemp writes.

But this was about to change. Britain’s victory in the French and Indian War plunged the country deep into debt. Parliament, the Board of Trade and the king’s Privy Council believed it only fair that the Colonies help defray expenses.
In 1764, Parliament passed the Sugar Act, which raised the duty on a number of imports and imposed new customs and trade regulations. Parliament followed this with the infamous Stamp Act of 1765. The colonists protested that these were unconstitutional taxes under British law because they had no representation in Parliament.

Skemp writes that while both Franklins were unhappy about the acts, they went through channels to seek their repeal—William as governor and Ben as a Colonial agent in London. Neither man was prepared for the protests and boycotts that erupted in the Colonies.

The Stamp Act was repealed in the spring of 1766, but it left a legacy of bitterness and distrust on both sides of the Atlantic. Over the next few years, Parliament passed more acts that enraged the Colonies, fueled organized resistance and sparked talk of rebellion and even independence.

"A thorough government man," as Ben once called him, William tried to persuade his superiors in London to repeal these laws, while at the same time attempting to carry out his duties. Having sworn an oath as governor, he felt obliged to uphold it. And though William grew increasingly unhappy with London, he continued to believe the problems could be worked out, perhaps with a change of ministers.

Ben’s outlook, however, shifted from conciliation and negotiation to opposition. He slowly lost faith that the mother country had America’s best interests at heart, since the government seemed determined to deny Americans their rights as British citizens.

Letters between father and son reflect their growing differences. William’s experiences in the Pennsylvania and New Jersey legislatures convinced him that Americans were not fit to rule themselves, that their legislatures were steeped in self-interest and jealous of any potential advantage another might accrue.

William’s experiences in the Pennsylvania and New Jersey legislatures convinced him that Americans were not fit to rule themselves, that their legislatures were steeped in self-interest and jealous of any potential advantage another might accrue.

In June 1774, William began collecting and sending information about dissidents and activities to London. Collaborating with Joseph Galloway, a delegate to the Continental Congress who was a longtime friend and political ally, William also passed along information about the secret activities of the Congress.

The Path to Prison

On January 6, 1776, one of William’s letters to London was intercepted by rebel militia and forwarded to the Continental Congress. The militia leader ordered William arrested, but after promising not to flee, he was allowed to remain at home.

Throughout the spring, the Congress wrestled with the question of what to do about William, who remained nominally in charge of New Jersey, although in reality by then he had little sway. When he tried to convene the assembly in June, hoping to convince it to oppose a break with England, the Continental Congress declared him “in direct contempt and violation of the resolve of the Continental Congress and an enemy to the liberties of this country.”

On June 19, 1776, Congress sent officers to arrest William at his home in Perth Amboy, N.J., and escort him to the seat of the rebel-controlled provincial assembly in Burlington, Vt. After what was essentially a show trial, during which William refused either to answer questions or offer a defense, the provincial government voted to exile him from New Jersey.

In the meantime, William attempted unsuccessfully to smuggle out letters stating his case to a friendly newspaper. He hoped that if the people heard his side, they would rise up and free him.

Skemp notes that William steadfastly believed most Americans did not want to break with Great Britain, but were afraid to oppose the handful of dangerous radicals who were unlawfully seizing power throughout the Colonies.

At root, William saw the issue as a choice between “British liberty” and “Independent Republican tyranny.” Remaining a part of the British empire would actually preserve liberty and provide stability in the long run. Revolution, however, would only lead to “democratical tyranny,” which he called “the worst and most debasing of all Tyrannies.”

On June 26, William and his escort left for Hartford, Conn. They arrived, ironically, on July 4, almost as his father and the other delegates to the Continental Congress approved the Declaration of Independence.

As a gentleman and former high-ranking official—as well as the son of one of America’s most powerful Patriots—William was entitled to better treatment than the average prisoner. All he had to do was sign a document called a parole,
promising he would not escape or attempt to aid the British. After some resistance, William gave in and signed.

Within a short time, though, William was accused of violating his parole by secretly communicating with the British in New York and also by distributing British “protections” to Loyalist sympathizers, according to Willard Sterne Randall in *A Little Revenge: Benjamin Franklin and His Son* (Little, Brown and Company, 1984). These documents attested to their bearers’ pro-Crown sympathies and granted them protection in case British troops seized the area.

After a surprisingly modern “sting” operation in January 1777 produced proof of his actions, Congress instructed Connecticut Governor Jonathan Trumbull to put William in solitary confinement.

On May 2, 1777, officers took William to jail in Litchfield, Conn., where he spent the next eight months in a tiny second-floor room with no furniture, bed or toilet. Reeking straw covered the floor. A single barred and closed window provided the only light. He was forbidden to speak to anyone except the sheriff and denied writing materials. During this time his wife, Elizabeth, who had fled to New York City after his arrest, became gravely ill. William asked permission to visit her but the Continental Congress refused, citing his parole violations. She died in May 1777 while he was in prison.

Elizabeth’s death seemed to break William’s spirit. He grew ill, lost weight and seemed to believe his own death was near. He asked to be moved to a quieter place where he could put his affairs in order, and, if allowed writing materials, agreed to have all documents searched and reviewed. Trumbull approved and transferred him to a house in East Windsor.

Finally, in September 1778, William learned he was to be freed as part of a prisoner exchange. In late October he was sent to New York, the center of British operations in America and a longtime Loyalist stronghold.

To the dismay of many of his friends, Ben had done nothing to ameliorate his son’s situation, and had given only a little assistance to Elizabeth. But Ben was determined to shield Temple from the Loyalist leanings of his father. Ben assumed responsibility for his grandson and, when Congress sent him to France to negotiate aid, he took the boy with him.

**Freedom for Some, Exile for Others**

William arrived in New York on November 1, 1778, after more than two years in custody. The city was crammed with Loyalist refugees who, like William, were frustrated with the slow pace of the war and were spoiling for revenge.

