

HERE LIES GEORGE WASHINGTON

Uncle John was in Boston for business (picking up his baked beans, no doubt) and just so happened to be staying in a hotel across the street from the graveyard where Paul Revere and John Hancock are buried. That got him wondering—where are the others? That simple question led to an entire section in the book we're calling "Finding the Founding Fathers." Here's the first of six articles.

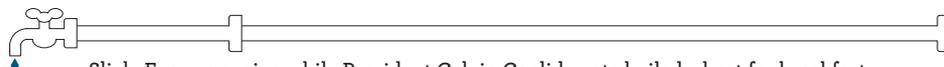
ELDER STATESMEN

America's Founding Fathers were colonial soldiers and politicians who, at great risk to their lives and livelihoods, banded together to protest English rule and the unfair taxes imposed by King George III. They drafted the Declaration of Independence in 1776, then fought and won the Revolutionary War, and wrote the U.S. Constitution in 1787, literally "founding" the United States of America. (During the 19th century, they were simply called the Fathers. In 1916 future president Warren G. Harding added "Founding.") Among the most notable are George Washington, John Adams, John Hancock, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, and Thomas Jefferson.

We've written a lot about these men before, but never with the focus on where they were buried, why they were buried there, and what's transpired at their grave sites since then. During our research, we rediscovered an important fact about history: If you were famous when you were alive—as George Washington was—then a lot will be known about your life. But if you weren't famous, or never wrote anything down, then your entire existence may be reduced to nothing more than a name in the county records, if that. And even if you *were* famous, if your enemies end up writing the history books—as was the case with Alexander Hamilton—then what is known about you will probably be less than if your friends had gotten to tell your story.

In fact, most of the Founding Fathers' contributions weren't widely known until long after they were gone. And if certain details were lacking in the historical records, those details were invented decades later by biographers and tourism bureaus, who were often more concerned with their own agendas than they were with telling the truth. And if darker parts of the Founding Fathers' lives—like the fact that most of them were slave owners—didn't mesh with modern sensibilities, then those parts of their lives were often sanitized.

The main reason we know as much as we do about the Founding Fathers today is because of the heroes—from then and now—who made it their mission to preserve these men's legacies, often in the face of powerful adversaries.



Slick: Every morning while President Calvin Coolidge ate boiled wheat for breakfast, an assistant rubbed Vaseline into his scalp.

GEORGE AND MARTHA

One of the most difficult tasks in Martha Washington's life was deciding where her late husband would be laid to rest. She was torn between interring him at their Mount Vernon estate, which is what he wanted, or handing his body over to the U.S. Congress to put it on permanent display in the city named after him, which is what they wanted.

It was a far cry from 40 years earlier, when Martha Custis, a widowed twentysomething who had inherited her late husband's considerable fortune, married a dashing military captain named George Washington, which suddenly made him one of the richest young men in the colony of Virginia. In 1759 George and Martha (and her two children, Jacky and Patsy) moved into a small house that George's late father had built in the 1730s; it was named Mount Vernon by George's older half-brother Lawrence. George spent four decades expanding the house into a sprawling 21-room mansion just south of Washington, D.C., overlooking the Potomac River (which for most of Washington's life was little more than swampland).

Everything changed in the late 1760s when Washington, who originally wanted to be a farmer, drafted a resolution opposing taxation without representation and took it to George Mason at the Virginia House of Burgesses. There were many factors that led to the American Revolution, but Washington's resolution was one of the catalysts, and it put him on the "national" stage. When the Revolutionary War began in 1775, General Washington was appointed commander-in-chief of the Continental Army. With Martha at his side for much of the war, he helped lead the colonists to victory in 1783. That December, Washington moved back to Mount Vernon, which had barely survived the war. Then he was pulled right back into politics. (When Washington reluctantly decided to run for president, he resigned from the army, to underscore his belief that a nation should be ruled not by the military but by civilians.)

THE OLD CRYPT

"I can truly say I would rather be at Mount Vernon with a friend or two about me, than to be attended at the Seat of Government by the Officers of State and the Representatives of every Power in Europe." Washington wrote that in a letter dated June 15, 1790, but he wasn't able to retire to his beloved estate until he declined the offer to run for a third term as U.S. president in 1797. Washington had been a sickly man for most of his life, and his health deteriorated after he left office. So did the family crypt at Mount Vernon.

A few hundred feet from the house, near the banks of the Potomac River, the Old Crypt consists of a small wooden door set in a brick wall at the base of the hill, which opens to a small vault. The first known burial there was in 1745 (George's infant cousin, Jane Washington). By the end of the century, the tomb held about 20 members



Fast food: Lobsters can swim up to 5 feet per second.

of Washington's extended family. And the president wanted nothing more upon his death than to join them...but not there. Here's an excerpt from his will:

The family Vault at Mount Vernon requiring repairs, and being improperly situated besides, I desire that a new one of Brick, and upon a larger Scale, may be built at the foot of what is commonly called the Vineyard Inclosure, on the ground which is marked out. In which my remains, with those of my deceased relatives (now in the old Vault) and such others of my family as may chuse to be entombed there, may be deposited. And it is my express desire that my Corpse may be Interred in a private manner, without parade, or funeral Oration.

In a futile attempt to ease the old man's constant coughing, doctors drained 80 ounces of his blood (nearly half his total volume).

DOWN AND OUT

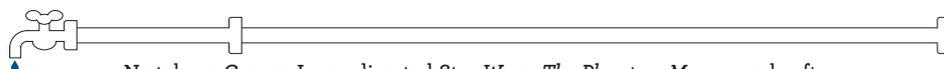
Washington's will included plans for the new tomb, and he put aside the money for it, but work hadn't even started in December 1799 when the former president came down with a fatal case of...it's uncertain what actually did him in—the most likely culprits are one or more of the following: “croup, quinsy, Ludwig's angina, Vincent's angina, diphtheria, and streptococcal throat infection due to acute pneumonia.”

One thing's for certain: it was an excruciating end. In a futile attempt to ease the old man's constant coughing, doctors drained 80 ounces of his blood (nearly half his total volume). Martha was at his bedside the entire time, as were their friends, doctors, and their grandchildren (from Martha's first marriage—George himself never procreated). Among Washington's last recorded words on that day, December 14, was a request that he be “decently buried...in less than three days after I am dead.” It took four.

MOSTLY DEAD

The next morning, Dr. William Thornton arrived to treat the ailing president, only to find out that he was too late. But Thornton had a plan: Because Washington had died “by the loss of blood and the want of air” on a frigid December night, and his body was cold, all Thornton had to do was warm the president's body and give him some blood and some air. He'd seen frozen frogs brought back to life, so why not George Washington? He told the other doctors present he would slowly warm Washington's body in a bath of cold water, perform a tracheotomy so that air could refill his lungs, and then give him a transfusion with the blood of a lamb. The barbaric procedure never took place, and it's unknown if Martha was even part of the discussion.

The president's funeral took place four days after he died. Only a few close friends and family were in attendance, but not Martha. She watched from the third floor of



No takers: George Lucas directed *Star Wars: The Phantom Menace* only after Ron Howard and Steven Spielberg both turned it down.

Mount Vernon as her late husband's lead casket was entombed into the dilapidated crypt, where he joined nearly two dozen other bodies, whose wooden coffins were in various stages of rot and decay.

MARTHA'S CHOICE

The 68-year-old widow was quickly besieged by throngs of well-wishers, though she had neither the inclination nor the energy to entertain them, and certainly didn't have it in her to start work on the new tomb. She was also receiving thousands of condolence letters, including one from her successor as First Lady, Abigail Adams: "I intreat, Madam, that you would permit a Heart deeply penetrated with your Loss, and sharing personally in your Grief to mingle with you the Tears which flow for the much Loved partner of all your joys and Sorrow's."

Another letter—one that Martha was dreading—came from Abigail's husband, President John Adams: "I entreat your assent to the interment of the remains of the General under the marble monument to be erected in the capital, at the city of Washington, to commemorate the great events of his military and political life." Congress had to have Martha's permission to move George's body because he had stated explicitly in his will that he was to be buried at Mount Vernon. Martha, as an executor of the will, could go against her husband's wishes if she chose to. But would she?

To find out where the father of his country was laid to rest, turn to page 227.

* * *

FOR THE BIRDS

PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) is a controversial animal rights group that advocates against animal cruelty and for pro-animal behavior, such as adopting a vegan diet. In 2018 it released a statement entitled "Stop Using Anti-Animal Language," designed to make people rethink the use of some everyday clichés. The statement gave a few examples, and offered these replacement suggestions:

"Kill two birds with one stone"	➔	"Feed two birds with one scone"
"I'll be the guinea pig"	➔	"I'll be the test tube"
"Beat a dead horse"	➔	"Feed a fed horse"
"Bring home the bacon"	➔	"Bring home the bagels"
"Take the bull by the horns"	➔	"Take the flower by the thorns"

Popular 18th-century drink: saloop, a hot beverage made from ground orchid roots.

HERE LIES GEORGE WASHINGTON, PART II

Would Washington end up being buried in Washington? It all depended on Mrs. Washington. Here's the second part of the story.

(Part one is on page 138.)

MARTHA'S DECISION

As she had done so many times during her husband's military and political careers, Martha weighed her love for George Washington against the public's love for him. She also considered his wish that the two of them spend eternity together. She wrote back to President Adams and informed him that, after a "severe struggle," she would allow her husband's body to be moved to Washington, on one condition: that she be interred alongside him when her time came. "In doing this, I need not, I cannot, say what a sacrifice of individual feeling I make to a sense of public duty."

It took a few days for the news of the former president's death to reach Philadelphia, where the federal government was still housed. A national funeral was held there on December 26, where Congressman Henry Lee, in front of 4,000 mourners, famously eulogized Washington as "first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen." Shortly thereafter, President Adams signed a joint resolution by Congress to have Washington's body moved from Mount Vernon and "deposited under...the United States Capitol."

One problem: Washington, D.C., wasn't quite there yet. The location, about 10 miles upriver from Mount Vernon, had only been chosen a decade earlier by George Washington, who wanted to call it Federal City. The U.S. Capitol Building (designed by Dr. William Thornton, who was an architect as well as a wannabe Frankenstein) was still under construction. It wouldn't get its famous dome until the 1820s, but two stories beneath where the floor of the Rotunda is now, work on an elaborate presidential tomb in a circular room with forty columns was begun. Into that tomb would go the remains of George and Martha Washington. A 10-foot circular opening was cut into the Rotunda floor so visitors could view their sarcophagi from above. The Crypt, as it's called today, is still there (it was used to store bicycles a century ago), but there are no Washingtons, or anyone else, interred in the U.S. Capitol. The hole in the floor was covered up long ago, and if you visit the Crypt, you'll see a famous bust of Abraham Lincoln and paintings of the Founding Fathers, including two of George Washington.

So why weren't George and Martha moved there?

...and played on a cricket team with J. M. Barrie (Peter Pan) and Arthur Conan Doyle (Sherlock Holmes).

