50 YEARS AFTER INDEPENDENCE:

PRESERVATION OF PLACES, SPACES, AND MEMORY

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION

BY EMILY A. WEILER

RONALD MORRIS- THESIS CHAIRPERSON

BALL STATE UNIVERSITY

MUNCIE, INDIANA

MAY, 2012
This thesis will study three specific subjects in order to document changing viewpoints in American culture in relation to nationalism, patriotism, and memories from older generations. It will be studying a space- Bunker Hill, a place- Independence Hall and a person- Marquis Lafayette at approximately fifty years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Each subject will explore the ways the memory of the soldiers involved in the American Revolution have been preserved and remembered. It is the intent of this thesis to establish the importance of the passage of time especially when it comes to preserving historic artifacts and buildings and the way the changing associations have on how we preserve these artifacts.
Acknowledgements

A lot of people pushed me in order to complete this thesis. Firstly, and most importantly, I would like to thank my thesis committee for their support: chairperson, Ronald Morris, and readers Dr. Daniel Ingram and Frank Hurdis Jr. Each person gave valuable input and helped direct my research into intriguing new directions. I thank them for providing valuable feedback and amazing guidance during the whole process.

I would also like to acknowledge the support of the director of Ball State’s Historic Preservation program Duncan Campbell. Duncan’s Historic Preservation Colloquium class provided the initial inspiration for studying Lafayette’s character in the 1820’s. Duncan also pushed me into continuing with the topic. Even when I hit several dead ends in my research, he refused to allow me to change my topic, and I thank him for this.

Finally, I would like to recognize the support of my friends, colleagues, and family. Without your patience, love, and motivation, I would have never been able to finish.
# Table of Contents

Preface ................................................................................................................. i

Chapter 1: Introduction ......................................................................................... 1

Chapter 2: The Triumphal Tour of Marquis Lafayette ........................................... 8

Chapter 3: Independence Hall ............................................................................. 23

Chapter 4: Bunker Hill Monument ....................................................................... 35

Chapter 5: Conclusion ......................................................................................... 46

Bibliography ......................................................................................................... 54
Preface

This thesis began as an exploration of Marquis Lafayette’s impact on historic preservation during his Triumphant Tour of 1824-25. After careful research, I observed an entirely different theme in the minds of early American preservationists. Although Lafayette certainly had an impact, the emphasis Americans placed on memory was the initial call for the protection of Revolutionary War artifacts and landmarks. As the generation that fought for independence in the United States diminished in number, the younger generations began to push for the preservation of the memories of their ancestors. The approaching fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the presence of the Nation’s Guest provided the tipping point for the early preservation efforts in the United States.

This thesis will examine the importance of the ways Americans valued their past. The passage of time allows memories to fade and perceptions to change, vastly altering the way people remember and perceive history. Historical significance is a major factor in a preservationist’s vocabulary. Not only is it needed for the nomination of buildings and structures into the National Register of Historic Places, it is one of the fundamental arguments for the preservation of sites and buildings.

The earliest commemoration and preservation efforts were based on a reinvigorated interest in United States history. This thesis will look at three events
approximately fifty years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence: The
Triumphant Tour of the Marquis de Lafayette, the restoration of Independence Hall,
and the construction of the Bunker Hill Monument. It will chronicle the evolving
trends in American memory for each event or place until the present day. From this,
I hope to further identify the earliest roots of the preservation movement, as well as,
determine specific trends in the way we perceive history.

I am using primary and secondary sources: books published in a variety of
time periods as well as contemporary journal articles which provide a wide range of
viewpoints to compare. Earlier journal records provide documentation for the earliest
mindset associated with the preservation of these memories and spaces. Later journal
articles and general histories expand on the process of remembering and associations
to each place. Photographs are also included for examples of historic artifacts and to
be a visual enhancement with the use of architectural descriptions.
Chapter 1:

Introduction

For years, preservationists and historians have been contemplating the origins of the preservation movement in the United States. Many cite the formation of the earliest preservation societies in the late 1800’s as the beginning of a full-scale movement. Others use the legislative acts passed by Congress to outline the progression of the movement. I, however, believe the stirrings of preservation began much earlier than was originally considered.

Fifty years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence, America was starting to realize the significance of the memories associated with various battlefields and buildings important to the Revolution. The mid-1820’s provided a perfect atmosphere for developing interest in the history of the young United States. Three national events provided a tipping point for a major push to reevaluate the memories of American Independence: The Triumphal Tour of Marquis Lafayette, the fiftieth anniversaries of the Battle of Bunker Hill and the signing of the Declaration of Independence, and the deaths of Thomas Jefferson and John Adams in 1826.

Marquis Lafayette, a general in the Revolutionary War, came back to the United States for a thirteen-month tour in 1824 to visit wartime friends and places associated with democracy, progress, and independence. His visit sparked the need to use public
spaces for large assemblies where grand speeches were delivered and for the Nation’s Guest to receive visitors. His presence led to the re-naming of cities, rivers, buildings, plazas, and other natural formations in order to honor his involvement in American independence. Lafayette also inspired memorabilia, toasts, balls, and public gatherings during his stay. Americans rejoiced as the last living Revolutionary War general toured their towns.