Many had joined the official Provincial Corps, which was commanded by New York Royal Governor William Tryon and was supposed to fight alongside the British army. But British Commander in Chief Sir Henry Clinton seldom deployed this potentially useful force. Instead, he ordered them to cut wood and provide other menial services for the British regulars.
Thirsting for revenge against the Patriots, William Franklin believed Clinton could use his considerable military, administrative and political talent to mobilize the restive Loyalists. Within a month after arriving in New York City, he had formed the Refugee Club, which served as an informal rally point for Loyalists to trade information and plot actions against rebel targets.

William also prepared and submitted to Clinton an ambitious scheme for a Board of Loyal Refugees, later called the Board of Associated Loyalists. With William as its rear-echelon commander, this organized guerilla force would raid rebel shipping and coastal towns, rescue imprisoned Loyalists and avenge Patriot outrages.

William was aided in his quest by Tryon, who was both a royal governor and a British army officer with considerable influence.

“Tryon found a natural relationship with Clinton, though Tryon at times had to rein him in,” says Thomas B. Allen, author of *Tories: Fighting for the King in America’s First Civil War* (2010, HarperCollins). “Franklin, who was only a wild-eyed ex-governor, needed to get Clinton’s blessing on his plans and eventually secured it.”

Clinton ignored William’s plan for almost two years. The general believed the Loyalists were overly bloodthirsty, and that their desire for revenge would enrage Americans even further against British troops. Like other British officers, he also looked down on the Loyalists and did not fully trust them. “The British did not have much faith in guerrilla groups; it was not something gentlemen did,” Allen says.

While Clinton stalled, William became the unofficial leader and spokesman for the Loyalists, whose numbers grew as refugees streamed into the city. He worked to better their situation and also to equip unofficial raiders for missions in New Jersey and elsewhere. In 1780, an exasperated William went over Clinton’s head and submitted his plan to London, where Clinton’s blessing on his plans and even- tually secured it.

The Huddy Affair

While the British army scored successes in early 1781, William’s Board of Associated Loyalists bedeviled coastal towns in Connecticut and New Jersey, raiding and plundering villages and whenever possible, exacting revenge, Allen says.

Then came the British Army’s debacle at Yorktown in September 1781. The British collapse was bad enough, but in the terms of surrender, General Cornwallis had agreed to Washington’s demands that Loyalist combatants would not be treated as prisoners of war, but as traitors. Furious, William tried unsuccessfully to persuade Clinton to issue a statement repudiating this provision, hoping that would protect other Loyalists from similar treatment.

The defeat at Yorktown caused the fall of the pro-war British ministry. Eager for peace, the new government replaced Clinton with Sir Guy Carleton, who was ordered to avoid combat while the sides negotiated a peace treaty. William and other Loyalists felt betrayed again. They decided to try to derail the peace talks by continuing their raids, Skemp writes.

In March of 1782, the board authorized a raid on a rebel stronghold at Toms River, N.J. The Loyalists overpowered rebel guards and burned the town. Among the prisoners was a well-known militia leader, Captain Joshua Huddy.

The next day, in an unrelated skirmish, a Patriot militia captured a Loyalist named Phillip White, who several years earlier was part of a raiding party and killed a man and wounded his son. The son recovered and, by chance, happened to be with the militia that captured White, who never reached prison.

Enraged, the Loyalists holding Huddy decided to retaliate, even though he had nothing to do with White’s death. Details of William’s role in the plot are not clear, but Huddy was taken by ship to Sandy Hook, N.J., and hanged with a note pinned to his chest reading “Up goes Huddy for Phillip White.”

The incident cast a shadow over the peace talks. For William, it was the end. Embittered, impoverished and still furious over what he saw as criminal mismanagement of the war and the subsequent cowardice of the ministry and Parliament, he nevertheless had given up.

In August 1782 he left America for England, where he tried to secure rights and protection for Loyalist combatants. However, Ben Franklin was one of the peace negotiators and stridently opposed leniency. William later worked with refugees to help them secure pensions and other British government support for their sacrifices.

Father and son never reconciled. They saw each other only once more, when Ben and Temple stopped in Southampton en route home from the peace negotiations. Ben all but disinherit ed William. “The part he acted against me in the late War, which is of public Notoriety, will account for my leaving him no more of an Estate he endeavored to deprive me of,” Ben Franklin wrote in his will.

In 1788 William married again, to Mary D’Evelyn, from whom he had rented rooms. Temple went to England and lived a wastrel’s life. He, too, fathered an illegitimate child, a daughter named Ellen, before moving to Paris. William raised Ellen, and when he died in 1814 at age 82, he left his small estate to her. William is buried in St. Pancras churchyard in the London borough of Camden.

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Bill Hudgins delved into the dramatic history of the Constitution for the September/October issue.

“I place him among the diehards who still believed that the British would win when, back in London, British realists believed otherwise.”

— Thomas B. Allen in *Tories: Fighting for the King in America’s First Civil War*
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Shaping the Role of First Lady

Dolley Payne Madison

During Dolley Madison’s event-filled lifetime, she experienced firsthand the Revolution, the difficult early years of the new nation and the onset of the national two-party political system. She had an unusual vantage point during the War of 1812, risking capture by the British to save government documents and the cherished Gilbert Stuart portrait of George Washington. She became an influential first lady, charming Washington, D.C., leaders and winning over foes of her husband James Madison’s administration.

By Daniel S. Marrone
Dolley’s personal life behind the glittering political scene is less known. Her life was marked by tragedy, losing multiple family members to alcoholism, epidemics, accidents at sea and even one to murder. Her first husband died when she was 25, and she outlived her second husband, Madison, by 13 years. Financial problems also plagued her, compounded by the spendthrift choices of her only surviving son, John Payne Todd, who squandered what little wealth she possessed during her later years. Yet her family tragedies and financial struggles were tempered by the universal respect and appreciation showered on her by an adoring public. Not only was she a beloved early American figure during her lifetime, but her influence also has been felt long after her death.