POLITICS AS USUAL

After Washington's funeral, his already considerable fame skyrocketed. He had only left the presidency two years earlier and, with his passing, even those who had criticized him—including King George III—laid praise on him. But in an all-too-familiar scenario, partisan bickering kept Congress from making any progress on the tomb. George Washington, like his successor, John Adams, had been a Federalist. The Federalists favored a strong federal government, while the Republicans, led by

Thomas Jefferson, favored a smaller government that didn't spend taxpayers' money on unnecessary body reburials.

But what really angered Jefferson was that during Washington's second term, the president chose to remain neutral in the Anglo-French War between France and Great Britain. Jefferson, who was then secretary of state, wanted the U.S. military to aid France (where he'd been an ambassador). When Washington refused to interfere, Jefferson resigned in protest.

Had the Federalists retained control of the White House, it's likely that the Washingtons would be in the Capitol Crypt today. But after Jefferson defeated Adams and took office

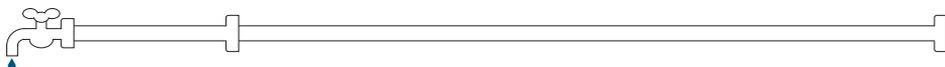
in 1801, he moved on to other matters (such as the Louisiana Purchase). Even if President Jefferson *had* been in favor of the project, Congress couldn't come to a consensus on what type of monument to erect or how the funds should be allocated. Result: the bill stalled.

MEANWHILE...

Back at Mount Vernon, Martha Washington had a potential slave revolt to deal with, not to mention her own failing health. Her husband's 29-page will had stipulated that all of his slaves be freed upon Martha's death. But of the 317 slaves at Mount Vernon, only 123 of them belonged to George Washington; the rest had belonged to Martha's first husband, Daniel Parke Custis, and ownership of those slaves was to revert to his family after her death. What happened next isn't clear, but there were rumors that many of Washington's slaves didn't want to wait for Martha to die. After accusations arose that one of them had started a fire on the property, Martha's nephew, Judge Bushrod Washington, told her that if she feared for her safety, then she should let all of her husband's slaves free at once. So she did.

Martha Washington died on a spring day in May 1802. Her death made national news. She was placed in a lead casket alongside her husband in the Old Crypt.

Had the Federalists retained control of the White House, it's likely that the Washingtons would be interred in the Capitol Crypt today.



The Ayam cemani chicken is completely black—including feathers, beak, meat, and internal organs.

IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED...

None of George and Martha's heirs were in a hurry to build the new tomb at Mount Vernon, so in 1816, Congress passed a new resolution to move the bodies to D.C., but again, nothing happened. In 1824, as the 100th anniversary of Washington's birth was approaching, another congressman, future President James Buchanan of Pennsylvania, said of Washington, "The man who was emphatically first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen, has been sleeping with his fathers for almost a quarter of a century, and his mortal remains have yet been unhonored by that people, who, with justice, call him the father of their country." Buchanan, even more than most of his peers, idolized George Washington, and saw it as his mission to move the bodies. Another resolution was passed, and work on the Capitol Crypt (which had been interrupted due to the War of 1812) was completed.

Though Washington had no direct descendants, there were a lot of his nephews out there with the last name Washington, and they became Mount Vernon's new caretakers, starting with Judge Bushrod Washington. As it was (and still is) with many of the Founding Fathers' grave sites, there was disagreement among members of the Washington family. Some were eager for him to be moved to the Capitol; others were against it. But the decision belonged solely to whoever owned the estate.

MAKING THE PILGRIMAGE

There was another pressing matter. Mount Vernon was a working plantation, and its new owner—John Augustine Washington II—was tiring of all the "pilgrims" helping themselves to "artifacts" from Washington's dilapidated tomb. They stole bricks, dirt, flora, and whatever else they could take. A Russian ambassador removed a tree branch that he later presented to Tsar Alexander I. But the bulk of the visitors—most of them uninvited—came simply to bask in the presence of the father of the country. Some wept, some prayed. And it was all having a detrimental effect on the grave site. When reports of the aging tomb made their way to Congress, more pressure was put on Washington's heirs to let George and Martha go.

The final straw came in 1830 when a disgruntled gardener (he'd been fired) decided to exact his revenge by breaking into the tomb and stealing George Washington's skull. When he got into the dark tomb with the low ceiling, most of the coffins had rotted away, and there were bones everywhere...so he grabbed a skull and left. When John Washington II later investigated, he was relieved to find the lead caskets of George and Martha still sealed shut. (The story goes that the stolen skull belonged to a man named Blackburn, one of Bushrod Washington's in-laws.)

Just before you vomit, your mouth fills with saliva. (It protects your teeth against stomach acid.)

LAIID TO REST

News of the grave robbing led to yet another resolution by Congress to move the Washingtons to Washington. They could still get him there by his 100th birthday in 1832, if only John Washington II would let them, but he wasn't the only one resisting. Virginia lawmakers didn't want their most beloved son taken out of the state, or out of the South. (A love for George Washington was one of the few things Northerners and Southerners had in common in those times.) They urged John Washington II to grant the president's dying wish to remain at his home...and Washington agreed, telling Congress no, he didn't want to upset his uncle's "perfect tranquility, surrounded by those of other endeared members of the family." That would be the last time the government tried to get their hands on George Washington.

In 1831 the Washington family finally got around to building the new tomb, and not a moment too soon. New coffins were built to replace the old ones, and more than 20 members of the family were relocated to their new home—a brick building with an arched entrance, and two large, white Egyptian-style obelisks out front. The project took so long to complete that George and Martha's coffins spent their first six years there in the back of the tomb. In 1837 two marble sarcophagi were donated by an architect from Philadelphia and placed in a vestibule (entrance room), so the coffins could be seen from outside. An iron gate protects the vault. An inscription on a tablet above the arch simply says:

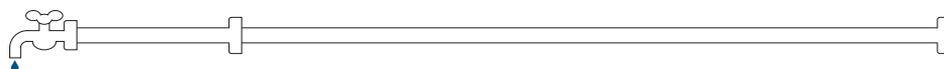
Within this Enclosure Rest the remains of Genl. George Washington.

LARGER THAN LIFE

When the Washingtons' lead caskets were placed inside the sarcophagi, John Washington II decided to have one last look at the president (either to make sure all of him was there, or to satisfy his own curiosity). According to a *Harper's* magazine account of the viewing, they opened the lid, "exposing to a view a head and breast of large dimensions, which appeared, by the dim light of the candles, to have suffered but little from the effects of time." The first thing they were surprised by was how large the president was. He stood over six feet tall; that's about a half a foot taller than most other men of the time. They also noted that the president had "tremendously" large hands.

FOR SALE

George and Martha Washington haven't been disturbed since they were sealed inside their marble sarcophagi (as far as we know), but Mount Vernon around them hasn't been so fortunate. The next owner, John Washington III, tired of swarms of



Surprised? The most littered item in the world is cigarette butts.

well-wishers disturbing his working plantation, which wasn't making a profit. He had little desire to become a tour guide and tell visitors all about his great-granduncle, but he knew there was money in it, so he started charging visitors a nominal fee to tour the estate and helped build new roads to make it easier to get there.

It still wasn't enough. In 1848 he tried to sell Mount Vernon to the State of Virginia or to the federal government, but as tensions were mounting between the North and the South, neither faction was interested. The property began to fall into disrepair.

THE MVLA

In 1853 a passenger on a steamer floated past the estate and couldn't believe what she saw. She wrote in a letter to her daughter, a South Carolina socialite named Ann Pamela Cunningham, that she was "painfully distressed at the ruin and desolation of the home of Washington. It does seem such a blot on our country!" There were even "No Trespassing" signs all over the place.

Four years later, Cunningham founded the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association (MVLA). Enlisting women from all 30 states, they raised sufficient funds to purchase Mount Vernon and the 200 acres surrounding it for \$200,000 (over \$5 million in today's money). John Washington III jumped at the offer, and the MVLA took over in 1860. Fortunately for them, Mount Vernon was considered neutral ground during the Civil War, so it was one of the few plantations in the area that didn't get ransacked. And with the end of the war and the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, the hundred-year history of slaves living at Mount Vernon had ended.

Mount Vernon was considered neutral ground during the Civil War, so it was one of the few plantations that didn't get ransacked.

Cunningham left these instructions when she retired in 1874: "Ladies, the Home of Washington is in your charge; see to it that you keep it the Home of Washington. Let no irreverent hand change it; no vandal hands desecrate it with the fingers of progress!" (In the 1950s, the MVLA had to raise money to buy land across the river before an oil company was able to install massive tanks and spoil the view from Washington's porch.)

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

In the late 1870s, while the MVLA was undertaking the arduous task of restoring the property, a former slave at Mount Vernon, Edmund Parker, was hired to stand guard at Washington's tomb. Most visitors thought he lived there. He didn't, of course. He had a wife and children at his home in Washington. But for 15 years he and several other

Nap rap: The healthiest time for a nap is 8 hours after waking up and 8 hours before bedtime.

African Americans, many of them former slaves, worked at Mount Vernon, and Parker was one of the best known of the former plantation's inhabitants. After Parker died, several more African American guards stood in front of Washington's tomb until the practice was ended in 1965.

Parker is one of the few "enslaved individuals" (so described on the Mount Vernon website) that we know anything about. At least 150 other slaves are buried in an unmarked graveyard on a hill in the woods just a short walk from Washington's tomb. In 1929 the MVL A placed a stone marker at the site that reads: "In memory of the many faithful coloured servants of the Washington family buried at Mount Vernon from 1760 to 1860. Their unidentified graves surround this spot." It is believed to be the first historical marker of its kind on a Southern plantation.

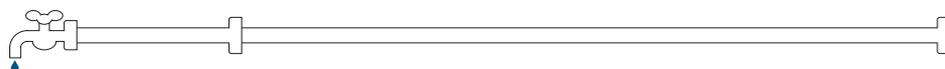
After that, however, the area became overgrown and was mostly forgotten until 1982, when Dorothy Gilliam, the first African American reporter at the *Washington Post*, went looking for the slave graveyard and uncovered the old marker. She wrote about her discovery: "The long walk from the stately tomb of George Washington to this abandoned memorial seemed drenched with the tears of the slaves." Gilliam's article sparked a renewed push to uncover the stories of Mount Vernon's slaves. Within a year, the MVL A had built a footpath to the cemetery and installed benches and a large stone memorial there. In 2014 the once-forgotten graveyard was cordoned off as an archaeological site. At last report, researchers were creating a map of the cemetery. One thing they've decided not to do, out of respect, is excavate the graves.

MOUNT VERNON TODAY

"There's a certain magic here at Mount Vernon," narrates Jeff Goldblum in a tourism video on the estate's website. "The rest of the world doesn't really exist." Goldblum's right. There are few places in the United States where more care has been put into showing visitors what life was like 250 years ago. And because Mount Vernon is far from a main road, nestled among trees and rolling hills, it's easy to forget you're less than 20 miles from the U.S. Capitol. The site is part of the National Park Service, but the MVL A is still in charge. Their mission remains to "preserve, restore, and manage" Mount Vernon.

