



HISTORICAL
BACKGROUND

SURVEY OF
HISTORIC SITES
& BUILDINGS

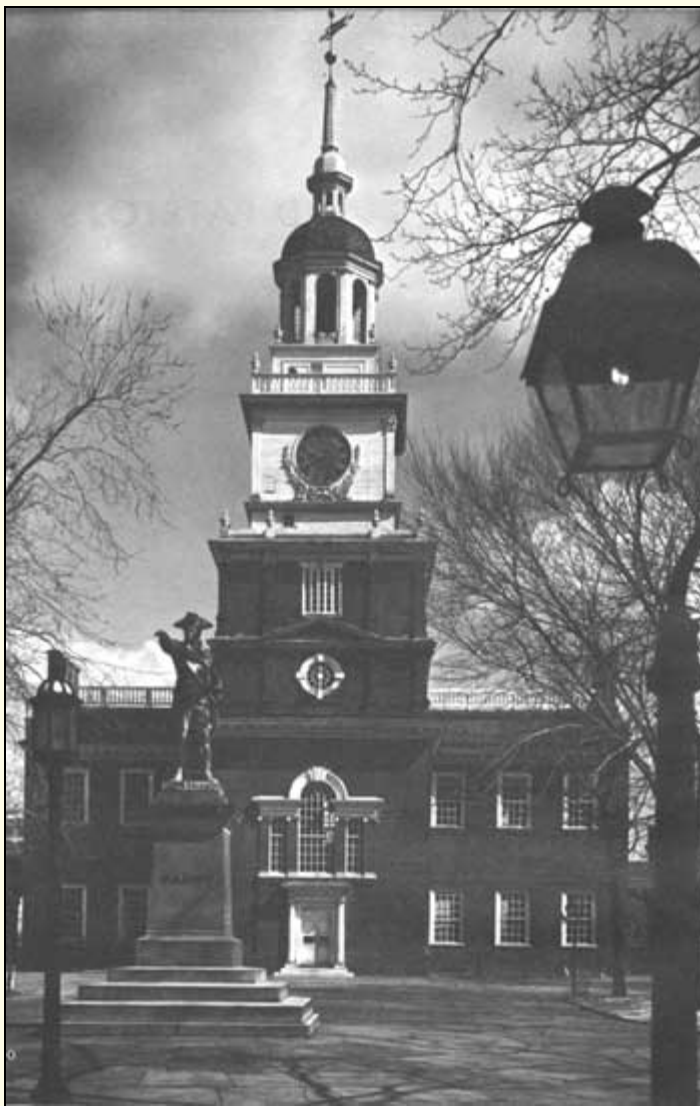
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COLONIALS AND PATRIOTS



Historic Places Commemorating Our Forebears 1700-1783



Independence Hall, Pa. *(National Park Service)*



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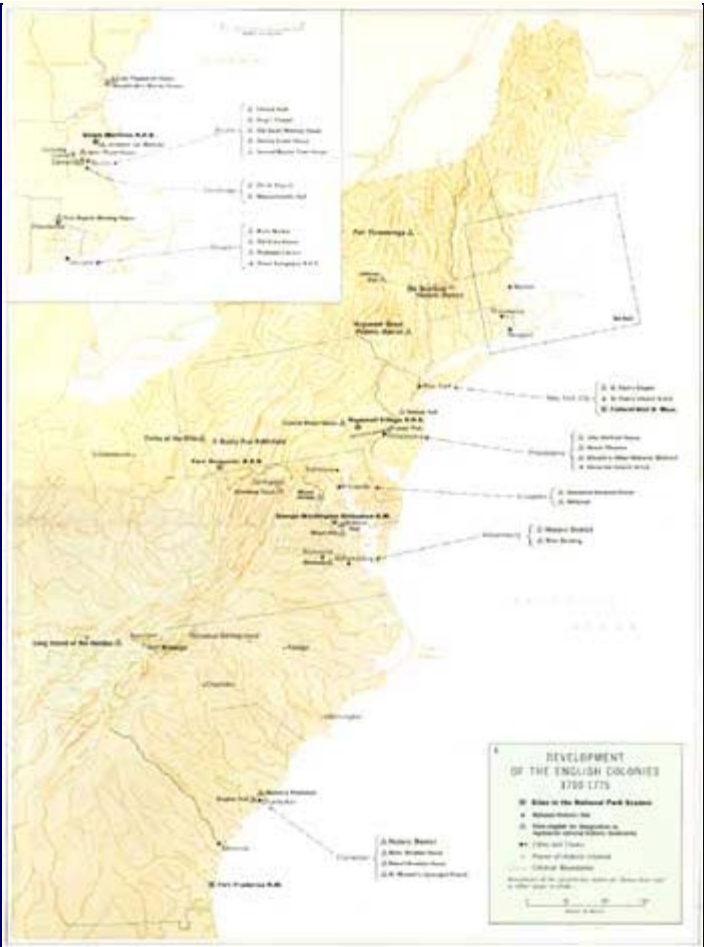
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Historical Background