Quaker Roots

Dolley’s mother, Mary Coles, was of Irish heritage with Scottish and Welsh ties. Her father, John Payne, was of English stock. Her parents were married in Hanover County, Va., in 1761.

In 1765, the Payne family was admitted into the Quaker Cedar Creek Monthly Meeting located in the northeastern part of Virginia. By the end of that year, John and Mary Payne, along with their 3-year old son, Walter, moved south to the New Garden Quaker settlement in the Piedmont area of North Carolina. While in North Carolina, Dolley’s second older brother, William Temple Payne, was born in 1766. Dolley was born two years later, on May 20, 1768. Although her father farmed while in Virginia, he chose to be classified as a merchant within the North Carolina Quaker community. Unsuccessful at business, he faced mounting debts and was forced to bring his family back to Virginia. By the spring of 1769, the PAYNEs were reunited with their extended family and the Cedar Creek Quakers.

When the Revolution broke out, Payne, as a Quaker, was forbidden to take up arms. The Quakers professed neutrality in the conflict, but this didn’t stop Payne’s Southern neighbors from labeling him and his sect as pro-Loyalist. Adding to difficulties with his neighbors were Payne’s strong views against the institution of slavery, an anathema to fundamental Quaker beliefs. He began freeing his slaves in 1778. By 1783, all of the Payne family slaves were free, and the family moved to Philadelphia.

First Marriage and Family Tragedy

Philadelphia was teeming with politicians, and Dolley soon had many admirers. However, in 1788, her father began press- ing Dolley to marry fellow Quaker John Todd Jr., an attorney. Struggling to eke out a living manufacturing and selling laundry starch, Payne hoped that making Todd a financial partner would revive his business. Despite the cash infusion Todd made, the enterprise went bankrupt in 1789. Unable to pay his creditors, Payne was disowned by the Quaker community. Though Todd lost his investment in the Payne family business, he and Dolley were married on January 7, 1790. In 1792, the couple had their first child, John Payne Todd. On October 24 of that year, Dolley’s father, who had retreated to his bed in deep depression, died.

In July 1793, their second child, William Temple Todd, was born. By August, Philadelphia once again became the epicenter of recurring yellow fever epidemics. Both of Dolley’s in-laws died of the disease. Then on October 24, 1793, exactly one year after the death of her father, her husband and infant both died of yellow fever. Family tragedies mounted. Within the next 15 months, two of Dolley’s brothers died—William Temple Payne was lost at sea, and Isaac Payne was shot to death. Dolley’s oldest brother, Walter Payne, had been lost at sea in early 1785.

The Payne family faced anxious creditors from the failed business venture. To help pay these debts, Dolley’s mother turned the ground floor of their home into a boardinghouse beginning in 1791. One of the boarders was Revolutionary War hero Colonel Aaron Burr, a senator from New York state. Burr, a practicing attorney, offered his help as legal advisor to Dolley, who had to fight for her late husband’s estate and even for custody of her surviving son. Burr also introduced Dolley to his colleague, James Madison, the intellectual force behind the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights.
Opposites Attract

At first glance, the couple seemed to be polar opposites. Dolley was exuberant, gregarious and vivacious; James, 17 years her senior, was a quiet, shy and reflective intellectual. Dolley dressed colorfully and in the latest styles; James primarily wore conservative black suits. Even without her trademark feather-plumed turbans, Dolley stood several inches taller than the diminutive, often sickly, bookworm. As Dolley pondered her future and that of her nearly 2-year-old son, she sought the marital advice of Martha Washington. That summer, Martha told Dolley that Madison would make a “good husband,” and it was “all the better for he being much older.”

James and Dolley married on September 15, 1794, at Harewood House, the Virginia home of George Washington’s nephew, George Steptoe Washington (who was wed to Dolley’s younger sister, Lucy). Madison most likely chose this particular day because his parents were also married on September 15—exactly 45 years earlier. Dolley wrote to her friend, Eliza Collins Lee, the day of her wedding, signing the letter: “Dolley Payne Todd—Evening—Dolley Madison! Alass!” From indications in their correspondence, the Madisons had an affectionate partnership.

Since she married a non-Quaker, the Quaker community “read out,” or disowned, Dolley. In 1797, James Madison’s congressional term came to an end. The couple retired to their peaceful, sprawling Virginia plantation called Montpelier. Madison’s mentor and close friend, Thomas Jefferson, would interrupt the Madison family’s tranquil life at Montpelier in 1801. Right after his inauguration, Jefferson asked James Madison to serve as his secretary of state, and Madison was sworn in on May 2, 1801. Dolley would soon have responsibilities of her own.

A Gifted Hostess

Jefferson began to have formal dinners and gatherings to which invited guests were allowed to bring their wives. According to protocol, women could not attend these gatherings unless a hostess was present. As Jefferson was a widower, the role of hostess fell to his adult daughter, Martha “Polly” Jefferson Randolph. Although at times Polly did fill in as hostess, it was Dolley who, on May 27, was formally asked via presidential request to serve this vital role. While the position of hostess was unofficial, the role was substantial. Dolley, with her combination of beauty, ebullient personality and gentle humor, made a superb hostess. She had a keen ability to remember names, events and personal details about her guests. Her respectful way with people mitigated potentially uncomfortable, embarrassing situations. She also had a calming, conflict-deflecting effect on individuals who may have been hostile—for one reason or another—toward the Jefferson Administration.

Her duties as U.S. hostess were put on hold in 1805 when her knee became inflamed. She feared amputation, but after convalescing for several weeks in Philadelphia, the ulcer on her knee healed, and she was able to resume her role as hostess. Though her knee ailment improved, she began to have problems with her eyes, and her wayward son, Payne Todd, also troubled her. Between 1806 and 1808, Dolley faced the loss of two nieces, her mother and her 26-year-old sister, Mary Coles Payne Jackson. While grieving the deaths of her family members, Dolley managed to maintain her ever-pleasant personality as hostess.