Lafayette’s visit came one year before the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. He was present for the ceremonies at the anniversary of Battle of Bunker Hill and even laid the cornerstone of the monument commemorating the battle. Although many cities celebrated Independence Day prior to 1826, the fifty-year anniversary provided extra reason for celebration. Motivated by Lafayette’s visit, Americans celebrated the memory of the living and mourned the deceased. They also had a bigger reason to celebrate: growth. Many of the speeches given during Lafayette’s stay made a reference to the topic of progress. The United States was expanding at very fast rate. At the beginning of the Revolution, thirteen colonies had been established; fifty years later, there were twenty-four states in the Union. The physical expansion seemed limitless.¹

The festivities of July 4th, 1826 were tied with the loss of two legendary Americans: Thomas Jefferson and John Adams. The death of both presidents reminded Americans of the dwindling number of people associated with the Revolution. Lafayette’s presence and the passing of two notable national leaders caused Americans to begin to realize that the older generations were not going to be able to represent the memory of the American Revolution forever. Historian, Andrew Burnstein wrote “two
generations, a fast-fading and a fast-rising one, came together to mark the meaning and character of the Revolution. It was a moment of self-conscious thanksgiving. It was an act of naming- and thereby moving past- a heroic age."

The younger generations were vastly different than their predecessors, born before Americans received independence. They were better educated as news, books, and printed materials circulated freely. Information became readily available and the printed word gave the opportunity to collect the memories of the older generations. There was a shift from relying on passed-down tales of the revolution to using literature for their education. The press had become an important conduit of cultural messages as literacy rates increased. The Second Great Awakening revived religion and encouraged social activism. The young nation also was dealing with major social problems. Antebellum America was filled with tension as the rapidly expanding nation struggled with how to deal with the growth. The nation was further split as political parties argued over the strength of the federal government and the need for a national banking system. America’s Jubilee provided a welcome distraction to the bitter battles and chaos.

The events during the nation’s fiftieth birthday laid the groundwork for the reevaluation and preservation of sites and buildings associated with American independence. Two sites with direct connection to the Revolution will be explored: the preservation of Independence Hall and commemoration of the Battle of Bunker Hill. The continuing restoration attempts for each site indicate waves of reassessments of their individual histories as well as nation-wide association with the preservation movement. I have also chosen to include a chapter on Lafayette and his tour as the crucial link between the two sites. This association to his character also showed changes in public
perceptions both during and after his lifetime, but his presence in the nineteenth century had a noticeable impact on America.

Prior to the nineteenth century, Americans showed little interest in saving the built environment. Early preservation societies began to form in the late 1800’s. These small not-for-profit groups were dedicated to preserving nationally significant sites. The first of such groups, founded in 1856, was the Mount Vernon Ladies Association. This Association, led by Pamela Ann Cunningham, helped fundraise the first restoration attempt of George Washington’s home at Mount Vernon. The group remained in charge of the estate, operating it as a museum and learning center.

The efforts of these early preservation leaders led to the formation and conservation of nationally recognized historic places. To protect the land and any antiques and graves on the sites, the Antiquities Act was written. This was the first law to give the federal government the ability to levy criminal fines for the destruction of ruins or excavation of graves. This act, passed in 1906, also gave the President the authority to set aside public lands as national monuments as well as giving out grants and permits for fieldwork to scientific institutions. Shortly after the creation of the Antiquities Act, the National Park Service was founded and placed in charge of battlefield stewardship. By 1935, with the passage of the Historic Sites Act, the National Park Service, under the Department of the Interior, was authorized to acquire property, operate and preserve historic and archaeological sites, and develop educational programs for these properties. A majority of these properties were battlefields, early Native American settlements, and sites associated to important national events.
The number of projects grew in the United States, as did their diversity. The preservation efforts slowly spread as various cities, starting in the 1920s with Charleston, South Carolina, began to designate larger historic districts to save their downtown neighborhoods. The nation had begun to move away from only preserving properties with national importance. The first half of the twentieth century continued to see small groups of people in charge of preserving buildings and sites important to national and local heritage. Other aficionados pledged to preserve and restore buildings with notable designers or specific architectural styles. Even Henry Ford and John D. Rockefeller supported preservation efforts by creating their own historic villages. Ford collected a wide variety of historic objects and buildings at Greenfield Villages in Dearborn, Michigan and Rockefeller sponsored the formation of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation in Virginia.

At the end of World War II, a flood of federal money poured into towns, sponsoring urban renewal and promoting suburban development. Highways were developed and downtowns were targeted to reduce slums and blighted areas. Unfortunately, these areas were often the home of historic sites, neglected and lacking maintenance during the wartime years. In response to the unwanted urban renewal, which included the demolition of significant structures, the National Council for Historic Sites and Buildings was created. This group of leaders from various historical groups including genealogical societies, amateur and professional historians, architects, engineers, and archaeologists formed the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The National Trust, a non-profit program, had a goal to preserve nationally recognized monuments to share with the public. The group also provided leadership and education
as well as advocacy to save America’s historic places. The preservation movement had grown from small groups, focusing on sites with national significance, into a national movement, concentrating on projects of various sizes and historical significance, headed by a federal program.