Visiting Washington's tomb is still a somber undertaking, much as it was when the "pilgrims" came to pay their respects at the Old Crypt two centuries ago (although there's a lot less grave robbing today).

Our next Founding Father, John Adams, was much less controversial, so the story of his final resting place is much shorter. It can be found on page 274.



Iroquois nickname given to George Washington in 1753: "Town Destroyer."

HERE LIES JOHN ADAMS

Here's the second part of our story about where America's Founding Fathers are buried. John Adams (1735–1826) was the second president of the United States. And like George Washington, his body lies in a different spot today than where it was originally interred. (Part I is on page 227.)

A MAN OF CONVICTION

“Jefferson lives.” Those were the widely reported last words of John Adams, in honor of his friend and former political rival, Thomas Jefferson. The joke was on Adams, though, because Jefferson had died earlier that day—July 4, 1826—the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, on which the two had collaborated. (July 4 is kind of a made-up anniversary, which we’ll talk more about in “Here Lies John Hancock.”)

Unlike Jefferson, Adams was a church-going man. His father had wanted him to be a minister, but he became a lawyer instead. In 1765 Adams got swept up in politics after the British Parliament enacted the Stamp Act, which decreed that anything printed on paper—documents, books, playing cards, etc.—had to, by law, be printed on pre-stamped paper made in England. It couldn’t be paid for with paper money made in the colonies; it had to be purchased with British currency. Adams was one of the first men to call the Stamp Act “taxation without representation,” and he said so in a speech in Boston. With that, he was a revolutionary.

LAWYERING UP

Adams successfully defended British soldiers after the Boston Massacre of 1770—a riot in which several colonists were shot dead by those soldiers. Although he was criticized for defending the British, he said he was more interested in getting to the truth than to giving in to “hysterics” of anti-British sentiment. Those who knew Adams knew he was a true patriot.

He went on to represent Massachusetts in the First Continental Congress, where he was one of the fiercest advocates for declaring independence from England. He helped draft the preamble to the document, and it was by his recommendation that George Washington was selected to head up the war effort. Adams later became vice president under Washington, and then narrowly beat Thomas Jefferson to become the second U.S. president (and the first to move into the newly constructed White House). In 1800, after a tumultuous term that saw the major political parties grow further apart, Jefferson narrowly beat Adams to become the nation’s third president. By this time, the two had become bitter enemies.



John Wayne, who fought cancer several times in his life, coined the term “the Big C” ...

A few months later, Adams's son Charles died unexpectedly, and all he wanted to do was retreat to his farm in Quincy and live out his days with his wife Abigail. She died in 1818, a few years after Jefferson and Adams reconciled.

LAI TO REST

John Adams took his last breath eight years later, just shy of his 91st birthday. He was buried next to Abigail in Hancock Cemetery, not far from Peacefield, the Adams family farm in Quincy. But he wouldn't stay there for long.

Plans were already underway for the construction of a new Greek Revival-style church across the road from the cemetery, on the grounds of "Ye Church of Braintry," a 200-year-old structure where Adams's Puritan ancestors first congregated in the 1630s. A man of considerable wealth, Adams put up most of the money for building the United First Parish Church himself, and most of the granite came from his own quarry. He hired one of Boston's best architects, Alexander Parris, to design it, and one of the best stonecutters, Abner Joy, to build it. The project reportedly cost \$30,489 (about \$775,000 today).

Two years after his death, John and Abigail were interred in a specially built crypt in the church's basement. Twenty years later, John Quincy Adams, who was president of the United States when his father died, was interred in the same crypt, along with his wife, Louisa.

THE CHURCH OF PRESIDENTS

United First Parish Church is located in Quincy Center (also designed by Parris), 11 miles south of Boston. Today, the church and cemetery are located in a bustling downtown area (on the same block as a Dunkin' Donuts and Liberty Tax Service). In the 1830s, Quincy was farmland and tree stands as far as the eye could see. Adams's "Stone Temple" towered over everything in sight. On top of the main building is a granite tower with a clockface on each of its four sides, and above that are eight granite pillars, topped by a Greek-inspired dome. Most impressive are the four huge pillars out front. They are 20 feet tall and weigh 25 tons each. They were so massive that they had to come from a deeper quarry than Adams's.

Among the presidents who have visited the "Church of Presidents" were William Howard Taft in 1910, Franklin D. Roosevelt (who drove past it in 1936), and Harry S. Truman, who gave a stump speech on the front steps in 1948 (only a week before the famous "Dewey Defeats Truman" headline). Rumor has it that Truman whacked his head against the low ceiling of the Adams crypt. Rumor also has it that he swore like a sailor.

Rumor has it that Truman whacked his head against the low ceiling of the Adams crypt.

...as a euphemism for the disease because he hated saying "cancer."

THE GRAVESITE TODAY

In 1970 United First Parish Church was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. And it still has an active Unitarian Universalist congregation that runs an outreach program for the homeless in the same basement where two presidents are resting in peace. The Adams family crypt, however, isn't owned by the church but rather by a trust originally set up by John Adams himself. Tours are available. And there's a lot more to see here than a presidential tomb.

- **The Adams Pew:** Inside the main congregation hall, the ornate domed ceiling is decorated like a passion flower surrounded by lotuses. Row 54 has a small brass plate marked "Adams Pew," where several generations of his family have worshipped.
- **Revere's Bell:** The church bell was originally cast by noted silversmith and patriot Paul Revere. Ironically, the man who loudly alerted his compatriots that "the British are coming" made a bell that—it was later discovered—wasn't loud enough for everyone in Quincy to hear, so it was melted down and recast by another silversmith. (There are several other bells in New England made by Revere that are still in use today.)
- **Hancock Cemetery:** Located just across the street from the church, Hancock Cemetery is one of the oldest graveyards in the United States. It was named after a Founding Father's father, Reverend John Hancock, who was once the pastor of the old First Parish Church before it was rebuilt by Adams. Founded in 1640, the cemetery—the only thing that remains from the original settlement of Braintree—contains some of the oldest granite headstones in the New World.

Our next Founding Father, John Hancock, is buried on page 332...or is he?

* * *

OOPS!

Ben Belnap and his wife, Jackee, stashed all their extra cash in an envelope, trying to save enough to buy two tickets to a University of Utah football game. But in the fall of 2018, when Belnap went to retrieve the money—over \$1,000 in small bills—the envelope was gone. After a frantic search, the Belnaps finally found the cash and the envelope...shredded to bits in the family shredder. The culprit: their two-year-old son. According to Belnap, he is "grounded from all fun."



Technically, if you put something off until the day after tomorrow, you're *perendinating*, not procrastinating.

HERE LIES JOHN HANCOCK

John Hancock's audacious autograph on the Declaration of Independence led to the phrase "put your John Hancock here" when signing a document. Now let's find out where they put the real John Hancock, along with a few other Founding Fathers...and Mother Goose. Here's the third part of our story about where America's Founding Fathers are buried. (Part II is on page 274.)

WAYWARD SON

Here's a trick question: Which Founding Father is buried at Hancock Cemetery? Answer: None of them. Even though Hancock Cemetery was named after his father, Reverend Colonel John Hancock Jr., John Hancock III (1737–93) never had much of an attachment to his birthplace of Braintree, Massachusetts. Hancock was only seven when the reverend died, so he was raised by his rich uncle in nearby Boston, where he later attended Harvard College and then took over his uncle's mercantile business.

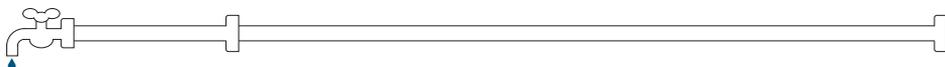
When relations with King George III started breaking down in the 1760s, most of Boston's elite sided with the British. But Hancock, along with his friend, fellow Bostonian Samuel Adams, joined the fight for independence. In 1774, with Adams's help, Hancock became president of the Massachusetts Provisional Congress, and soon after became president of the First and Second Continental Congresses—the legislative body that declared the colonies' independence from England.

As president of the Continental Congress, Hancock was the first person to sign the Declaration of Independence. As he inked his fancy, six-square-inch signature, he proclaimed to everyone in the room, "There, I guess King George will be able to read that!" (Sounds of laughter.)

MYTH-MAKERS

That anecdote fits right in with Hancock's reputation for flaunting his wealth and always speaking his mind. But did he really say that? No one knows what he said on July 4. Or maybe it was the 2nd, or the 6th...or maybe August? Most of these tales-turned-school-lessons (like George Washington's cherry tree and Abe Lincoln's log cabin) weren't even written down until decades after the subjects had died.

The Declaration of Independence wasn't signed by 59 patriots on July 4, 1776, but that's how it's been portrayed in countless history books and paintings. Congress actually voted for Independence on July 2 (that's the date many of the Founding Fathers thought should be a holiday). The final draft wasn't approved until July 4, which is when the broadsheet was sent to the printer. That's why it says on top, "IN CONGRESS, July 4, 1776." Only a few men were on hand to sign it; the first was John



Will Ferrell turned down \$29 million to reprise his role as Buddy the Elf.

Hancock, and his words were not recorded. (We still find it humorous that in King George's diary, he noted that "nothing important" happened on July 4, 1776.) It wasn't until August that most of the other signers put their John Hancocks on the document. (Hancock may or may not have said his famous quote *that day*.)

And while we're at it, July 4, 1776, isn't really the nation's birthday: the Declaration of Independence was just that, a declaration stating that the colonies were breaking away from England. The nation wasn't "founded" until the U.S. Constitution was ratified on June 21, 1788. None of this diminishes Hancock's role as a Founding Father, nor would it be the last tall tale associated with him.

LAI D TO REST

In 1780 Hancock was elected the first governor of Massachusetts and served in the position on and off for the next 10 years. By the early 1790s, he was more figurehead than governor, and his health was failing fast. He'd had severe gout—a painful arthritic condition—since he was 36. He was only in his mid-50s, but he looked and felt like a much older man. He succumbed to the disease in October 1793, becoming one of the first of the signers to die. His body was kept in Hancock Manor (on Beacon Hill in Boston) for a week.

Samuel Adams took over as governor and declared Hancock's funeral a state holiday. The largest crowd that had ever gathered in Boston up to that point—20,000 people—paid their respects as Hancock's body was taken through the city from the State House to Granary Burying Ground. His lead coffin was placed inside a tomb along a long brick wall. A white marble slab with his name on it was attached to the wall.

Why the Old Granary? Anybody who was anybody in Boston was interred there. In addition to Hancock, you can also visit the markers of Samuel Adams, Paul Revere, Robert Treat Pine (another signer), Benjamin Franklin's parents (but not Franklin himself), five colonists who were killed in the Boston Massacre, and Mary "Mother" Goose (not the original Mother Goose herself, but the mother-in-law of a publisher of Mother Goose books). Also buried there is Samuel Sewall, one of the judges during the Salem witch hunts of the 1690s. Sewall later wrote an "article of penitence," begging forgiveness for his part in the hysteria.