James Madison won the presidency in 1808 by a wide margin. After serving as hostess for the eight years of the Jefferson presidency, Dolley would serve again in this important capacity for the two terms of her husband’s presidency. During these 16 years, she essentially created the modern ideal of first lady. Although Martha Washington and Abigail Adams were accomplished and distinctive individuals, it was Dolley who arguably had the greater impact on national politics. Each Wednesday, she charmed and swayed key congressional and diplomatic decision makers at her innovative executive mansion gatherings, at which she served a new culinary invention called ice cream. Her relaxed soirees were so successful that they topped the list of Washington, D.C., social events. With throngs of attendees—including politicians, diplomats and local residents—crammed into the home of the president, Dolley’s gatherings earned the sobriquet, “squeezes.” Her abilities to influence were noticed, with newspapers worldwide began referring to her as “Lady Presidentress,” or simply “The Presidentress.”

Wartime Role

James Madison’s chief executive predecessors attempted to steer away from war with Great Britain and France, the two great superpowers at the beginning of the 19th century. Measures such as the Jay Treaty during the Washington
Administration and the Embargo Act of December 1807 during the Jefferson Administration were instituted to avoid conflict with these highly militarized countries. However, disputes, especially with Great Britain, persisted. The British continued to occupy territory they agreed to relinquish in the 1783 Treaty of Paris that ended the Revolutionary War. The Royal Navy, short the number of sailors required to fight the Napoleonic Wars, was impressing American seamen into service by the thousands. The British also were stirring up trouble with American Indian tribes in many regions along and within U.S. borders. Congress felt compelled to act, passing a declaration of war on Great Britain on June 1, 1812.

For most of the first years of the War of 1812, the Americans were defeated on land, but the newly formed U.S. Navy achieved a stunning string of victories. The Americans, however, overreached on April 27, 1813, when a poorly led and coordinated invasion of the Canadian city of York resulted in an unmitigated disaster. In addition to large numbers of casualties, there was widespread looting by Americans.

Less than 16 months later the British got their revenge for the York raid. In August 1814, the Royal Navy sailed up the Patuxent River and landed troops on the shores of Maryland. The British soundly defeated the Americans who were fleeing the scene in a rout known as the Battle of Bladensburg. On August 24, 1814, Dolley received an urgent message warning her to flee the executive mansion or risk being captured as a prisoner of war. Before she fled for safety in Virginia, however, she was determined to save as many treasures housed at the mansion as possible. First among these valuables was the life-sized portrait of George Washington painted by Gilbert Stuart in 1796. Dolley didn’t want the British to use the iconic image of George Washington for propaganda purposes, but transporting it proved difficult. As the painting, also known as the “Landsdowne Portrait,” was huge and heavy, its wooden frame was screwed directly into the wall. Since there wasn’t enough time to unscrew the frame, the first lady ordered the frame to be broken apart with an ax, thereby freeing the canvas.

Dolley spared from confiscation piles of official cabinet papers detailing vital information that could have been used by the British against American interests. She also retrieved White House silverware and red velvet drapes designed by Benjamin Henry Latrobe, ordering all these valuables sent to the Bank of Maryland. She barely escaped before the British torched the White House and many of the other official buildings in the capital city.

While the much-damaged executive mansion was being repaired and repainted—and during which time the building began to be called the “White House”—the Madisons moved into the Octagon House on September 8, 1814. On November 2, Dolley reinstituted her weekly gatherings that were open to the public, and they continued throughout the war. President Madison signed the Treaty of Ghent at the Octagon House on February 16, 1815. The War of 1812 ended with no readily apparent benefits derived by the Americans—no Canadian territory was conquered, no British armada was sunk and the treaty didn’t address the Royal Navy’s impressment of American seamen—but it did prove that America was indeed free and independent from British rule.

The first couple spent the summer of 1815 at their Montpelier home. Later that year, they would return to Washington and take up residence at the Seven Buildings located at 1901 Pennsylvania Avenue. Here they would live until the end of Madison’s term of office on March 4, 1817.

Back to Montpelier

After James Monroe was inaugurated as the fifth president, the Madisons spent weeks attending inaugural celebrations before returning to Montpelier. For the former president, returning home was a well-earned respite after years of government service. For Dolley, the change presented mixed emotions. Although she spent many years on farms in her youth, the rural tranquility necessitated a significant lifestyle adjustment. In spite of frequent guests to Montpelier, Dolley missed holding her weekly D.C. soirees.

And there were continual problems with her son. Payne Todd’s alcoholism, errant behavior and gambling debts were escalating beyond control. Between 1813 and 1836, James Madison paid $30,000 to cover his debts. In spite of this
substantial financial assistance, Payne was twice forced into debtors’ prison.

Funds wasted covering Payne’s debts combined with Montpelier’s substantial operating costs presented daunting financial burdens. Health issues also were problematic. Never robust, Madison’s remaining vitality began to wane in 1834 when an advanced case of rheumatism prevented him from walking and forced him to spend his last years in bed. With Dolley near, James Madison died on June 28, 1836, at 85. Dolley, now age 68, was once again a widow.

Dolley’s Legacy

To pay off mounting debts, Dolley began selling parts of the estate in 1837, though she didn’t generate enough to fully pay creditors. Adding to her troubles was her misguided decision to leave the incompetent Payne in charge of the estate when she moved back to Washington in 1837. Congress eased her money woes in 1837 and then again 1848 when it purchased James Madison’s papers, with a trust fund set up and accessible only by Dolley’s friends. The restriction was made to avoid seizure by Payne’s creditors.