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 gave the struggling preservationists extra protection for historic properties. The act created the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation as well as the National Register of Historic Places. The Advisory Council administered Section 106 reviews to mitigate the destruction of historic properties. The National Register is a list of over 79,000 districts sites, buildings, structures and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. The properties listed on the National Register must meet one or more of the following criteria: Association to significant events; Association with significant persons; Superior examples of design or architecture, including craftsmanship; and association with archeological sites. A listing on the National Register provides state and federal tax benefits as well as grants for local governments and non-profit organizations. Most importantly, the act required a mandatory review of state and federally funded projects (a Section 106 Review, led by the Advisory Council) in order to mitigate damage or demolition of recognized historic properties.

Though this very brief introduction to the preservation movement and National Register of Historic Places is generalized, it provides the foundation to a central argument: public perception of history is constantly changing. Buildings and memories share this important characteristic. In each stage of their processes, some aspects of their memory are preserved while other details are obscured. This process is extremely
important in the formation of identities and fundamental in the production of collective memories.\textsuperscript{10} This process is extremely evident in the histories of Lafayette’s visit, Independence Hall, and Bunker Hill. Each event will also highlight its significance and impact on preservation efforts and collective memory in the United States.

\begin{itemize}
\item[2] Ibid. 32.
\item[4] Ibid. 18.
\item[5] Ibid. 204-205.
\item[6] Ibid. 219.
\item[8] Ibid, 171-172.
\item[9] Ibid. 174.
\end{itemize}
Chapter 2:

The Triumphal Tour of Marquis Lafayette

The Triumphal Tour of the Marquis de Lafayette set the stage for America’s fiftieth birthday celebration. His tour, beginning in 1824, came at an opportune time not only as a welcome distraction for the American people, struggling with national issues, but as an early reminder of the fiftieth anniversary of the birth of the independent United States. Throughout the thirteen-month tour, Lafayette visited people and places important to the memories of the war as well as younger states and sites that reminded the citizens of the youthful nation’s progress.

The return of Lafayette spurred the thoughts of preservation in the United States. The French aristocrat and former general in the Continental Army was warmly welcomed by thousands of spectators in hundreds of cities and loved by the entire nation. The year long celebration of his return stoked the fires of nationalism and patriotism in the American people and reminded them of the importance of the memories of the older generations. These memories were often associated with war itself including battlefields, like the one at Bunker Hill, and places such as Washington’s home and Mount Vernon and Independence Hall in Philadelphia. The Frenchman gave speeches and received toasts on the footsteps of these buildings and used their imagery to remind the audience
of their struggle for independence. Lafayette also used his comeback tour as a way of highlighting American progress and as a way to promote an example of a strong democratic government to his home country. Americans had adopted a new governmental system and more than doubled in size in a mere fifty years, proving the rising nation was to become a dominant country.

After his death, historians reevaluated his interaction in the American and French Revolutions. The subsequent biographies reexamined his character and importance in American history, and significantly altered our understanding of him. This reassessment reduced his importance from lessons in history and preservation in America, and almost removed Lafayette completely.

Born into French nobility and a family with a strong military background, Marie Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier de La Fayette was destined to become a cunning soldier and a skillful general. The Lafayette men in previous generations had fought gallantly for their country for decades; they were placed high among the army ranks, and were involved in hundreds of battles throughout Europe. Lafayette’s own father, Marquis Gilbert du Motier de La Fayette, served as a colonel in the French Grenadiers and died in battle in August of 1759 while fighting English forces. A young Lafayette, under the care of his grandmother, was repeatedly and forcefully reminded of the cruel actions of the British and the importance of a successful military career. He later reflected,

It was natural that I grew up hearing many tales of war and glory in the family so closely tied to memories and sorrows associated with war… From the time I was eight, I longed for glory. I remember nothing of my childhood more than my fervor for the tales of glory and my plans to travel the world in quest of fame.
Lafayette attended exclusive schools for children of nobility and continued to live with his grandmother until the death of his mother and great-grandfather in 1770. Thirteen-year-old Lafayette became one of the richest people in France literally overnight. Later, his marriage to Marie Adrienne Francoise de Noailles further secured the, then, sixteen-year-old into a very prominent seat in society. Not only did Adrienne’s family offer Lafayette a chance to become associated with the court of King Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette, it also gave Lafayette the chance to attend the finest military academies. Young Lafayette found the social circle of the King and Queen incredibly dull and, therefore, threw himself into military training, gaining the title of Captain by 1775.