THE YEARS SKETCHED out here, 1700-1783, were very momentous ones in the history of our land. From shaky beginnings, and often through great travail, the English Colonies on the mainland of North America had for the most part passed through their infancy by 1700. Some were still quite young, and the 13th colony had not yet been established, but the point of no return had long since been passed for many Englishmen-turned-Americans. Long before 1775 the colonials had drifted away from dependence upon the mother country. Along with independent thought came independent actions, which in time produced political maturity. The English colonials became American patriots, and a new nation emerged. The transition was not sudden, as it is sometimes represented. Max Savelle observed that the War for Independence was "not so much for independence, as for the recognition of a maturity and a *de facto* nationhood that already existed." [1]



Map I. Development of the English Colonies, 1700-1775. (click on image for an enlargement in a new window)



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Last Updated: 09-Jan-2005



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Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings

ENGLISH COLONIAL and Revolutionary War sites and buildings are abundant along the Atlantic coast, particularly in the New England and Middle Atlantic States. War and economic distress have taken a great toll in the South, and War for Independence sites were fewer there to begin with, but there are still many important locations. Selection was a major problem in almost all phases of the Survey's work. Even a rigid application of the criteria of exceptional value barely reduced the field to manageable proportions. Approximately 650 places relating to the period 1700-1775 were noted and evaluated from written sources, for instance. Field historians then made formal visits to more than a hundred of these. The Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments has approved 38 sites and buildings and 5 historic districts in this period as meeting the criteria and therefore eligible for the Registry of National Historic Landmarks; and an additional 22 sites in the period of the War for Independence.

Many important sites have been "lost" in one way or another. The exact locations of some, such as Fort Moore, a South Carolina trading post, are unknown in the light of present knowledge. Others have lost their integrity because of undesirable encroachments or the destruction of original features. Among these may be noted the Carlyle House, a magnificent Georgian mansion built by one of the founders of Alexandria, Va., and the Lucas Plantation, where 16-year-old Eliza Lucas demonstrated that indigo could become a major export crop in South Carolina. Most of the lost sites have been obliterated by the growth of communities and industries since the colonial period. For example, New Post, Spotsylvania County, Va., headquarters of the General Post Office for America for 23 years, has been destroyed by a sand-and-gravel operation; the Albany Congress site by the streets and buildings of downtown Albany, N.Y.; the site of the Boston Tea Party by a commercial building; and battle areas of Long Island, Manhattan, Trenton, Germantown, and Savannah have been overwhelmed by urban expansion.

Most of the important 18th-century sites and buildings that survive appear to be protected adequately against destruction. A number of them are in State or municipal ownership while others—such as

Boston's Old South Meeting House and Virginia's Stratford Hall—are well maintained by private organizations. Some notable restorations have been accomplished within the past generation, of which the most famous is Colonial Williamsburg.

The toll among less significant sites and buildings continues, however. The boom period since World War II, with its accompanying acceleration of industrial, housing, and highway development, has greatly increased the threat. A particular threat, the full extent of which is not yet known, is the interstate highway program. The damage is being offset and blocked to some extent by an increasing awareness of preservation needs by historical societies and the public at large.