Dolley and Anna Coles Payne, the daughter of her younger brother John Coles Payne, lived together from late 1837 until Dolley’s death in 1849. Dolley and her niece moved back and forth between Montpelier and Washington until 1844, when she was forced to sell all of Montpelier to Richmond merchant Henry Wood Moncure to pay off outstanding debts. She and Anna then lived in the Richard Cutts House located within walking distance of the White House. Dolley continued to attend many official functions in the nation’s capital.

With Anna by her side, Dolley died on July 12, 1849, and was honored with what was thought to be the largest state funeral to date. First buried in Congressional Cemetery, her remains were later transported to Montpelier and now rest next to her husband’s in the Madison Family Cemetery.

By all accounts, Dolley Payne Madison was a notable force in American politics. Her influence is best summed up by a quote from South Carolina Governor Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, Federalist Party candidate for president in 1808: “I was beaten by Mr. and Mrs. Madison. I might have had a better chance had I faced Mr. Madison alone.”

The following references were consulted in writing this article: Richard N. Cote, Strength and Honor: The Life of Dolley Madison; Hugh Howard, Mr. and Mrs. Madison’s War: The First Couple and the Second War for Independence; and Holly C. Shulman, Dolley Madison’s Life and Times.

Dr. Daniel S. Marrone is a Distinguished Service Professor at Farmingdale State College of the State University of New York. In 2011, Dr. Marrone received the SUNY Chancellor’s Award for Scholarship and Creative Activities.
Since the 1660s, only two parties have held ownership of the plot of land in Windsor, Conn., occupied by the Oliver Ellsworth Homestead: the Ellsworth family and the Connecticut Daughters of the American Revolution (CTDAR). The stability provided by this short chain of ownership has allowed the restored, circa-1781 house to serve as a faithful representation of the life of the family that lived there for so long.

During his career as a lawyer and statesman, Oliver Ellsworth represented Connecticut in the Continental Congress, the Constitutional Convention and the U.S. Senate, drafted the Judiciary Act of 1789, served as the third Chief Justice of the United States, and negotiated a key compromise as Minister Plenipotentiary to France. Although his duties often required him to be away from home, he never encountered a place he liked better.

“I have visited several countries and I like my own the best,” Ellsworth said. “I have been in all the States of the Union, and Connecticut is the best State. Windsor is the pleasantest town in the State, and I have the pleasantest place in the town of Windsor. I am content—perfectly content to die on the banks of the Connecticut River.” Two hundred five years after his death, Ellsworth’s beloved home endures as a monument to his life and work, as do the foundational documents of our national government which he helped to create.

Acting Out the Grand Plan

Oliver Ellsworth was born in Windsor on April 29, 1745. His parents, David and Jemima Leavitt Ellsworth, envisioned their second son as a minister, but after being dismissed from Yale and later graduating from Princeton, Ellsworth ultimately passed on a theological career to study law. He was admitted to the bar in 1771, but in his early years as a lawyer most of his income came from farming. On December 10, 1772, Ellsworth married Abigail Wolcott. Marrying into Abigail’s politically influential family helped Ellsworth achieve a position of significance within the state, William R. Casto writes in Oliver Ellsworth and the Creation of the Federal Republic, published in 1997.

Ellsworth’s career in public service began in the Connecticut General Assembly in 1773, followed by an appointment as a justice of the peace and, early in the Revolutionary War, a position on the Committee of the Pay Table, a job that involved a lot of travel and detail but little prestige. Soon he was rewarded...
with a more celebrated appointment: delegate to the Continental Congress, in which he served from 1777–1783. After the Revolution Ellsworth became a state judge.

As a politician, Ellsworth was a Federalist who sympathized with commercial interests and the Calvinist church, which was powerful in Connecticut. He was also known for his ability to compromise. Casto attributes this gift to Ellsworth’s Calvinist beliefs, which emphasized predestination and an all-powerful God. “The idea that God has minutely predesigned human history and that even evilness is part of God’s righteous plan provides a powerful justification for political compromise,” Casto writes. “An interim compromise with evil would be acceptable as long as Ellsworth had faith in the general direction of politics.”

Ellsworth put his aptitude for compromise to use in 1787 as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention. In Philadelphia, he served on the five-man committee that drafted the Constitution. He advocated for the adoption of the Great Compromise, also known as the Connecticut Compromise, which resolved a disagreement between large states and small states about congressional representation. For what in their view was the greater good—the creation of the Constitution—Ellsworth and the Connecticut delegation also supported the Southern states’ demand that the Constitution allow the importation of slaves. Although Ellsworth left the convention before signing the Constitution, he campaigned strongly for its ratification in Connecticut.

The new government convened in 1789 with Ellsworth as one of Connecticut’s first U.S. senators. One of his many committee assignments was to chair a Grand Committee that drafted the bill that became the Judiciary Act of 1789. Ellsworth believed the nation needed a strong federal court system with a network of circuit courts, but many, recalling the recent fight for freedom from a powerful absentee government, resisted the idea. Interconnected issues such as national security, federal revenue and indebtedness to Britain further complicated the task. Despite these obstacles, the bill passed convincingly.

In March 1796 Ellsworth assumed the highest office in the judicial system he helped create when the Senate confirmed his appointment by President George Washington to the position of Chief Justice. Ellsworth’s health faltered during the next several years as he suffered from gout and attacks of sporadic, intense pain. Nevertheless, he accepted President John Adams’ request to take part in a diplomatic mission to repair relations with France, which had been damaged by a disastrous earlier diplomatic visit and the Quasi War between the two nations. (Washington and Adams each visited the Ellsworth...
Homestead during their presidential terms.) The envoy arrived in Paris in March 1800 and succeeded in negotiating peace, although some Americans objected to the forfeiture of the $20 million owed by France.

By 1800 the Federalists’ power was declining as that of the Republicans increased. The shift led Ellsworth to resign from national office. He continued to serve at the state level, however, both in the legislature and the Supreme Court of Connecticut, even as he battled chronic illness. Ellsworth died at his home on November 28, 1807.