Word of the signing of the Declaration of Independence did not reach France until the fall of 1776. Lafayette wrote, “The moment I heard of America, I loved her; the moment I knew she was fighting for freedom, I burnt with a desire of bleeding for her.” Lafayette sought the chance to avenge his father’s death and promote his own military reputation. Though the young marquis was eager to fight, French law stipulated a man under the age of twenty-five would need the approval of his family to go overseas. Fearing major retributions from the French and English governments, as well as tarnishing of the family name, Lafayette’s father in-law, his legal guardian, denied permission for the young soldier to travel to America. Defying his family’s wishes, the determined Lafayette secretly signed a contract to join the fighting in the Continental Army, and even offered to do so without pay. He purchased his own ship and sailed with a handful of French soldiers to the struggling American colonies to fight, against the commands of his family and his own country.
Once in America, Lafayette struggled to make a name for himself as a soldier and military leader. Harboring anti-French sentiments after a bitter battle in the French and Indian War, the American people and soldiers did not warm to Lafayette initially. American leaders explored the idea of using his influential family and rank as a way to secure French support during the early days of the war. His presence in the army also lent an aura of legitimacy to the troops as well as a feeling of European support to the soldiers. Whatever the reason, Lafayette made his way into the ranks close to General George Washington, gaining favor and becoming friends with the nation’s first president. The Marquis was barely nineteen years old and had no combat experience, but General Washington mentored Lafayette and took him into battles. Until then, Lafayette had not witnessed war first hand.

His first active battle at Brandywine gave the young soldier instant fame. Lafayette charged into combat and rallied the troops, ordering them to fight harder, push forward, and encouraged them when British troops gained ground. After hours of combat, the young Frenchman helped the badly beaten American troops to retreat gracefully from the battlefield. It was only until the troops were in a safe position that Lafayette noticed he had been wounded. A musket ball had struck his left leg and his boot was filling with blood. Though his limp became more noticeable in the later years, Lafayette managed a complete recovery. During the mending process, Lafayette and Washington continued to bond. It was widely known George Washington thought very highly of the Frenchman, even going as far to consider him as his second son.

Lafayette used this time to learn military tactics from Washington and gain introductions to other officers, diplomats, and politicians, each becoming a valuable friend. Upon
meeting, James Monroe and Lafayette instantly connected, leading to an association of great importance to the Marquis later on in his life.

As the Revolutionary War raged on, it was clear America was in a losing position. Troops were tired from fighting and often lacked supplies. Lafayette spent a great amount of his personal fortune to feed and clothe his own troops. He also rallied other governors and statesmen to muster up additional supplies for the warriors. Lafayette continued to be involved in small battles until the winter of 1779. The skirmishes were one-sided as the English troops repeatedly won, but the general gained a reputation for fighting with valor, intelligence, and retreating honorably with minimal casualties. At the urging of George Washington, Lafayette agreed to return to his home country in order to lobby more support for the American troops. Upon arrival in France, Lafayette was arrested for defying his legal guardians and fighting in an international war.12

The punishment for such a crime consisted of eight days of house arrest. Lafayette used this time to make amends with his wife and family. Once released, he submerged himself in the political scene once again, gaining favor with the elite society. Over the span of a few months, Lafayette managed to gain more financial support for American forces. Several companies of soldiers, supplies, and even ships were also donated to the American cause as France had formally entered the war siding with the American colonies.

Lafayette returned to America in the spring of 1780.13 When word got out that Lafayette returned, “every person ran to the shore; he was received with the loudest acclamations, and carried to triumph to the house of the governor.”14 The excitement of his return heightened with the arrival of additional troops, ready to fight for America.
Lafayette had been appointed a liaison to the French troops and gained his own forces to command. He managed to track and follow the English troops under the lead of General Cornwallis and Benedict Arnold. General Lafayette’s troops surrounded Cornwallis and the Tories in Yorktown and waited for additional troop reinforcements from Washington to arrive.\textsuperscript{15} No longer was he headstrong and assertive, Lafayette had realized the political benefits and notoriety that would inevitably come after capturing Cornwallis and his troops.\textsuperscript{16} His patience and calculations led to an important victory for America as Cornwallis was surrounded and ultimately surrendered. After the major win in 1781, Lafayette returned to Philadelphia to oversee the court martial of several wartime traitors, but before the court cases had concluded, the Continental Congress gave orders for the Frenchman to return to Paris and lobby along side Benjamin Franklin, John Jay, and John Adams for more troops and supplies.\textsuperscript{17}

Lafayette’s reputation skyrocketed as he went back to his home country. As a celebrity in France, word of his victory in the fight for American Independence travelled fast. Queen Marie Antoinette singled out Lafayette for praises as her husband promoted him to the rank of \textit{Marechal de Camp} (equal to a Major General) in the French Army. These praises were short lived as the onslaught of the French Revolution burst onto the scene. Lafayette stood by the French King as he slowly fell out of favor. Lafayette promoted social reform and religious freedom, but the arrogant king dismissed his ideas. The twenty-nine year old Lafayette soon became an unquestioned leader of a group of nobles favoring a reform of the monarchy.\textsuperscript{18} As Lafayette continued to speak out for reform, the king stripped him of his \textit{marechal} rank, putting an end to Lafayette’s military
career. Likewise, the queen, who had spoken so highly of Lafayette, banned his family from attending royal social functions.