TWO FEET UNDER

Unlike typical graveyards, burying grounds are just what they sound like. A single grave or tomb can contain several people, even from different families. And not all these graves were given proper markers. Boston's third-oldest cemetery (after the first two filled up), the Old Granary was established next to a grain storage building in the 1660s on what was basically swampland. Because of the area's low water table, the graves had to be quite shallow—most are less than two feet belowground. It wasn't

Walt Disney originally intended for EPCOT to be an actual city where people lived (and worked for Disney).

uncommon after heavy rainfall for bones to find their way to the surface. (As recently as 2009, an unfortunate tourist fell through the dirt and landed waist-deep into a previously unknown crypt.)

By the time Hancock was laid to rest there in 1793, the burying ground was already overcrowded. Over the next century, as the city of Boston rose up around it, the Old Granary went through several renovations. Graves were rearranged and rows were straightened to make room for sidewalks. Unless a family could afford to replace their crumbling headstone, whoever was buried beneath it would be lost to history. Out of the estimated 5,000 to 8,000 people who were buried at the Old Granary, less than a third of them were even given proper gravestones in the first place.

THE DUSTBIN OF HISTORY

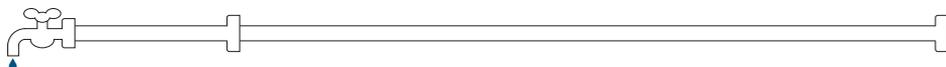
Though a household name today, John Hancock was largely forgotten after his death. That was pretty much the case for every Founding Father whose name wasn't George Washington. Admiration for Washington, the Revolutionary War hero and nation's first president—even by his sworn enemies—was almost universal. In the 1800s, as the only man equally admired in the North and the South, he came to embody *all* the Founding Fathers. Because John Hancock's fame faded so quickly after his passing, no care was taken to preserve his legacy. In 1809 John Adams lamented that both Hancock and Samuel Adams had been “buried in oblivion.” By 1863 Hancock wasn't even famous enough for his house on Beacon Street to be saved.

PUBLIC RELATIONS DISASTER

Then came the centennial. Observance of the nation's 100th anniversary in 1876 sparked a renewed interest in all of the Founding Fathers. And Boston, a city that played a large role in the country's formation, saw a huge jump in tourism. That created a problem at the Old Granary. Over the next two decades, as historical plaques and markers honoring Boston's forgotten heroes started popping up all over the city, no one knew exactly where Hancock's body was.

Not helping matters was an 1886 account by a local historian named Edwin M. Bacon. In *Bacon's Dictionary of Boston*, he wrote that, back in the 1860s, when construction workers were building a new basement in a building on neighboring Park Street, they removed a high wall across the street to let more light in:

In tearing down the old wall, the tomb of John Hancock must have been broken into, as the wall formed one side of it, so there is no proof that even his body remains there. The body was inclosed in a lead coffin: who knows but this may have been converted into water pipes, or used up in various plumbing operations?



It takes 27 hours to change the oil on a Bugatti Veyron sports car—and costs \$21,000.

If Bacon's account is true, then it's most likely that the workers threw all of the human remains—including Hancock's—in the trash.

And that's not Bacon's only Hancock tale. He also wrote that not long after Hancock was laid to rest, grave robbers dug up the Founding Father and tried to pry the expensive rings off his fingers, but they were so bloated by rigor mortis (the fingers, not the robbers) that the rings wouldn't budge. So the robbers removed Hancock's hands instead. If this did indeed happen, then Bacon was the first to write about it...80 years later.

THERE HE IS!

True or not, stories like that only added to the Founding Fathers' lore, and as Hancock was finally starting to get the credit he deserved, it would be advantageous for Old Granary officials to determine where he was. In early 1895, plans were announced for a new monument to be erected at his grave site. That August, the *Boston Globe* reported that workers renovating the site had located Hancock's intact coffin, and it would be securely reburied underneath a massive granite obelisk in the Old Granary. The monument went up quickly, but other than that one newspaper article, there is no record of Hancock's body ever being found. The only way to know for sure if he's actually buried there would be to exhume the grave and look for a skeleton (with or without any hands), and there are no plans for that to happen.

THE OBELISK

If you'd like to see Hancock's grave, it's not hard to miss. Like his famous signature, the stone monument—with a flattering portrait of the statesman etched into its side—dwarfs all the other markers around it. In fact, it's the third-largest obelisk in the entire burying ground. And even though it wasn't erected until a century after he died, it's a good bet that Hancock would be impressed. (Of course, he would also be impressed by the 790-foot John Hancock Tower, which has been Boston's tallest building since the bicentennial.)

There are several other graves surrounding Hancock's (which you have to stand on when looking at his obelisk). One of the markers is for Hancock's wife, Dorothy, who died 37 years after him. Another nearby headstone marks the grave of...

F R A N K

Servant to

JOHN HANCOCK ESQR.

lied interr'd here

who died 23d Jan

1 7 7 1

The Toll House Inn, where chocolate chip cookies were invented, burned down in 1984.
Today a Wendy's fast-food restaurant sits on the spot.

As a testament to Hancock's wealth and power, Frank is one of the few African Americans ever interred in the Old Granary. Another was Crispus Attucks, a runaway slave who was the first African American killed in the Revolutionary War.

HERE LIES LONGFELLOW

John Hancock isn't even the most visited grave at the Old Granary. That accolade goes to Paul Revere (1735–1818), the silversmith who, in 1775, rode his horse all over Massachusetts in a single night and warned his compatriots that the British were coming. That's according to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's 1861 poem "Paul Revere's Ride"...which altered some key details. For one, it didn't take one rider one night but several riders several days to spread the news of the impending British invasion. Because Longfellow's story happens to be the most popular one, that's how most people think it happened. The poet wasn't trying to give a history lesson, though, he was creating a fictionalized account of history to serve his own purpose—a warning against the impending Civil War.

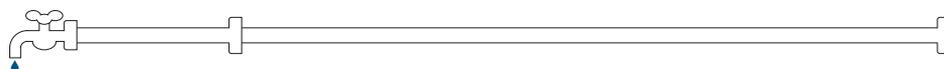
Thanks to scores of historians over the centuries who have studied that fateful ride, what we do know is that if Paul Revere—along with fellow patriots William Dawes, Samuel Prescott, and others whose names are lost to history—hadn't warned John Hancock and Samuel Adams about the impending invasion, the wanted men would probably have been captured and hanged for treason. However, it did take a bit of prodding by Revere when Hancock refused to retreat. "If I had my musket," said Hancock, "I would never turn my back on these troops." But Revere did convince him to leave, and two years later, John Hancock signed the Declaration of Independence.

THE OLD GRANARY TODAY

The Beantown Pub, located across from the Old Granary on Tremont Street, is probably the only place you can drink a Sam Adams Lager while looking out at the grave of Samuel Adams. His marker is a large rock, about four feet high, with a green plaque that dates to 1898 (nearly a century after his death). Located steps away from a subway station, the Old Granary receives about 3,000 visitors every day. It's one of the most popular spots on the Freedom Trail, which consists of 16 historical sites between Boston Common and the Bunker Hill Monument.

Can't make it to the Old Granary yourself? You can visit it virtually on Google Earth, where you can see markers on the graves of John Hancock, Samuel Adams, and Paul Revere...whose remains may or may not be with their headstones.

Our tour of the Founding Fathers' final resting places takes us next to Philadelphia, where the Liberty Bell isn't the only famous piece of history with a crack in it. Off to page 387.



A blue whale's tongue is bigger than a rhinoceros.

HERE LIES BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

As you may recall from our visit to John Hancock's grave (page 332), he's buried in the Old Granary. In 1830 some Bostonians tried to change its name to Franklin Cemetery, in honor of Boston-born Benjamin Franklin. They might have gotten their wish if Franklin had actually been buried at the Old Granary. Here's part III of our story about the Founding Fathers' graves.

RENAISSANCE MAN

Benjamin Franklin (1706–90) began his career as a humble printer, but he accomplished a lot more in his 84 years—including cowriting and signing the Declaration of Independence, discovering new properties of electricity (via the famous lightning experiment with the kite and the key), and publishing several influential works (most notably *Poor Richard's Almanack*). Franklin also invented the first library where books could be checked out, the volunteer fire station, the lightning rod, swimming fins, bifocals, the Franklin stove, the “long arm” (for retrieving books from a high shelf), the glass armonica, and, surprisingly, crowdsourcing.

Unlike most of the Founding Fathers, who were just reaching middle age when the American Revolution began, Franklin was already an old man. And he was already one of the most famous people in the Western world. As his end was approaching, it was a big deal to Philadelphians that he be laid to rest there. True, he was born in Boston, and even though he ran away as a young man and settled in Philadelphia, he still had ties to Beantown—including a spot in the Franklin family plot at the Old Granary if he wanted one. But there wasn't much to debate; Franklin had decided decades earlier that he would spend eternity with his wife and children in his adopted hometown of Philadelphia.

A STATE FUNERAL FOR A COMMON MAN

After a long illness, Franklin succumbed to empyema on April 17, 1790, and the world mourned. Count Mirabeau of the French National Assembly said, “He was able to restrain thunderbolts and tyrants.” Back in Philadelphia, more than 20,000 people attended Franklin's funeral (the city's population at the time was 28,000). Sixty years earlier, he'd written his own epitaph:

The Body of B. Franklin, Printer; like the Cover of an old Book, Its Contents torn out, And stript of its Lettering and Gilding, Lies here, Food for Worms. But the Work shall not be wholly lost; For it will, as he believ'd, appear once more, In a new & more perfect Edition, Corrected and amended By the Author

Place on earth farthest from any sea: the Eurasian Pole of Inaccessibility (northern China).

But as Franklin grew older and wiser, his last wishes became more modest. Where most other Founding Fathers wanted massive obelisks to mark their graves, Franklin's will stipulated that he be buried under a flat marble ledger tablet "6 feet long, 4 feet wide, plain, with only a small moulding round the upper edge." He wanted his marker to say only "Benjamin Franklin, Printer."

LAI D TO REST

After his coffin was carried from the State House to Christ Church (where George Washington worshipped while in Philadelphia), Franklin was buried in the church's adjacent burial ground beneath a 1,000-pound stone slab, inscribed with the words "Benjamin and Deborah Franklin – 1790." Deborah had died 25 years earlier. Their son Francis, who died of smallpox at age four, was also buried there. Their daughter Sarah would complete the quartet in 1808.

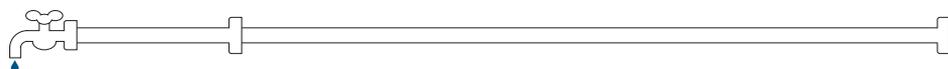
The Christ Church Burial Ground was established in 1719, but it's only in the last century or so that graveyards have become tourist attractions, which is why few people visited Franklin's grave for the first 70 years after his death. Another reason: there was a tall stone wall separating his slab from the sidewalk. In the mid-1800s, Philadelphia's leaders decided to capitalize on Franklin's fame by tearing down the wall and replacing it with a steel fence, so that people walking along Arch Street could view his grave site.