Abigail Ellsworth had nine children, but little is known about her day-to-day life. At some point, the CTDAR hopes to fill this gap in the Ellsworth family record. It’s clear that Oliver was gone much of the time, so Abigail’s responsibilities must have been numerous.

Two of the Ellsworths’ children died before age 2, and Oliver Ellsworth Jr., who accompanied his father on his mission to France, lived only to age 24. (At the time of his death he was believed to be working on his father’s memoirs. The project was never completed.) William Wolcott Ellsworth, who had a twin brother, Henry Leavitt Ellsworth, served in the U.S. House of Representatives and also as governor of Connecticut. Daughters Abigail, Frances and Delia all married men from Connecticut. Martin Ellsworth and his wife, Sophia, whose portraits now hang in the second-floor hallway, inherited the house after Abigail died on August 4, 1818.

**Becoming a Historic House Museum**

Various members of the Ellsworth family lived in the home until the early 20th century, when the last Ellsworth in residence died. Because none of the heirs wanted to move in, the home’s future was uncertain. Delia Lyman Porter, one of the 116 surviving heirs who held an interest in the homestead, came up with the idea of donating the property to the CTDAR. She proposed the plan to then-Connecticut State Regent Sarah Thompson Kinney, who expressed her enthusiasm. Before the transfer could occur, Porter had to convince all 115 of her fellow heirs to agree to it. Remarkably, she succeeded. When the Ellsworth heirs deeded the home to CTDAR, they did so on the condition that the home would be open to the public as a museum.

On October 8, 1903, the CTDAR held a grand opening celebration at the homestead. Among the estimated 500 attendees were Governor Abiram Chamberlain, Connecticut DAR members and 50 Ellsworth descendants, including “some who had their first sight of their ancestral homestead simultaneously with its going out of the possession of the Ellsworth family,” according to *The Ellsworth Homestead Past and Present*, published by CTDAR in 1907. Guests enjoyed an informal picnic on the lawn and followed Mrs. Kinney and Chamberlain in signing the original guest book, which is still displayed today.
At the celebration Mrs. Kinney proclaimed, “To the state of Connecticut the Ellsworth Homestead will hereafter be what Mount Vernon is to the nation—a shrine dedicated to all that was noblest and purest in the lives and homes of our forefathers and foremothers.”

It is unusual for a nonprofit organization to receive a historic property directly from the family that originally owned it. “Many historic homes change hands [multiple times] before they come back to be preserved as museums,” says Connecticut State Regent Joyce Cahill. “We’re lucky to have received the home from Ellsworth descendants.” The unique circumstances of the transfer helped CTDAR gain a rich understanding of family history, enhancing its interpretation of the homestead and benefiting visitors and the Ellsworth legacy alike.

Inside the Pleasantest House in Town

The Oliver Ellsworth Homestead was built in 1781 by Samuel Denslow. The Ellsworth Homestead Past and Present describes it as “roomy, plain and dignified.” Ellsworth called his home Elmwood in honor of the 13 elms he planted outside—one for each of the original Colonies. (Maples have since replaced the elms.) In its original form the two-story, clapboard house employed a simple floor plan; each level featured a central hallway with two rooms on each side.

In the early 1790s, Ellsworth hired Windsor architect Thomas Hayden to modify the design. The original staircase was relocated to allow for the widening of the central passage, but the most significant change was the addition of a large drawing room, and a chamber above it, to the southern end of the house. A parlor, breakfast room, keeping room and the kitchen fill the first floor. Decades later, Martin and Sophia Ellsworth added a substantial two-story extension, including a spacious new kitchen, to the back of the house, and a colonnade porch with an overhanging roof to the front. The homestead underwent a complete interior renovation in the late 1980s to early 1990s and an exterior renovation in 1998.

Ellsworth may have preferred his own house to all of the destinations he visited, but that didn’t stop him from bringing home design inspiration he encountered during his travels. “On Oliver’s trip to France he became enamored with French wallpaper,” says Jean Kelsey, Oliver Ellsworth Homestead house chairman. Accordingly, reproduction wallpaper in various patterns adorns many rooms of the house. A pattern called “The Fox and the Hounds” decorates the north parlor, which also contains a coffee urn Napoleon Bonaparte gave to Ellsworth. Peeking through several open first-floor doorways, visitors can take in the succession of patterns in the interconnected rooms.

In comparison, the painted pistachio walls in the drawing room seem sedate, but the space derives presence from its
The homestead contains even more Ellsworth family artifacts than it does wallpaper patterns. A Gobelin tapestry that Napoleon presented to Ellsworth hangs above the drawing room mantel. In 2007, a local middle schooler raised money to fund its cleaning and restoration. Another treasured piece is a desk that belonged to Ellsworth’s grandfather. Housed in the keeping room, a place where Ellsworth might have met with clients, the desk was acquired in 2010. Inside a hidden compartment CTDAR found a note indicating that the desk had been loaned to the homestead for the dedication festivities in 1903.

Upstairs, bright yellow wallpaper in the hallway contrasts dramatically with the muted tones of the paper in Oliver and Abigail’s bedroom, which is the only original wallpaper remaining in the house. Initially it was believed to be French, but a specialist consulted during the late 20th-century restoration advised that it is likely a French reproduction purchased in Boston or Hartford in the 1780s. After conservators authenticated the 18th-century paper, it was carefully removed, transported to a studio for cleaning and repair, then reapplied.

Two additional original bedrooms are interpreted as Sophia’s bedroom and a child’s bedroom, respectively. A narrow, dark hallway between the two leads to the large chamber above the drawing room. Believed to have been used as a bedroom and as a storage area at various times, the space is presented as a multipurpose room containing a canopy bed, a sitting area and two tall chests.