Groups and individuals active in historic preservation are too numerous to mention individually. They range from the National Trust for Historic Preservation through such regional organizations as the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, State groups such as the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, to groups such as the Historic Charleston Foundation, Inc., the Deerfield (Mass.) Heritage Foundation, and the Elfreth's Alley Association of Philadelphia. The work done by these groups, and many others like them, is invaluable in the preservation of our historic heritage.



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aspects of the Revolution. It also discusses quite fully the British and European situations of the period and gives a briefer treatment of the colonial home front. An excellent one-volume treatment of the entire Revolutionary episode.

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Credits

This publication is one of a series designed to make available to the public the studies of the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings. This is Volume VI of that study written by Frank B. Sarles, Jr. and Charles E. Shedd and edited by John Porter Bloom and Robert M. Utley.

Portions of the 1964 document have been omitted and only minor revisions have been made to the original text, however the reader should note that some of the information contained herein *may* not reflect current conditions. Current color photos of historic sites are courtesy of current property owners who are the caretakers of National Historic Landmark properties that are in private ownership. Additional historical site information can be obtained by visiting

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[American Independence and Westward Expansion
Battlefields of the Revolution](#)

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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 64—60050

Foreword to Published Edition

The sources of history are many, involving written documents and physical remains. This volume deals with the great "outdoor archives" of American history as found in historic sites and structures. A visitor at one of these places may stop time at a great moment of history and look with increased understanding into the past. No amount of reading can ever supplant the vivid imagery and feeling of identity with the past which one contact with the site itself will evoke.

Historians and archeologists of the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, after comprehensive fieldwork, prepared the basic studies from which this volume has been drawn. The studies were reviewed by the Consulting Committee, composed of eminent historians, architects, and archeologists not otherwise

connected with the Park Service, and also by the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments. The findings of the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings, achieved through this process, are made available to the public by means of this volume.

The Survey's purpose is the evaluation of places important in U.S. history and prehistory. Some sites and buildings may be considered for addition to the National Park System. Others, also of outstanding importance, may be designated Registered National Historic Landmarks, showing that they have exceptional value for commemorating and illustrating America's heritage. The Secretary of the Interior will upon request provide engraved certificates and bronze markers for Registered National Historic Landmark properties, attesting to their value and encouraging the community and the owner to respect their integrity. Many other places of general interest have been included in the volume, selected from the large number of sites considered by the Survey.

We believe that this book will be of widespread interest, especially to travelers, historians, students, and preservation groups. "The old order changeth, yielding place to new," but, important as this progress is, it should not result in the thoughtless destruction of sites and buildings of great historic value. We hope earnestly that this volume may focus attention on, and stimulate further activities in, the safeguarding and interpretation of an important segment of our heritage.

GEORGE B. HARTZOG, Jr.
Director
National Park Service

Introduction to Published Edition

The conversion of Colonials into American Patriots provides one of the most fascinating and significant chapters of the history of our Nation. The fascination derives in part from the unique circumstances which caused the Colonials to migrate to the "New World," and the forces which molded and shaped their character as a people. The significance of the story is seen in the basic ideals and aspirations of the patriots that produced the independent United States of America, and changed fundamentally the pattern of world relationships.

COLONIALS AND PATRIOTS has two parts. The first offers a brief historical background for the period 1700-83 in American history. The second represents the major contribution made in this work. It consists of classified, carefully evaluated descriptions of historic places that should be visited by one who wishes to become acquainted with American history in its "third dimension." This is the dimension of place. Essential as academic learning is, written history cannot impress upon one's mind and spirit the feeling that

comes from standing in the room where a great event transpired or walking the ground where a momentous battle occurred. It has been the privilege of the historians and archeologists of the National Park Service to work primarily in this "third dimension" of history and it is their privilege to communicate their finding to the public now in this form. It will be the reader's privilege and challenge to seek out the experience and inspiration offered by this guide-book into history.