Lafayette continued to fight for a reformed France. He presented the Declaration of the Rights of Man to the French National Assembly. The document, modeled on the American Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights, pushed for the rights of “liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression” as well as calling for the American freedoms of speech, assembly, press, and religion. The Declaration of the Rights of Man was adopted in August of 1789. Fighting under a new national flag, naturally of his own design, Lafayette joined forces with other individuals fighting for French democracy. As the years passed, Lafayette lost everything: his fortune, his title, and most importantly, his freedom. Ultimately in 1792, Lafayette was imprisoned and charged with fomenting revolution. Though not as rebellious as the other rioters, Lafayette was seen as one of the heads of the rebellion against the king and condemned to death.

During the French Revolution, the rest of Lafayette’s family had also been imprisoned and many of them fell subject to the guillotine. Adrienne, Lafayette’s wife, was spared and set free by the efforts of James Monroe. Lafayette continued to be shipped from prison to prison across Europe and held in deplorable conditions until he was released in October of 1797 under the agreement he and the rest of his family leave the country forever. After Napoleon Bonaparte came to power in France, Lafayette and his family pledged to support him and Lafayette’s citizenship was restored. The Marquis

---

*His tricolored blue, white, and red flag eventually became adopted as France’s national flag.*
and his family returned to his home in La Grange where the broken man lived as a farmer.

In 1824, the sixty-seven year old Lafayette received an invitation from Congress and President, James Monroe. A unanimous congressional vote raised payment for transportation back to America for a reunion. The French nobleman refused the offer and, instead, booked passage on a merchant ship using the little money he had left from his personal savings. Twenty-five year old George Washington Lafayette, named after the Marquis’ wartime friend, and Auguste Lavasseur, Lafayette’s personal secretary, also travelled to America. Lavasseur kept a journal of the visit and published many articles in French newspapers about the warm welcoming given by the American people. His *Lafayette in America in 1824 and 1825* was published upon their return to France.

Lafayette arrived in New York City on August 15th, 1824. The American people welcomed him enthusiastically, and the thirteen-month celebration provided a nation-wide opportunity for memories of the American past and the necessity for memorializing and preserving these thoughts. As the tour progressed, many cities began the preservation of a number of Revolutionary War historic sites and artifacts. The tour came at a perfect time for the cultivation of preservation ideas. Direct memory of the revolution had begun to wane; in fact, in 1824 Lafayette had become the last living general of the Continental army.

Though much of the planning of the tour had been informal and scheduled by last minute invitations from various governors, politicians, and notable officials, Lafayette sought out sites and places significant to the history of the American Revolution. In every city he visited, old veterans and friends greeted Lafayette. Their reunions and
stories provided associations with historic and patriotic narratives. Teary-eyed veterans made toasts and speeches in honor of the general and their memories of Washington, the war, and friends long gone.

During this tour, Lafayette paid homage to the soldiers lost in battle at Bunker Hill on two separate occasions. His first visit on August 27 served as an informal trip to the battlefield. Lafayette’s secretary noted the history of the site in his journal and described the surroundings. The first visit to Bunker Hill was without flourish. There were no parades, no long-winded speeches, and no feasts with uplifting toasts. Lafayette visited the open battlefield where the only monument was to General Warren, a Free Mason who died during the battle. The modest monument was placed in a field where the American warrior was slain. Though he had not personally fought in the battle, Lafayette valued the sacred site as a “holy ground, where the blood of American patriots…early and gloriously spilled, aroused the energy of three millions, and secured the happiness of then millions and of man other millions of men in times to come.”

After a short visit to the site, Lafayette continued on towards Philadelphia, unaware he would return to the site at a later date.

Lafayette was greeted by the mayor of Philadelphia and was immediately taken to the newly renamed Independence Hall where he met other office holders and veterans. The general also received visitors and members of Philadelphia’s Philosophical Society, Library, University, Chamber of Commerce, and even groups of school children. Thousands of people flocked to the city of Philadelphia to see Lafayette. As part of the festivities, Philadelphians organized a grand parade for the Nations Guest. The city had hired architect William Strickland to construct small-scale triumphal arches along its
streets. The parade passed underneath these temporary structures as it wound throughout the city. Strickland had a reputation in Philadelphia as the winner of the design competition for the construction of the Second Bank of the United States. He based his arch design on historical precedents, using the Arch of Septimus Severus in Rome as a model for Lafayette’s Triumphal Arches. Lafayette had a chance to meet with the architect and give his praise for the designs for both the bank and the arches. The architect, also impressed by the Marquis wrote a song in his honor. Strickland eventually became the architect in charge of the first restoration of Independence Hall.

The iconic structure served as a backdrop during Lafayette’s stay for speeches on freedom, independence, and patriotism. Philadelphia’s mayor opened his own speech with:

Forty-eight years ago, in this City, in this very hall that one could justly call the cradle of independence, an assembly of such men as the world has seen little of, eminent in virtue, in talent, and in patriotism, declared in the face of the world their determination to govern themselves by themselves; and to take for themselves and for their descendants a place among the nations.