The rooms Martin added to the second floor function as exhibit space. Artifacts on display include a silk purse Napoleon gave to Abigail and pay vouchers Ellsworth signed while serving on the Committee of the Pay Table.

As CTDAR approaches its 110th year as owner of the Oliver Ellsworth Homestead, Daughters, ever mindful of the responsibility entrusted to them by the Ellsworth heirs, try to anticipate the property’s future needs.

“We hope to do a historical structure report study to have professionals identify issues and guide maintenance,” Mrs. Cahill says. “We know we need to seal the roof and we have problems with our windows, but we might learn about things we’re not even aware of.”

In revealing a preference for prioritizing big-picture perspective and collaboration, her statement suggests that it is not just Oliver Ellsworth’s house and family artifacts that have been preserved, but his ideals as well.
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The handing down of an item of value—whether it’s a piece of furniture, some silver or a quilt—creates a chain of ownership called provenance. It’s even more meaningful when that chain is linked between family members. Documenting an item’s provenance not only preserves that piece of history, but it also helps save the treasure for the next generation. It’s easier to discard an undocumented artifact than one with a paper trail.

Your investigation can also unearth new information about your ancestors—and sometimes even new ancestors. Knowing more about their lives adds richness to the provenance.

How does one build such documentation? Here are four steps to take.

1. **Ask Family First.**
   To learn more about family treasures, start by interviewing family members: Who owned it before them? What was it used for? Where was it made? When did it first come into the family? Cast a wide net, asking relatives if they have any information, stories or even old photos of the item or the people who owned it.

2. **Dig Into Documents.**
   While my husband and I were cleaning out our house to move, we rediscovered a set of plates that were given to us after Gramma, my husband’s grandmother, died. We knew they had belonged to her, but not if she was the original owner.

   Web searches, probate documents and newspapers helped pinpoint some details. A quick web search for “Ridgways Renaissance Old Ivory Ware” turned up several links to individuals selling their plates. It appears that this dinnerware was quite common.

   Next, I searched a subscription newspaper database called GenealogyBank.com for “Old Ivory Ware,” which dated the plates to the early 20th century. The search also revealed they were a type of white ware made by the Republic Stamping and Enameling Company of Canton, Ohio. They were sold in department stores for between 50 cents and $8.50, depending on the design.

   Now that I had an approximate date, I consulted family records to determine who could have owned the plates, based on when they lived and additional information about their lives. The search suggested that Gramma’s parents originally owned the plates.

   That’s a lot of information for a single set of plates. And since they were everyday items, it’s unlikely that they were ever specifically mentioned in a will.

   However, that’s not usually the case for larger items. Consider the case of Sibilia Appel, who died in 1853, having outlived her husband and her children. She had $262.98 in cash, as well as personal property, mostly household goods, valued at $358.80. A detailed inventory of her personal property included a table, baskets and crockery ware. Other items on the list—a tea set, springerle cookie molds, eyeglasses, beeswax candles, textiles and wood printing blocks—are still owned by her descendants.
A mention in a will can establish who owned a specific item. Tracing that ownership down through subsequent generations through their probate inventories provides the provenance.

_Estate Inventories: How to Use Them_ by Kenneth L. Smith (Masthof Press, 2000) explains what probate inventories typically include and how to use them to determine who was to inherit what.

Probate records are usually kept in the town or county where someone lived, though the exact location depends on record-keeping practices in the state. The FamilySearch.com research wiki (www.familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Main_Page) can tell you where to start. Enter the state and the topic, such as “Vermont Probate,” to locate information on the history of those records, a list of repositories and online resources. You can also search “probate” in the subscription database Ancestry.com to see if any collections have been digitized.

Sometimes you get lucky and find that a previous family member attached details to a piece of family history.

We have a bed that was passed down with ownership details written on an index card. It contains the names of all the men who have slept in it for seven generations, from eldest son to eldest son. Genealogical research in vital records and census documents will fill in the facts of their lives.

The information you uncover allows you to tell your family’s story through the significant objects your ancestors owned and passed on.

Quilts are particularly good storytellers. Signature quilts include the names of those who worked on the stitching. One of our quilts came with a note, “Made in 1850 by Mrs. Elizabeth Johnson Hotham, mother of Charles T. Hotham.” Researching those fabric creations can tell you not just about your ancestor, but also about the people in her quilting circle.

A fun way to display your findings is to use your research together with other items owned by your ancestor to create a storyboard of pictures and objects. Online sites such as Pinterest allow you to “pin” photos from the web, but you can also create original boards of photos from your own collection.

If the person giving you an item is still alive, try interviewing them with audio and/or video. Then post all your photos and video to a family history website that you can create on Webbly.com. Or add what you’ve learned to an online family tree on a site like Ancestry.com.

Once you have the materials to creatively present the story online or in a scrapbook, all you have to decide is the format and the design.

Inheriting pieces of the past comes with the heady responsibility of ensuring the item’s future. Take one step at a time and put an inheritance plan in place so that there won’t be any mystery or disputes about who will be the item’s future caretaker.


American Spirit | November/December 2012 45
Ethan Allen: Outlaw Patriot Advocate

Ethan Allen, the charismatic and controversial folk leader of Vermont, was born in 1738, in Litchfield, Conn., the first of Joseph and Mary Baker Allen’s eight children. Despite the rural isolation, Joseph Allen could read and write and wanted to pass on those skills to young Ethan, in whom he found a willing pupil with a keen aptitude for learning. Joseph intended for his bright first son to go to Yale College, but when Joseph died unexpectedly in 1755, Ethan had to take on the role of leader of the household.

By Nancy Cooper
Then 17, Allen went to work immediately to provide for his mother, five brothers and two sisters. Though he felt a lifelong disappointment in not attending Yale, he went on to play an inspiring role in the emergence of Vermont, as well as a prominent part in the nation’s early history.