The Christ Church Preservation Trust was set up in 1858 to raise the money for the project. To make Franklin's slab more visible, workers lifted it out of the ground and raised it up a few feet. The plan worked. Ever since the steel fence went in, millions of people have paid homage to the man who coined the phrase "a penny saved is a penny earned" by throwing pennies onto his grave. (Uncle John's note: If you'd like to pay homage to the actual coiner of that phrase, you'd have better luck visiting the grave of George Herbert at St. Andrew's Church in Bemerton, Wiltshire, England; in his 1633 book *Outlandish Proverbs*, Herbert wrote, "A penny spar'd is twice got.")

WWW.GOFUNDME.COM/SAVEBENFRANKLIN

Have you ever heard the phrase "nibbled to death by ducks"? That's what was happening to the Franklin family's marble slab, only instead of ducks it was pennies. The Preservation Trust, which is still active today, wishes people would throw hundred-dollar bills instead (also known as "Benjamins"). That would cause far less damage and help pay for the costly work required to seal the huge crack that stretches from one end of the rock to the other. The pennies didn't cause the crack—blame that on the improper setting of the stone when it was raised in 1858—but the pennies were slowly eroding the stone, one pockmark at a time. And the crack was getting a little wider each year.

"For a long time, people wanted to do a big restoration of the old marker," said Marco Federico, who oversaw the team that restored the grave site in 2017.



Odds of survival if you stow away in the wheel well of a jet airplane: 1 in 4.

“They basically wanted to toss the old stone and put in some glorious, grandiose monument, which [Franklin] never wanted. His will is very specific.” But even a “simple” restoration was estimated at more than \$80,000. The trust was able to secure most of the money from universities and historical societies, but they were still \$10,000 short. So in 2016, the trust set up a “Save Ben Franklin” GoFundMe page in order to raise the rest of the money.

The campaign stalled at a few thousand dollars. Then Jon Bon Jovi swooped in to save the day. After hearing about the fund-raiser, he and his wife, Dorothea, pitched in \$5,000. “It was kind of funny,” observed Christ Church project overseer John Hopkins. “I joked when we received the news, that we were ‘halfway there, living on a prayer,’ and then he kind of put us over the top.” (That’s a reference to Bon Jovi’s 1986 hit song.) Then more people and more groups, including the Philadelphia Eagles, made donations, and the work began.

They were still \$10,000 short. Then Jon Bon Jovi swooped in to save the day.

HISTORY UNDER FIRE

“Most people probably won’t even notice we did anything,” explained Federico, whose team carefully lifted the stone off the ground, sealed the crack, and filled in all the penny-caused pockmarks. The crack is still visible, though. Like the famous crack in the Liberty Bell, it has also been preserved as part of its story.

An odd thing happened during the restoration. The area had been sealed off, the fence was covered up, and signs were erected telling people *not* to throw pennies. Hopkins was at the site, being interviewed by *Hidden City Philadelphia*, and just as he was saying, “It’s a tradition, it’s hard to change, but we can try to alter the culture of it,” a barrage of pennies flew over the fence and pelted him. “It’s disrespectful,” he growled. “These [tour] groups come by, they tell them to throw the pennies, and they walk on. They don’t talk about the most important American to ever live!”

YE OLDE GO FUND ME

Not seriously injured by the penny attack, Hopkins added that he is grateful for one thing: “The beauty of the GoFundMe was the donations from regular citizens. Ben Franklin was a man of the people, and he was a fund-raiser in his time. He probably would have invented GoFundMe if he was alive.” In a way, he did. In Colonial times, if money was needed for a project, it always came from the top down (like King Ferdinand funding Columbus’s voyage to America). But Franklin, who believed in democracy, realized that if you can’t get one king to give a whole lot of money, you can get a whole lot of people to donate one pence each. During his lifetime, Franklin organized several successful fund-raising campaigns. That’s how he helped set up the first subscription library and the first volunteer fire department, and when Christ

Church's steeple needed to be replaced in the 1750s, Franklin helped manage a lottery to raise the money for it. He wasn't much of a churchgoer himself, so why would he be so interested in building a tall steeple? Hopkins believes that Franklin had an ulterior motive "to do some experimenting with the electricity and the height of the building." (Franklin later decided to do the experiment with a kite instead.)

In May 2017, Franklin's grave site reopened to the public. That day was the culmination of a lot of restoration work that took place at the site in the early 21st century. Twelve years earlier, on the statesman's 300th birthday in 2005, a new brick path had been installed around the grave. And a plaque was set into the bricks with several quotations about the patriot, in *Poor Richard's Almanack* style:

The Last Resting Place of Benjamin Franklin

*"Venerated for Benevolence, Admired for Talents, Esteemed for Patriotism,
Beloved for Philanthropy."*

—WASHINGTON

"The Sage Whom Two Worlds Claimed as Their Own."

—MIRABEAU

"He Tore from the Skies the Lightning and From Tyrants the Sceptre."

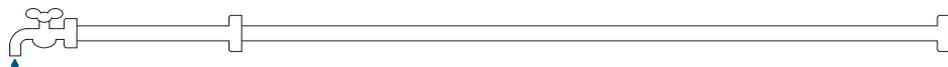
—TURGOT

THE GRAVEYARD TODAY

Franklin isn't the only Founding Father you can find at the Christ Church Burial Ground. Five of the 1,400 graves include signers of the Declaration of Independence. In addition to Franklin, there's Joseph Hewes, Francis Hopkinson, George Ross, and Dr. Benjamin Rush. There's also a monument to Commodore Uriah P. Levy, the man who saved Thomas Jefferson's final resting place from ruin.

The Burial Ground is located at the intersection of 5th and Arch in Old City Philadelphia. It receives about 100,000 visitors annually and offers guided tours, but it's closed during the winter months, so check before you go. Or, you can always view Franklin's grave from the sidewalk through the fence. And while the trust always welcomes donations, when you're visiting Franklin's slab, they'd rather you throw praise than pennies.

Our next Founding Father, Alexander Hamilton, is buried a few blocks away from where his titular hip-hop Broadway musical opened to rave reviews in 2016. That story is on page 429.



Technical name for nose-picking: *rhinotillexis*.

HERE LIES ALEXANDER HAMILTON

If we'd written about Alexander Hamilton's grave site before mid-2015, this article would be a page or two shorter. But because one man was inspired by a history book, a whole new chapter has begun for a previously unsung Founding Father.

TRINITY CHURCHYARD

In 1804 Aaron Burr shot and killed Alexander Hamilton. In 2015 Lin-Manuel Miranda brought him back to life. But the story of Hamilton's final resting place begins in the 1660s when Dutch settlers in New Amsterdam started burying their dead on a small plot of land next to what is now Wall Street in Lower Manhattan. In 1697 the parish of Trinity Church built the first of three churches that have stood in that spot. The most recent is a Gothic building with a tall steeple completed in 1846. Once the nation's tallest building, the church is now dwarfed by skyscrapers. The graveyard's most famous occupant, Alexander Hamilton, rented pew number 92 at Trinity Church, even though he wasn't much of a churchgoer himself.

SELF-MADE MAN

What sets Hamilton apart from most of the other Founding Fathers is that he didn't come from a prominent family. So, unlike Washington, Jefferson, and Adams, his surname got him nowhere. Openly called a "bastard" by his contemporaries, Hamilton was born out of wedlock in 1757 in the Caribbean and was an orphan by age 11. As a teenager, he taught himself to read while working random jobs in St. Croix. He so impressed his elders that they paid for his secondary education in New York City. Hamilton arrived there in 1774 to attend King's College (now Columbia University), and was on a path to become a lawyer or a banker when he took up the fight against King George III and joined the militia. The young soldier worked his way up to become General George Washington's chief military aide during the Revolutionary War. A natural-born leader, Hamilton was later put in charge of the new Continental Army.

ON THE MONEY

One reason Hamilton's contributions aren't more widely known is that they dealt mostly with unglamorous pursuits, such as banking and deficits and economics. But his part in the founding of the United States was huge: he coauthored the "Federalist Papers," which led to the creation and then ratification of the U.S. Constitution (Hamilton was the only New Yorker to sign it). His input led to an independent judiciary, a professional

Cities with the most overall team sports titles: New York, Boston, Chicago, Montreal.

army, and an economy driven by industry and innovation. He later served as Secretary of the Treasury (America's first) under Washington, where he was the architect of the nation's banking and financial systems. As if that weren't enough, Hamilton also founded the U.S. Coast Guard and the *New York Post*. Also, unlike many of the other Founding Fathers who owned slaves, Hamilton was a staunch abolitionist who truly believed that all men are created equal. His most lasting legacy, however, is that his economic policies helped turn 13 weak colonies bankrupted by war into a strong United States. That legacy earned Hamilton a spot on the \$10 bill...which used to be the main reason people even knew his name. That, and how he was killed.

As a man who demanded satisfaction, Alexander Hamilton had a penchant for dueling.

I CHALLENGE YOU TO A DUEL!

As a man who demanded satisfaction, Alexander Hamilton had a penchant for dueling (an upper-class method of solving disagreements, in which two rivals face each other and fire their pistols at the same time). And he wasn't the most disciplined of the Founding Fathers. Any presidential aspirations Hamilton may have had were quashed in 1795 when, while serving in President Washington's cabinet, his extramarital affair with a woman named Maria Reynolds went public.

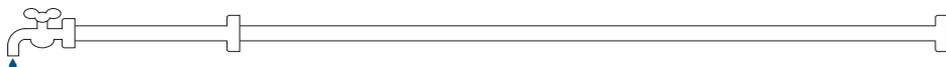
He resigned and went home to New York to mend things with his wife, Eliza. He started practicing law and had a bunch of kids, but he couldn't keep himself out of trouble.

Hamilton had been in a few duels before, though none had led to a shot being fired—duels were more of a way for him to make a point. And that may be what he was up to in 1804, when he relentlessly taunted his political rival, Vice President Aaron Burr, whom Hamilton publicly called “unprincipled, both as a public and private man.” After successfully preventing Burr from first becoming U.S. president and then New York governor, Hamilton published an open letter full of vague insults (vague because he knew his lack of specifics would anger Burr) that ended with, “I trust upon more reflection you will see the matter in the same light with me. If not, I can only regret the circumstances and must abide the consequences.”

There were consequences. As expected, Burr challenged Hamilton to a duel. At dawn on July 11, 1804, across the Hudson River in Weehawken, New Jersey, the two men faced off and fired their weapons. Hamilton's bullet hit a tree branch 12 feet above the ground. Burr's bullet tore through Hamilton's gut.

LAST RITES

Barely clinging to life, Hamilton was taken by boat back to Manhattan and placed in the upstairs bedroom of a friend's mansion. Knowing his end was near, Hamilton called for the Reverend Benjamin Moore, the rector of Trinity Episcopal Church, to give him communion, but Moore refused. Dueling, though technically legal at the time, was



Hawaiian Punch was first marketed as an ice cream topping.

frowned upon, so Moore (the future bishop of New York) didn't want it to appear as if the church approved of it. Besides, although Eliza was the devout Christian, Hamilton wasn't even a regular churchgoer.