Due to Lafayette’s visit, the building was seen as the birthplace of American liberty for the first time. The associations drawn from his presence changed the popular perception of the building and set in motion a pattern of continued protection as an artifact of independence.

After leaving Philadelphia, Lafayette visited the nation’s capital in Washington D.C. and made a voyage to Mount Vernon, to pay his respects at the tomb of his beloved friend. Upon his arrival at Washington’s tomb, Lafayette walked quietly into the

---

b Please see “Independence Hall” Chapter for further discussion of the restoration of the Hall and information on Strickland’s design.
mausoleum. Several minutes later, he had returned, his face stained with the tears shed for his American father. The tearful reunion of the two brought powerful emotions to all present. After leaving the tomb, the group headed to the home at Mount Vernon, which had lain untouched and unchanged for the twenty-five years after Washington’s death. Lafayette’s somber visit once again had a profound impact on the memory of the site. The Mount Vernon Ladies Association became the first non-profit preservation society in the United States as they restored and preserved the property in 1856.

As the seasons changed and winter started to slow his travel, Lafayette returned to Washington D.C. where he became immediately bombarded with invitations to visit the southern states. Levasseur wrote,

> He felt, indeed, that it would be difficult, not to say impossible for him to refuse requests expressed to him in so touching and honorable a manner. Hence, he came to a decision to accept all these invitation, but it was decided that, in view of the too-advanced time of the season, he would recommence his traveling only at the end of winter...  

Until such a time, Lafayette vowed to remain at the nation’s capitol to follow the presidential debates between John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson for the 1824 election. During this time, Congress met to discuss Lafayette’s presence in America. The committee made a report on the services “the sacrifices he had made for the establishment of [American] independence, it proposed that they offer him as compensation and as a gesture of gratitude, a sum of $200,000 and the ownership of 24,000 acres of land chosen in the most fertile part of the United States.” A humble Lafayette graciously accepted the reward.

---

6 Roughly $1 million in today’s currency.
As winter continued in the North, Lafayette received many more invitations from southern cities, urging him to visit. Lafayette left at the beginning of February 1825 to tour the southern states. His trip was speedy as he had to return to Boston for the fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Bunker Hill in the following June. After his first visit to the battlefield, it was decided another monument should be added to the site. At the urging of the newly formed Bunker Hill Monument Association, Lafayette returned to lay the cornerstone for the monument. During this visit, Lafayette was greeted by thousands of on-lookers, celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the site. The general became part of a parade and an honorary guest at the ceremonies commemorating the battle. Various members of the Bunker Hill Monument Association, including the group’s president Daniel Webster, gave compelling speeches about democracy, independence, and progress as well as the importance of the memory of the site.

Lafayette returned to France in October of 1825. His reputation in his home country had been reinstated as his family, friends, and other gatherers cheered for his return. The entire tour was documented in the journal of Lafayette’s secretary. Though most of the notes in the journal pertain to the establishment of the cities they visited and the various celebrations they attended, Levasseur makes a point to include themes of democracy in America. He added the stories of the formation of the Declaration of Independence, and went as far as adding the entire document, word-for-word, in his journal. Lafayette used the tour to reconnect with his American memories while also promoting America as a model country where democracy was succeeding.

\[d\] For more information about Lafayette’s second trip to Bunker Hill, and the history and preservation of the site, please see the Bunker Hill Chapter.
Lafayette continued to fight for democracy in France until his death in 1834. In the years leading up to his death, the marquis welcomed American travellers as guests to his French estate in La Havre. Even after his death, American visitors left tokens of their love for Lafayette on his grave and outside his home.

The memory of Lafayette in America faded after his death. It had been years since his final tour of the United States, and this inactive period in American recollection dulled the perceived impact the French general made on United States soil. It was not until the beginning of the twentieth century that historians started to question Lafayette’s meaning in history. Where Romantic historians in the 1800s saw a noble man defending liberty and democracy, twentieth century historians saw a vain adventurer, too immature to understand politics and social conflict.35

Updated biographies began painting another picture of Lafayette. Historians began relying on contextual information to start comparing Lafayette’s image during the Revolution and his Triumphal Tour and their own perceptions of him decades after his death. By looking at Lafayette’s failures in Europe during the French Revolution, and comparing them to the American perception of Lafayette, historians found two separate characters: the hero and the failure. Lafayette’s iconic American image was questioned as historians studied and compared it to his involvement in the French Revolution. Historian and biographer of Lafayette, Louis Gottschalk summarized:

He did not fully understand his own motivations or the implications of his own words and actions. He was unable to remain sternly imperturbable against the guile of the less well-intentioned men. His need to be approved was so great that he was unable to develop a decent disrespect for the opinions of mankind. And being essentially self-centered, despite his warm interest in others, he was unprepared to dissociate his personal interests from his causes.36
Lafayette fell from hero status to that of a childish boy. The constantly evolving perception of the past creates changing relationships and identities of the memories of the past.