Part II of the Table of Contents gives one a quick notion of the major historic sites which pertain to 18th-century American history. Eighteen of these areas are units of the National Park System, and represent the Federal Government's major share in the preservation of this particular segment of the national historical heritage. Four National Historic Sites in non-Federal ownership which pertain to this period are listed; and 64 places, including six historic districts, have been classified as being of exceptional value in commemorating and illustrating the history of the United States, and are therefore eligible for Registered National Historic Landmark status (*Wed Edition Note: those sites which have been officially registered as National Historic Landmarks show their date of designation next to their name*). These are preserved mainly by the efforts of historical and patriotic societies, State and local governmental agencies, and in some cases by private individuals. A much longer list of "Other Sites Considered," each described briefly, is included, as well as a list of "Sites Also Noted." Though not all-inclusive, this Table of Contents indicates the wide coverage provided by the Survey.

Turning the pages of descriptions, farther on, one is struck by the rich variety of experience he may capture by visiting the many places described. Units of the National Park System, for example, capture this variety in the differences between the near-tropical rural setting of Fort Frederica, Ga., and the urban surroundings of Federal Hall in New York City. Or compare Salem Maritime National Historic Site, in Massachusetts, with Kings Mountain National Military Park, in South Carolina. One of these places will remind us of the imperial rivalry which required the English Government to make large expenditures for protection against Spaniards in Florida. At the next are reflected the arduous labors in committee and Congress, in urban centers, to form "a more perfect union." In Salem we may think of the magnificent trading ships that braved the seven seas to bring wealth to resolute New Englanders, and at Kings Mountain we do homage to equally resolute southern frontiersmen who contributed a notable victory of arms to the patriot record in the struggle for independence.

Perusing the much longer lists of sites eligible to become Registered National Historic Landmarks, and other non-National Park Service sites, we find equal if not greater opportunities for drawing contrasts. Visiting the sites, one may imagine what life must have been like in a modest house on Elfreth's Alley, Philadelphia; or what suffering must have transpired in the hospital hut at Valley Forge, Pa., in the winter of 1777-78 (now a unit of the National Park System); or what experiences the students encountered in the Wren Building of

William and Mary College, Williamsburg, Va.; or where the men came from whose bones were discovered still aboard the Gundelo (small sailing vessel) *Philadelphia* when it was raised from the bottom of Lake Champlain, where it had lain since the Battle of Valcour Bay.

Pursuing avenues of speculation or reverie, such as these sites may stimulate in one's imagination, it is easy to see that this book contains heady materials. Do not read it if you cannot cope with the possibility of arousing in yourself an irresistible urge to get out, to travel, to set your feet onto the ground trod by famous men of our country's earliest days—and trod also by anonymous men of humble birth who contributed their much or their little in the manner of people of all ages.

This volume represents the work of several National Park Service historians. Frank B. Sarles, Jr., and Charles E. Shedd, Jr., prepared the major portion, as Survey historians for their respective Regional Offices in Richmond and Philadelphia. They did the original work in library research and study, the preparation of the inventory, and the major part of the on-site investigation of all sites that could be reached during a limited available time. Editorial labors were shared by Historian Robert M. Utley of the Santa Fe Regional Office and Historian John Porter Bloom of the Washington Office. Dr. Bloom was responsible for the final stages of preparation of the manuscript and related work of production. The Service's Branch of Publications also gave valuable assistance.

As indicated in the acknowledgments at the back of the book, credit for collaboration on the finished product is shared widely by persons both in and out of the Service. This book and the work of the National Park Service in the general field of historic preservation have benefited inestimably from the assistance provided by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States, which is a co-sponsor of the Survey.

JOHN O. LITTLETON, *Chief*
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Acknowledgments to Published Edition

The work of the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings profits from the experience and knowledge of many persons and organizations. Efforts are made to solicit the considered opinion of as many qualified people as possible in reaching final selection of the most significant sites. Assistance in the preparation of this volume from the following is gratefully acknowledged:

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