Hamilton called for another reverend, who also refused (wrong denomination), so Hamilton called Moore back in and literally begged him for communion. With the reverend at his bedside, Hamilton professed his love of God and insisted that he'd never intended to shoot Burr, and that he forgave him for shooting him. (Some historians have speculated Hamilton told all this to the reverend in order to kill Burr's political career, which, true or not, is what happened.) Then he told the reverend that, if he were to recover, "I would employ all your influence in society to discountenance this barbarous custom." With Eliza and several of Hamilton's friends also putting pressure on Moore, he finally relented and gave the dying man communion. "I remained with him until 2 o'clock this afternoon," Moore wrote, "when death closed the awful scene—he expired without a struggle, and almost without a groan."

LAI D TO REST

Hamilton's funeral was the largest that had ever taken place in New York City up to that point. Thousands of mourners paid their respects as his body was taken from Jane Street to Trinity Church. Even though Hamilton didn't attend the church regularly, he had a lot of ties to it. In the past, he'd offered the clergy his legal services, and as a young soldier-in-training, he'd performed drills in the churchyard. And several family members were already interred there, most recently Hamilton's son Philip. (Ironically, three years earlier, Philip was killed in a duel—against someone who insulted his father—in the same spot where his father would be killed three years later.) After Hamilton was eulogized by the governor of New York, he was laid to rest beneath a large white obelisk surrounded by four urns, at the edge of the graveyard next to an iron fence looking over Rector Street. His epitaph reads:

The PATRIOT of incorruptible INTEGRI TY.

The SOLDIER of approved VALOUR

The STATESM AN of consummate WISDOM .

Whose TALENTS and VIRTUES will be admired

Long after this MARBLE shall have mouldered into DUST.

A WITNESS TO HISTORY

There have actually been three churches built on the site of Trinity Church. The first one, built in 1698, burned down during the Revolutionary War in the Great New York City Fire of 1776. The second, completed in 1790, was where George Washington and

St. George is the patron saint of leprosy, syphilis...and England.

other Founding Fathers worshipped when New York was the nation's capital. In the winter of 1838, the 200-foot-tall church was heavily damaged by snow and had to be torn down. The third church, completed in 1846, was well within the debris field when the World Trade Center was destroyed in the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The church was saved by a 70-year-old sycamore tree, which didn't survive. Today, an iron casting of the tree's roots are on display in the churchyard.

Looking up from Hamilton's grave site, the Freedom Tower looms overhead. Across Rector Street is an outlet shoe store. And all around you are hundreds of weather-beaten tombstones, some from as far back as the 1680s. At the base of Hamilton's grave, you're likely to find flowers, wreaths, and lots of coins—which makes a lot of sense for the man who established the U.S. Mint. The grave site was rededicated in 2014, and in 2018 the church underwent extensive renovations, making it more accessible to visitors. These days, there's almost always someone at the grave (when the churchyard is open). But until a few years ago, the most likely people you'd see there were Wall Street brokers taking their lunch break. Then a hip-hop musical turned it into the most visited graveyard in New York.

A TIP FROM UNCLE JOHN

Thinking of writing your own hit musical, like *Hamilton*? First, study the form by watching or listening to as many musicals as possible. You'll notice that they all have a similar structure, namely that songs aren't merely songs—they advance the action of the play, particularly the big emotional moments. Some experts say that the best way to start, after determining what your subject and story will be, is to figure out the emotional core of the play—what it's about, emotionally speaking. Knowing that can help you figure out the big moments best expressed through song, and you can plan your script around those.

WHO TELLS YOUR STORY?

Before *Hamilton* the musical, there was *Hamilton* the 2004 biography, written by Brooklyn-born journalist Ron Chernow. Chernow's sympathetic portrayal of Hamilton struck a chord that previous biographies hadn't. One reviewer described it as a “popular biography that should also delight scholars”; it spent three months on the *New York Times* best-seller list. And unlike Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's historically inaccurate poem that greatly embellished Paul Revere's midnight ride, Chernow tried to tell who Hamilton really was. “He had always been portrayed as this ferocious snob, the stooge of the plutocrats,” said Chernow. “For most Americans, there was a feeling that he was a second- or third-rate founder. And yet the more that I read about his achievements, they were so monumental that I decided that they needed to be up there with those of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin et al.”

And so did a rising Broadway playwright named Lin-Manuel Miranda, who read Chernow's book while vacationing in Mexico. Inspired, Miranda decided to



What's the difference between Broadway and Off-Broadway theaters?
Seats: Broadway theaters...

turn Hamilton's life into a hip-hop musical with minorities portraying the Founding Fathers, and he hired Chernow as a consultant, telling him, "I want historians to take this seriously"...not an easy task when a black Thomas Jefferson is rapping about meeting lots of ladies in Paris. But it worked.

Hamilton: An American Musical (starring Miranda as Alexander Hamilton) opened on Broadway—about six miles north of the Trinity Church graveyard—in August 2015. It became an instant phenomenon. Hamilton's grave site even gets mentioned in the musical's closing number, "Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Tells Your Story."

Before *Hamilton*, Hamilton's grave site seldom drew a crowd, except for yearly memorials on his birth and death dates. Thanks to the play, people now come every day. It's become something of a pilgrimage for fans to see the show and then pay their respects. "For years," said Rand Scholet, president of the Alexander Hamilton Awareness Society, "huge numbers of people have visited Washington's Mount Vernon, Jefferson's Monticello. Now Hamilton is getting his due."

HERSTORY

Located in the grass a few feet away from Hamilton's obelisk is an unassuming granite slab bearing the inscription:

E L I Z A
D A U G H T E R O F
P H I L I P S C H U Y L E R
W I D O W O F
A L E X A N D E R H A M I L T O N
I N T E R R E D H E R E

For 50 years after her husband's death, Eliza never remarried, and she visited his grave site often. Because she's a main character in both the book and the musical, her grave site now receives as many (some days more) gifts than her husband's. Largely forgotten until *Hamilton*, Eliza (or Betsey, as she was also called) is now being celebrated for, among other things, advocating for the building of the Washington Monument. She was on hand for the laying of the obelisk's cornerstone on July 4, 1848.

Hamilton fans even ask to see the grave of Eliza's sister, Angelica Schuyler Church, who had a brief flirtation with Alexander. Her remains are located inside a vault marked "Winchester."

A SINGULAR SENSATION

In April 2016, after *Hamilton* cleaned up at the Tony Awards and established itself as one of the most successful Broadway musicals of all time, a tourist snapped a photo

...have 500 or more; Off-Broadway theaters have 100 to 499.
Off-off Broadway theaters have fewer than 100.

that made headlines around the country. This one is from the *Hollywood Reporter*: “Lin-Manuel Miranda Pays Respects at Alexander Hamilton’s Grave.” (The fact that this photo was actually newsworthy is the kind of thing that pleases historians.) The musical was so influential, in fact, that it helped keep Alexander Hamilton’s portrait on the \$10 bill. He was initially going to be replaced by a woman, but in 2016 *Hamilton* fans helped convince the U.S. Treasury Department to instead replace Andrew Jackson on the \$20 bill with abolitionist Harriet Tubman.

Why has it taken so long for Hamilton to get his due? As Chernow explains, it’s because of who originally told the Founding Father’s story: “Hamilton’s political enemies were John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe—I just named presidents two, three, four, and five—and if history is written by the victors, history had very much been written by Alexander Hamilton’s enemies.”

THE CHURCHYARD TODAY

If you’re looking for a quiet graveyard, Trinity Church is not for you. The cacophony of car horns, squeaking breaks, and sirens can make it difficult to imagine what it was like in colonial days when horse carriages clotted up and down Wall Street, and the church steeple was the tallest thing around. The churchyard is the oldest of three cemeteries in Manhattan run by Trinity Church. The other two are Trinity Church Cemetery and Mausoleum in Upper Manhattan, and the Churchyard of St. Paul’s Chapel, which is still active today. A tour of all three cemeteries will take you to the graves of such luminaries as steamboat inventor Robert Fulton (1765–1815), whose monument is right next to Hamilton’s, and colonial American printer William Bradford (1660–1752). At the Trinity Church Cemetery and Mausoleum, located on Riverside Drive overlooking the Hudson River, the most famous grave belongs to John Jacob Astor (1763–1848), a business magnate whose family was known as the “landlords of New York,” and his son, millionaire John Jacob Astor IV, who died on the *Titanic*.

Bonus: In 1801 a New York sea captain named Robert Richard Randall left detailed plans in his will to create what would become the young nation’s first retirement home on Staten Island. Until it closed in 1978, thousands of old sailors lived at Sailors’ Snug Harbor, and most of them were buried there. (The cemetery made grim news in 2018 when more than 100 tombstones were discovered in a basement. They’d been taken there decades earlier to protect them from vandals, but now no one knows where the graves they belong to are.) The lawyer who drafted Randall’s will: Alexander Hamilton.

*Our final installment—on page 491—takes you to Monticello,
the home of one of Hamilton’s most bitter enemies.*



Alan Stillman started TGI Fridays so he could meet the flight attendants and models that lived in his neighborhood.

HERE LIES THOMAS JEFFERSON

As we learned in the previous installment of “Finding the Founding Fathers” (page 429), the reason Alexander Hamilton wasn’t better known (until the musical) was because “his history had very much been written by his enemies.” One of those “enemies,” Thomas Jefferson, wasn’t going to let anyone but himself tell his story...but that’s not how it worked out.

THE PROMISE

In Virginia’s Blue Ridge Mountains, about 100 miles southwest of Washington, D.C., there’s a clearing near the top of a forested hill where a large oak tree once stood. In the 1760s, two college students who’d been best friends since they were children spent many an hour studying together under that tree. They cherished each other and that spot so much that they made a pact: whichever one died first, he would bury the other one under that tree. Today, that spot is known as the Monticello Graveyard.

Compared to the other Founding Fathers’ graveyards, this one has the most complicated and at times ugliest history—and it’s still unfolding today. But it’s impossible to tell the story of the graveyard without telling the story of Monticello.

NATURE BOY

Of all the words used to describe Thomas Jefferson—revolutionary, statesman, writer, architect, inventor—at heart he was a farmer. His agrarian upbringing (his father was a farmer) helped form his belief in a small federal government that gave more rights to the states and to landowners like himself. While serving as the nation’s first secretary of state, under President George Washington, Jefferson clashed with Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton, who, like the president, wanted a strong federal government. It drove a wedge between Washington and Jefferson that would never be resolved. Jefferson’s decades-long feud with John Adams, however, did get resolved late in their lives, and the two Founding Fathers famously died on the same day: July 4, 1826—50 years after the Declaration of Independence was signed.

LITTLE MOUNTAIN

Born on April 13, 1743, Jefferson was the third of ten children. After his father died, Thomas, still just a teenager, inherited the family plantation—a 1,000-acre tract of land on rolling green hills overlooking Charlottesville, Virginia—that the family had acquired in 1735. Jefferson called the estate Monticello, an Italian word that translates to “hillock” or “little mountain.”