Americans celebrated Lafayette’s presence in their nation for many reasons. His appearance in the mostly deceased revolutionary generation sparked a need to remember and commemorate the passed generation. Americans also felt the need to demonstrate unity and nationalism as well as show off civic accomplishments and growth. Lafayette’s presence gave the struggling nation a reason to celebrate. As the festivities died and America progressed, Lafayette’s memory faded. Decades later, upon reevaluating Lafayette and the historical context in America and France, subsequent biographies were written. These books started to alter the impact of Lafayette’s character and its importance in American history. The memory of Lafayette was reduced or removed from American history, leaving only the countless towns and natural features named after Lafayette, hinting at the significance he once had in this country.

4 Ibid. 11.
6 Ibid. 13.
13 Ibid. 72.
18 Ibid. 128.
21 Ibid. 158.
24 Ibid. 21.
25 Ibid. 22.
27 Ibid. 32.
28 Ibid. 145.
30 Ibid. 144.
32 Ibid. 273.
33 Ibid. 273.
34 Ibid. 301.
36 Ibid. 4.
Chapter 3:

Independence Hall

Independence National Historical Park, located in the heart of Philadelphia, is dedicated as a shrine to the history of the United States. Containing a variety of historic structures and landscapes from various decades, it points to an important era in American history. The events that led to the country’s independence began on the site two centuries ago are extremely significant to the growth of the nation.

The collection of buildings and objects associated with Independence Hall attract large crowds of visitors each year, and each visitor looks for connections to America’s earliest history. From its construction as the Pennsylvania State House to the current day, Independence Hall has changed not only physically, but also has grown in importance. Its significance began as a single document for independence and grew to include the room the Declaration was signed in, to the entire building. Its historical significance was highlighted with the Presence of Lafayette and the upcoming revolution, saving the building from demolition. This significance also grew to not only the surrounding site, but to the entire city of Philadelphia as the birthplace of Independence.

As the site grew into a national park, the meaning of independence changed. The public’s interaction with the building continued to evolve, shaping their memory of
Independence Hall and allowing for other important lessons to develop. These lessons included value of time as it pertains to the evolution of memory. As decades passed, American beliefs continued to change, their values placed on history evolved, altering the way we view Independence Hall and how we preserve its memory.

Construction of the Pennsylvania State House, as it was originally known, began in 1732. The two-story, brick, Georgian building was seen as an ambitious architectural project for the growing city of Philadelphia. The construction took several years to complete as the building required immediate expansions to allow for extra space. These additions included two identical wings, each flanking the central structure, and a central bell tower. The first floor originally housed the meeting rooms for the Pennsylvania Assemble and the Supreme Court. A central hallway divided the two spaces. The second floor featured the Long Gallery, which spanned the entire north side of the building, as well as smaller chambers for committees, smaller assemblies, and rooms for the governor and his council member.¹ The Library Company of Philadelphia, formed by Benjamin Franklin in 1731, transferred their collection of books to a wing of the statehouse in 1740.² The statehouse continued to expand and change to accommodate various functions and uses.

By 1774 the city of Philadelphia had grown to a population of 25,000 people and had surpassed Boston as the largest port city on the continent. Its size and wealth as well as its ideal coastal location, midway between the northern and southern colonies, made Philadelphia the chosen location for colonial assemblies.³ Delegates met in the state house in 1776 to plant the seeds for an uprising against the British government and its controls over the colonies. The Declaration of Independence and the United States
Constitution, both drafted inside the Assembly Room of the state house, made the building one of the most important historical structures in the nation for centuries to follow.

During the revolutionary period, the city of Philadelphia continued to be the center of government for the fighting colonies. The Continental Congress used the Assembly Room during the duration of the war as the rest of the building was converted to a hospital for wounded soldiers. After the conclusion of the Revolution, it continued to be used for state and national government functions until the nation’s capital moved to Washington D.C. Likewise, the government of Pennsylvania relocated to Lancaster as the state’s population shifted. In 1799, after over a half of a century, the governmental complex located on the town square was no longer the center of the political life of the nation. Though the state house continued to be used for smaller court hearings and city meetings, the Assembly Room where American Independence was born, sat vacant and unused.

Charles Wilson Peale, an American painter and naturalist, became a tenant of the second floor of Independence Hall in 1802. Peale used the space to showcase his natural history artifacts. This museum was home to a variety of taxidermy animals including over 700 species of birds, 1000 insects, and samples of plants and natural habitats. His “exhibition of curiosities” intended to provide education and amusement to the citizens of the city. Peale’s museum was the first adaptive reuse of the former state house. He remained sympathetic to its preservation and use, but he also supported the first, and most destructive, of its nineteenth-century alterations: the demolition of the wing buildings. This alteration, in 1812, made room for the creation of two fireproof buildings for the
storage of records. The demolition razed the original library and smaller committee rooms.\textsuperscript{7}

Other alterations, this time to the interior, began in 1816. The Philadelphia County Commissioners allocated funds to remove decorative plaster and paneling from the Assembly Room. Pieces of woodwork were sold as the room was stripped of the historic features present during the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The commissioners also added an elaborate Greek entablature to the entryway and removed the conservative original. That same year, the State of Pennsylvania moved its state government once again to Harrisburg. Needing to pay for construction of a new capitol building, the state decided to sell the state house and subdivide its land. This proposal infuriated Philadelphians, who placed sentimental value on the structure. The City of Philadelphia offered to buy the building and its land for $70,000 in order to save their local treasure.\textsuperscript{8} No restoration attempt had been made after the purchase of the building.