There is no accurate portrait of Allen in any museum, but he was thought to be more than 6 feet tall. Despite a confrontational personality, he easily attracted and retained followers. He was known to be arrogant, belligerent and impulsive, but his flamboyance managed to spur his fellow rebels’ enthusiasm and hunger for freedom.

The Birth of the Green Mountain Boys

Beginning in 1749, the first royal governor of New Hampshire, Benning Wentworth, made land grants to settlers, including Allen’s father, who had acquired titles to land in what is now Vermont. King George III and the Colony of New York insisted they had jurisdiction over these same lands and wanted them back. In 1770, the New York Supreme Court said the grants were invalid. The British began confiscating these lands that were part of the New Hampshire Grants or, if settlers wanted to stay, imposing high taxes.

Allen and his brother Ira moved to western New Hampshire, now Vermont, in 1769. In 1770, Allen became the head of the local militia and quickly moved to defend the landholders’ titles to the New Hampshire Grants, especially since the fees ordered by the court affected his properties. He started the movement for independence from the wealthy landowners of New York, called Yorkers, even before the Revolutionary War erupted. The militia he formed became known as the Green Mountain Boys, whose first mission was to defend their property and take back the disputed lands from New York. From 1771 to 1775 his militia fought several skirmishes with the Yorkers, leading New York’s Royal Governor William Tryon to declare Allen an outlaw and offer a cash reward for anyone who brought him into custody. Allen put the education his father had provided to good use, writing inflammatory pamphlets such as 1774’s “A Brief Narrative of the Proceedings of the Government of New York,” a 200-page treatise arguing against his oppressors.

Taking on Fort Ticonderoga

When the Revolution officially began in April 1775, Allen was ready to lead the Green Mountain Boys to help the colonists. He was one of the first to realize the significance of capturing Fort Ticonderoga, located in a strategic part of Lake Champlain’s shipping route and under British rule since 1763. When the Continental Congress ordered Benedict Arnold to lead an attack against the fort, Allen stepped in as co-commander since the Green Mountain Boys wouldn’t follow Arnold’s orders. Some historians say that Allen sent Noah Phelps into the fort pretending to be a nearby farmer looking for a barber. While his hair was cut, Phelps learned much about the fort, such as what supplies were there, how many troops it held and the location of a gap in the wall.

Armed with such insider information, on May 10, Allen and his 85 men captured control of the fort without any loss of life—before the British troops at the fort even realized they were at war with their Colonies. The Patriots also took charge of a large store of war materials: 100 cannons, hundreds of rifles, 10 tons of musket and cannon balls, a warehouse of boat-building materials, and other supplies that were later used by General George Washington in the battle for Boston. Legend tells us that when a British officer asked Allen under what authority he acted, Allen said, “In the name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress!”

The Patriots’ success in capturing Fort Ticonderoga, in addition to Crown Point, another British fort a few miles north, fueled the fires for independence. Though the victories owed more to the element of surprise than military skill, they gave the rebels confidence that they were a match for the British forces.

The next military venture for Allen did not end in victory, however. In autumn of 1775, he served under General Philip Schuyler’s force in
British Canada and recruited American Indians and other Canadians to lead an attack against Montreal. Allen, frustrated at never receiving a formal commission—and characteristically impatient at the delays in action over the summer—led a risky foray to capture Montreal, which was well-prepared for the impending attack. When a backup force from the Continental Army failed to arrive and some of the Green Mountain Boys deserted him, Allen was easily captured by the British. He spent the next three years in jails as a prisoner of war in England, aboard British ships and in British-held New York City. He was freed in a 1778 prisoner swap, and later wrote about his harrowing experiences in the popular *Narrative of Colonel Ethan Allen’s Captivity*.

**Controversies**

After his release, Allen returned to his land in the New Hampshire Grants, where residents had declared independence in July 1777 and abolished slavery. The Continental Congress didn’t recognize the newly named Republic of Vermont, largely because it didn’t want to anger the powerful state of New York, which objected to Vermonters’ property claims. However, Allen, in addition to his farming and publishing careers, was actively involved in the republic’s politics. Perhaps impatient for acknowledgement of Vermont’s contribution to the American cause—or working to ensure Vermont’s independence for his own ends—Allen and his brother Ira directly negotiated with the British for Vermont to become a British province. Those controversial talks, which took place from 1780 and 1783, were labeled by some as treasonous and weren’t supported by the Vermont Assembly, which continued lobbying for statehood.

Allen also promoted the philosophy of deism, and in 1784, published *Reason the Only Oracle of Man*, which was influenced by his mentor Dr. Thomas Young, as well as the ideas of Thomas Paine. Though the volume and its controversial ideas were not well-received, the book reflected his free-thinking, independent spirit.

Allen had five children with his first wife Mary Brownson, whom he married in 1762. Their union was often strained—Mary was a very religious woman who could barely read and write, while Allen often attacked organized religion and maintained a lifelong love of learning. Mary died of consumption in 1783, and he married Frances “Fanny” Montresor Brush Buchanan, a well-educated widow, in 1784. Their marriage was a happier one, and they had three children together.

Allen died of an unknown cause in February 1789, two years before Vermont became the 14th state. Some believe he suffered a stroke after crossing a frozen lake to retrieve a load of hay for his animals. Another legend says he fell from a sleigh because he had had too much to drink.

Allen’s home in Burlington is now a museum where visitors can trace his steps and see the land that inspired him. (Learn more at [www.ethanallenhomestead.org](http://www.ethanallenhomestead.org).) The inscription on his granite column monument in Burlington’s Green Mount Cemetery reads: “Wielding the pen as well as the sword, he was the sagacious and intrepid defender of the New Hampshire Grants, and Master Spirit of the arduous struggle which resulted in the sovereignty and independence of this state.” Another statue of him stands at the Vermont State Capitol in Burlington, his arm raised in defiance to anyone who would threaten Vermont and its people.

Nancy Cooper wrote about Patriot John Witherspoon for the November/December 2011 issue.
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