Inspired by Italian Renaissance architect Andrea Palladio, Jefferson started

1970s music artists The Captain and Tennille weren’t married when their record label told the world they were (so they got married).

designing his dream home in 1770. He hired the best builders from Charlottesville and used slaves to level the top of a hill and start construction on what would eventually become a 43-room brick mansion with a domed roof and pillared front entry. Because it wasn't completed until 1809, the final year of Jefferson's presidency, historians have called Monticello his "architectural autobiography." (Having trouble picturing this "neoclassical masterpiece in the Palladian style"? Take a look at a nickel—Jefferson's profile is on one side; Monticello is on the other.)

The 1760s and early 1770s were Jefferson's best years, when he and his young wife, Martha Wayles Skelton, started a family. A lawyer by day—he mostly represented slaves suing for their freedom—Jefferson spent his evenings playing music in the parlor (he on violin, Martha on piano). But tragedy was never far off in colonial times, and in 1773, he returned home from a trip to learn that his best friend, Dabney Carr—the one he'd made the burial pact with—had come down with a sudden illness and died. Grief-stricken, Jefferson paid to have his friend's body disinterred from a churchyard and buried under that oak tree. Carr became the Monticello Graveyard's first inhabitant.

RELEASE THE PRISONER

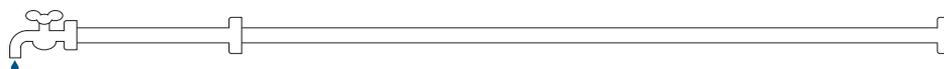
Jefferson took over Carr's legislative seat in the Virginia House of Burgesses, kicking off one of the most celebrated political careers in world history. Just three years later, the rising star would be chosen to pen the first draft of the Declaration of Independence, which included the revolutionary concept that "all men are created equal." Jefferson's checkered history as a slave owner aside, that phrase has been called "the most potent and consequential words in American history."

Now one of the most famous people in the fledgling nation, Jefferson was elected governor of Virginia in 1779. Three years later, his beloved wife Martha, a diabetic, died at 33, a few months after bearing her sixth child in ten years. Thomas never recovered from the heartbreak and, per her request, never remarried, though it's believed that he had a 40-year affair with a slave named Sally Hemings.

After resigning from George Washington's cabinet over political differences (and never speaking to him again), Jefferson was later elected the third U.S. president. His first term brought about the Louisiana Purchase, which doubled the size of the United States. His second term was marred by a failed embargo of British ships that nearly tanked the American economy. In December 1807, Jefferson announced that he would not seek a third term. The day before his successor, James Madison, took office, Jefferson compared his exit from public life to being "a prisoner, released from his chains."

DEFICIT SPENDING

After retiring to Monticello, Jefferson spent much of his time with his daughter Martha, one of only two of his and Martha's children who made it to adulthood. As old age set in, Jefferson kept himself busy inventing things, buying books, writing



You can bring your horse into the Fountain Inn in South Dakota...if it's wearing pants.

letters, buying books, tending to his farms, buying books, entertaining visitors (which he grew tired of), buying books, founding and designing the University of Virginia, buying books, and then selling 6,700 of those books to the Library of Congress to get out of the huge debt he'd acquired after buying so many books. (Not to mention all the money he'd spent remodeling his house over and over, and his failed horticultural projects, including the gardens at Monticello and five other farms in Virginia.) Congress paid Jefferson \$23,950 for his book collection, which came at a crucial time because British troops had burned the library's previous collection in the War of 1812.

Jefferson was 83 years old and \$100,000 in debt—more than \$2.5 million in today's money.

But it wasn't enough. In 1826 Jefferson was 83 years old and \$100,000 in debt—more than \$2.5 million in today's money. Slowly succumbing to rheumatoid arthritis and various urinary disorders, Jefferson woke up on July 4, 1826, and asked, "Is it the Fourth?" He died a few hours later. Martha had died 44 years earlier, and she was waiting for him in the Monticello Graveyard.

BLUEPRINTS FOR ETERNITY

The day after Jefferson died, he was given a simple funeral with few in attendance (by his own request). At 5:00 that afternoon, with rain falling, he became the family graveyard's 13th inhabitant. But he had no grave marker. Unlike most of the other Founding Fathers, who left behind detailed instructions for their interments, Jefferson was a bit more...scattered. After he was dead and buried, his daughter was going through his bedroom and found "on the torn back of an old letter" some scribbled notes that included his epitaph, along with a crude sketch of his obelisk with little squiggles where the words should go. He began with a philosophical question:

Could the dead feel any interest in monuments or other remembrances of them, when, as Anacreon says,

Oligê de keisometha Konis,
osteôn lythentôn,

the following would be to my manes the most gratifying: on the grave a plain die or cube of three feet without any mouldings, surmounted by an obelisk of six feet height, each of a single stone; on the faces of the obelisk the following inscription, & not a word more:

Here was buried
Thomas Jefferson
Author of the Declaration of American Independence
of the Statute of Virginia for religious freedom
& Father of the University of Virginia

Nutella was invented during WWII—an Italian pastry maker mixed in hazelnuts to make a chocolate ration go farther.

because by these, as testimonials that I have lived, I wish most to be remembered. [It is] to be of the coarse stone of which my columns are made, that no one might be tempted hereafter to destroy it for the value of the materials . . . On the die of the obelisk might be engraved:

Born April 2, 1743 O.S.

Died ___

It's interesting that of the three things Jefferson wished to be remembered for, being president of the United States wasn't one of them. Two other points about his note:

- The verse is by the ancient Greek poet Anacreon, known for his drinking songs and hymns. The full stanza translates to:

My soul to festive feelings true;
One pang of envy never knew;
And little has it learn'd to dread
The gall that Envy's tongue can shed.

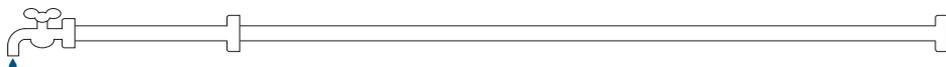
- The "O.S." refers to the Old Style Julian calendar that was in use until Jefferson was a boy. The British added 11 days to their calendar to join the rest of Europe, which was already following the newer Gregorian calendar. So even though the birth date on Jefferson's epitaph is April 2, his birthday is celebrated on April 13.

EVERYTHING MUST GO

Installing Jefferson's obelisk wasn't the family's first priority. If his daughter and her husband couldn't raise enough money to pay off the old man's debts, they'd have to sell Monticello. First to go were Jefferson's 140 slaves, who were sold at public auctions, as were most of Jefferson's possessions and artworks (only his bust of Voltaire remained). In accordance with Jefferson's will, Sally Hemings's children were freed.

By 1831, with all hopes of keeping Monticello in the family dashed, whatever remained was sold off to the highest bidders. Martha and her children moved to Edgehill, her husband Thomas Randolph's estate.

The only part of Monticello that the family didn't have to sell was the graveyard. Jefferson was concerned that if he lost his estate before he died, he would have no place to be buried. So he left the graveyard—and only the graveyard—to the Randolphs. It took Martha seven years to raise the funds for her father's obelisk, which was placed in the graveyard in 1833. It was made by two of Monticello's master carpenters, John M. Perry and James Dinsmore; they tried to follow Jefferson's instructions as best they could. But the epitaph couldn't be carved into the coarse stone that Jefferson had asked for, so it was inscribed onto a marble plaque that was attached to the marker.



Dirtiest place in a bathroom: the floor.

As Jefferson had predicted, trespassers soon started removing chunks from the obelisk, but not for the raw materials—they wanted souvenirs. Before long, the hard edges had been rounded, prematurely aging the rock. Both Thomas and Martha Randolph were dead by 1836, and the care of the graveyard went to their son Jeff Randolph. But he didn't spend much time tending to the cemetery, nor did the man who bought Monticello, and it fell into disrepair.

CHANGING HANDS

The man who purchased Monticello from Jefferson's estate was James Barclay, a 24-year-old Charlottesville druggist whom Martha had referred to as a "madman." Barclay paid \$7,500 (\$200,000 today) for the 500 acres that remained (out of 5,000). The Jeffersons wanted \$20,000, but it was a tough sell. Not only was it located well out of town up a windy wagon road on top of a mountain, but as *Smithsonian* magazine described the main house, such "iconoclastic Jeffersonian details as narrow staircases and ill-defined bedrooms struck some well-heeled Virginia couples as the enemy of gracious living."

Barclay didn't care about preserving the history of the house or the graveyard, and he didn't like the former president or his politics. After tearing out most of the poplar trees and gardens that Jefferson had so lovingly tended, Barclay put in a grove of mulberry trees and tried to turn Monticello into a silkworm farm. His plan failed, and he put the land up for auction in 1833, after owning it for only three years. All it would take was for one more unscrupulous buyer to erase Monticello from history.

THE COMMODORE

Luckily, Jefferson had some friends in high places, including one he'd never met, a retired U.S. Navy commodore named Uriah Phillips Levy. A century earlier, Levy's Jewish ancestors had escaped religious persecution in the Old World and settled in the Georgia colony. Now a wealthy real estate developer, Levy credited his own prosperity to Jefferson's struggle for religious freedom—including his rise to become the U.S. Navy's first Jewish commodore after making a name for himself in the War of 1812.

Levy wanted to fund construction of a life-size bronze statue of Jefferson inside the U.S. Capitol. He was in France in 1833, where he visited the Marquis de Lafayette, a 75-year-old Frenchman who'd been Jefferson's close friend and compatriot in the Revolutionary War. Lafayette agreed to donate his portrait of Jefferson to the sculptor, and asked Levy what had become of "the most beautiful house in America." Levy said he had never been to Monticello, but that he would check on it as soon as he was able.

MONEY PIT

A year later, Uriah Levy's bronze Jefferson statue was put on display in the U.S. Capitol rotunda, where it still is today (two floors above George Washington's empty

Nature's lie detector: When you tell a lie, your nose gets slightly warmer.

tomb). In 1836 Levy (whose other claim to fame was his successful campaign to end flogging as a punishment in the navy) set his sights on buying Monticello. Barclay had already sold off a lot of the land, and various disputes and lawsuits delayed the sale for another two years. When Levy finally took over ownership—for \$2,700—the land was overgrown and the house was falling apart. But Levy didn't care. "My heart leaped," he reportedly told friends. Now considered one of America's first historical preservationists, Levy began the arduous task of restoring Monticello. One of the first things he did was to take the plaque bearing Jefferson's epitaph into the house before someone stole it. Trespassers were helping themselves to Jefferson's obelisk chunk by chunk.

In 1838 Colonel Jeff Randolph (Jefferson's grandson) took possession of the plaque and put up a nine-foot-tall brick wall around the graveyard. He left a gap in the wall next to Jefferson's obelisk so people could view it through an iron fence. After Jefferson's daughter, Martha, died that same year, Colonel Randolph buried her in the grave next to Jefferson's mother's. Randolph's wall did little to deter the vandals, though, and by the time the Civil War rolled around, Monticello Graveyard was in near ruins. Here's a description from an 1861 article in the *Charleston Mercury*:

You climb, and climb, and climb...until you unexpectedly emerge in a small clearing around which a somewhat dilapidated, square brick wall runs. The iron gate is open, and as you enter, the eye glancing over a dozen or more marble slabs and head-stones rests on a granite pyramid, supported by a block of the same material, rudely hewn and blackened with age, which you know at once to be Jefferson's tomb.

'TIL THE COWS COME HOME

Back at the house, Commodore Levy had been making progress in his restoration, but he was slowed by old age and mired in a struggle with his heirs over who would inherit the estate. In his will, Levy bequeathed Monticello to "the people of the United States for the sole purpose of establishing an agricultural school." But while his children were fighting over who'd get the land, the Civil War broke out and the Confederate government seized control of Monticello—which was in Virginia, a Southern slave state—and put it up for sale.

Confederate colonel Benjamin Franklin Ficklin paid \$80,500 in Confederate money for the property. (Prior to the war, Ficklin helped start the Pony Express, a mail service that greatly sped up transcontinental communication.) During the Civil War, he used the house as a convalescent home for wounded rebel soldiers. In the wintertime, it was used to keep cattle warm, and the upstairs bedrooms of Monticello were used to store grain. An 1864 *New York Times* article decried, "Shame! Shame upon our thoughtless countrymen. Why should they be so disrespectful to the



Civil War general Robert E. Lee traveled with a pet chicken, Nellie.
It laid the eggs he ate for breakfast.

sepulcher of the great patriot of the Revolution?” (After the war, Ficklin was arrested for assassinating President Abraham Lincoln—and later freed after the capture of John Wilkes Booth.)

NOBODY HOME

The Confederacy’s defeat put the ownership of Monticello into question, and several of Levy’s heirs tried to claim it as theirs. As the legal battles dragged on, no one lived at Monticello for the next 17 years. And it showed. “The windows are broken,” Congressman Augustus Albert Hardenbergh (D-NJ) lamented to Congress after visiting the estate in 1878. “The room in which Jefferson died is darkened; all around it are the evidences of desolation and decay.” He proposed that the federal government claim ownership of the estate. But then, in 1879, another congressman, Jefferson Monroe Levy (D-NY)—Uriah’s nephew—bought out the rest of his family and took sole ownership. He paid \$10,000, the equivalent of \$240,000 today. And he would end up living at Monticello longer than Thomas Jefferson did.

Levy made it clear from the get-go that he had no intention of selling Monticello, and he continued his late uncle’s mission to restore it. Within a decade, the estate was looking much more like its former self. And Congress tried once again to buy it. The answer was still no. Levy was using Monticello as a summer home, and when he was home, he charged a 50¢ entrance fee to anyone who wanted to view the house. (He reportedly gave the money to Charlottesville charities.)

When Congress was unable to obtain Monticello, it set its sights on the graveyard. The plan: turn it into a national monument. Jefferson’s heirs, which now exceeded 50, weren’t interested. Nor was Levy. He owned the land surrounding the cemetery, and although he allowed visitors into Monticello, the graveyard was off limits to all but the Jeffersons.

THE OBELISK GOES SOUTH

But even though it couldn’t own Jefferson’s grave site, in 1878 Congress passed a resolution to pay for the restoration of the crumbling obelisk, along with a stronger wall to protect the graveyard. Unfortunately, the coarse stone monument was in such poor condition that it couldn’t be repaired, so Congress reallocated the funds

A TIP FROM UNCLE JOHN

Are you planning to renovate your old house? You don’t have to do what Thomas Jefferson did and spend several decades and most of your fortune to do it. According to *Mother Nature Network*, one way to save on home renovations is to make what’s old new again. For example, instead of spending thousands on brand-new furniture, go to thrift stores and yard sales and buy beat-up old couches and chairs. Then spend a few hundred to have them refurbished and reupholstered.

Another tip: If your home’s hardwood floors are scratched or faded, it’s less expensive to restore the hardwood than to replace it. And “original hardwood floors” will increase your home’s resale value.

to replace it with a brand-new monument that was built exactly to Jefferson's specifications (right down to the "O.S."). One difference: the replacement obelisk is nearly twice as tall.

As for the old one, Jefferson's heirs gave it to the University of Missouri in 1883, along with the original plaque. It's not exactly clear why the gravestone ended up there, but it does make sense in one way, because the University of Missouri was the first college to be founded in the states that President Jefferson had acquired in the Louisiana Purchase. The obelisk and plaque were initially put on display on campus, but time was taking its toll on them, so they spent most of their 130 years at the university in a storage room. By 2013 they were so in danger of crumbling away into nothing that the Smithsonian Institution offered—at no cost to the school—to restore the headstone and plaque. The project took two years of painstaking work to complete. Today, the plaque is once again firmly attached to the obelisk, which you can find on campus in the Jefferson Garden.

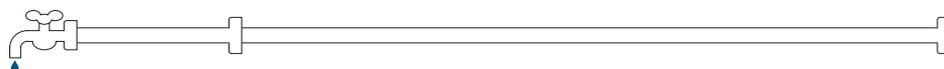
EMINENT DOMAIN

In 1912 Maud Wilson Littleton, the wife of New York congressman Martin Littleton, had dinner at Monticello and was aghast to discover that the pictures on the walls were of the Levy family. "I did not get the feeling," she later wrote, "of being in the house Thomas Jefferson built and loved and made sacred." Littleton, or "the Lady of Monticello" as the newspapers called her, mounted a massive public campaign to wrestle Monticello away from the Levy family. It was a campaign that had, as the *Washington Post* described it, "a strong subtext of anti-Semitism." Referring to Levy as "greedy and unpatriotic," Littleton published pamphlets that accused the owners of letting Monticello "fall into ruin" (a lie that she later recanted).

Jefferson Levy countered that he was indeed caring for Thomas Jefferson's legacy, a big part of which was honoring the rights of landowners. The three-term congressman wasn't about to let the government take it from his family by eminent domain. At a contentious congressional hearing, Littleton testified that Uriah Levy's will bequeathed Monticello "to the people of the United States." She displayed photographs of the overgrown graveyard and said the Jefferson family rarely ever visited it. (The Jeffersons were firmly on the side of Levy.)

Levy's colleague, Senator Albert Cummins of Iowa, was on Littleton's side, and issued this threat: "When we build a railroad, if we find it necessary to take a man's property, we can take it by condemnation proceedings. And if the government of the United States wants Monticello, it can take it."

A joint resolution to take Monticello by eminent domain barely failed, and Levy had won round one. "When the White House is for sale," he said, "then I will consider an offer for Monticello." But Littleton didn't let up. She set up "campaign



Pringles flavors available outside the U.S.: blueberry hazelnut, prawn, and turkey.

headquarters” in New York City, and enlisted some big names to her cause, including President Woodrow Wilson.

As the years wore on, Levy eased up on his stance—and even considered an offer to turn Monticello into a presidential retreat, like Camp David in Maryland. Then World War I put everything on hold. By the end of the war, Levy’s fortune was dwindling, and he offered up Monticello for \$500,000, half of its estimated worth. A year before his death in 1923, Levy sold Monticello to a newly formed nonprofit group, the Thomas Jefferson Foundation. Sixty years later in 1985, a ceremony was held there honoring the Levy family, without whom Monticello might not have survived the 19th century.

THE GRAVE SITE TODAY

The work that the Levys had done on the house was admirable, but it would take a lot more to restore it to its condition of 1809. Today, a century after taking over Monticello, the Thomas Jefferson Foundation reports that more than 440,000 people visit every year, quite a feat considering the historic landmark’s remote location. (George Washington’s Mount Vernon, in the suburbs of D.C., gets more than a million visitors a year.)

From the visitor center, just a short drive up a windy road out of Charlottesville, you can take a shuttle bus the rest of the way to Monticello, or you can walk (it’s half a mile). From the top of the mountain, you can look out on rolling green hills that look much as they did when Monticello was being built. A short walk from the house takes you to the base of stone steps that lead up to an iron gate with a placard that says, “This Graveyard Plot is the Private Property of Thomas Jefferson’s Descendants.”

You can’t get close enough to touch the headstone, but you can toss a nickel through the gate. On the base of the platform, directly beneath Jefferson’s epitaph, is an inscription for his daughter Martha. Also buried in the plot are Jefferson’s wife Martha, another daughter, and his son-in-law. The 0.75-acre graveyard now contains more than 225 people, and three to four more are interred there each year. They’re either related to Jefferson, or to someone with a connection to the family. (Several descendants of Jefferson’s friend Dabney Carr are buried there.) But there is one group of people who cannot be buried at Monticello, though they’re trying to change that.

THE RETURN OF SALLY HEMINGS

In 1998 the scientific journal *Nature* published the results of DNA tests that concluded there is a “high probability” that Thomas Jefferson was “the father of Eston Hemings, and that he was likely the father of all six of Sally Hemings’s children listed in Monticello records.” But there’s also a slight chance the father was Thomas Jefferson’s younger brother, Randolph. That’s one of the reasons the Monticello Association, a group of Jefferson’s descendants that maintains the graveyard, won’t allow any of Sally Hemings’s

descendants to be buried there. The other reason is that they don't believe Thomas Jefferson would have done something like that. In 2002 they released a statement:

The Monticello Association's 67-5 decision not to admit the Hemings was not based on race, as some have asserted. It would have been shockingly out of character for Jefferson to have sexually exploited a 13- or 14-year-old child whom he owned and to conduct such a relationship under the eyes of his daughters and his 11 grandchildren. In his Notes on the State of Virginia, he singled out for particular criticism the sexual exploitation of slave women, which he described as "unremitting despotism" by the master and "degrading submissions" by the victim. He condemned in particular the effect of such behavior on the master's children.

The Monticello Association has proposed building a second cemetery at Monticello for the Hemings family. But the Thomas Jefferson Foundation, Inc., which has been in charge of the rest of the property since 1923, has accepted the results of the DNA test. After a 25-year campaign, in 2018 the Sally Hemings exhibit opened at Monticello in the room where she and her brother most likely lived. For more than a century prior to that, it was used as a bathroom.

Another group called the Thomas Jefferson Heritage Society actively disputes the DNA test results, and claims that the Monticello Society has bowed to "political correctness" by including the Hemings exhibit.

CHANGING TIMES

In February 2019, a Caucasian man named Lucian Truscott and an African American man named Shannon Lanier appeared together on CBS *This Morning*. Both men are direct descendants of Thomas Jefferson, the former from Jefferson's marriage to Martha, the latter from Jefferson's 40-year relationship with Sally Hemings. "I don't want to be buried there," said Lanier, "but I should have a right to be buried there." He said he's pleased that Truscott and some other descendants of Martha Jefferson have welcomed Sally's family. The two sides "have been loving and knowing each other... as cousins." But he said there's still work to be done. "When we get to a point where... the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners can sit down at the table of brotherhood and reconciliation, and be buried together, then times have changed." As it stands today, however, the graveyard is off-limits to them. The location of Sally's grave is unknown, which is the case for just about all of the 600 slaves who lived at Monticello while Jefferson was alive.

The fact that the Hemings story is still making headlines is yet another indication that the Founding Fathers' stories are still unfolding. And those stories probably won't be over as long as the country they founded survives. At that point, the only evidence that they ever existed in the first place may be their tombstones.

No one has ever won the video game *Missile Command*. It's impossible: the creator was inspired by Cold War-era "Mutually Assured Destruction."