Over the next decade, two important events spurred the need for the restoration of the newly named Independence Hall: the arrival of Lafayette, and the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The Triumphal Tour of Marquis Lafayette took place from 1824 to 1825. The French Marquis, as discussed in the previous chapter, spent thirteen months travelling throughout the United States. His impending arrival in Philadelphia necessitated the redecorating of Independence Hall as a space to receive the nation’s honored guest. During Lafayette’s visit, he described his love for the building and the importance of its history.\textsuperscript{9} In a speech given at Independence Hall on the tour, Lafayette states:
It is here, in this sacred enclosure, that the independence of the United States was emphatically declared by a council of wise men. In anticipating that of all of America, it began for the civilized world as a new era, that of a social order founded on the rights of man, an order of which the success and peace of your republic demonstrates the advantages every day. Here, Sir, was formed by brave and virtuous Revolutionary Army; here, inspired by Providence, came the happy idea to entrust command of it to our well-loved Washington, that warrior without blemish. But these memories and a throng of others are mixed with the profound regret for the loss of men, great and good, for whom we have to mourn. It is to their services, Sir, to your respect for their memory, to the friendship that binds me to them, that I must assign a large part of the honors that I have received here and elsewhere…

The fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence led to the first full restoration of the hall, in order to return it to its 1775 appearance. The first step was to reconstruct the steeple lost in 1781 when the wooden structure crumbled due to rot. In 1828, William Strickland was commissioned to design a replacement. Though Strickland’s design featured ornamentation not typically seen in Georgian architecture, his design pays homage to the original style of the building. The massing and scale were similar to the original design and dentil features seen at the roofline were continued in the new construction. The original tower held a large bell (now known as the Liberty Bell, which continues to be on display in Independence Square) and contained very simple Georgian details, matching the rest of the building. Though the neoclassical details were not as flamboyant as Strickland’s other designs during this period, the reconstruction proved to be inaccurate. Strickland’s design accommodated a four-faced clock tower adorned with neoclassical ornamentation popular in the nineteenth century taste. These design features included pilasters topped by Doric capitals, a floral and leaf pattern detail under the clock and pilasters adorned with Corinthian capitals. The tower is topped with a balustrade, cupola, and spire (See Figure 1).
Figure 1

A photograph of Independence Hall’s south elevation and main façade. Note the differences in ornamentation of the windows on the first and second floor in comparison to the reconstructed tower including the entryway, windows, and ornate ornamentation on the tower.
Photograph taken by Frederick D. Nichols of the Historic American Building Survey (HABS PA, 51- PHILA, 6-2)
As the new tower was being constructed, architect John Haviland was commissioned to study the interior of the structure and restore it to its 1776 appearance. The study began in 1831 and though only fifteen years had passed since the disassembly of the original room, Haviland’s restoration proved to be extremely inaccurate. Like Strickland, he relied on a nineteenth-century interpretation of the historic architecture.\(^{12}\)

Years later, the approaching centennial of the Declaration of Independence influenced the reversal of this restoration. In 1872, the City of Philadelphia dedicated the Assembly Room as a shrine to America’s Independence and began a restoration of the space and the creation of a National Museum. This restoration attempt grew from the interior to the exterior as the facades were repainted, repointed, and polished. As the work continued, structural studies were done and the building received a substantial amount of structural reinforcement. The twenty-five-year-long restoration also removed the fireproof buildings (built in 1812) in order to reconstruct the flanking wings. Unfortunately, T. Mellon Roger, the architect in charge of the late 1800’s restoration, did not rely on documentation or architectural evidence to support his designs. The second restoration became more inaccurate than the first. Roger’s restoration received much criticism and it was determined Philadelphia’s chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) was to be in charge of any future designs for the entire complex.\(^{13}\)

The sesquicentennial restoration of Independence Square was fueled by the increasing role of the National Park Service and increasing interest in historic sites across America. In 1933, along with the reorganization of the National Park Service, the addition of the county’s first National Historic Park in Morristown, New Jersey drove the desire for the creation of a national park devoted to America’s independence. Other
pushes came from the increasing interest in historic sites during the Depression years. Works Progress Administration employees and other professionals were put to work researching and documenting the historic structures associated with national history.\textsuperscript{14}

Representatives from over fifty historic agencies in Philadelphia met together to create the Independence Hall Association in 1942. Their focus was the creation of the Independence Mall, to ward off encroachments and possible fire hazards to the historic area, and the Independence National Historic Park.\textsuperscript{15} As non-historic buildings surrounding Independence square were being razed to make room for the Mall area and green space, Pennsylvania legislators drafted a plan to create a national park “for the purpose of preserving for the benefit of the American people.”\textsuperscript{16} The passage of the 1948 law that officially created the Independence National Park also brought a unique opportunity, the first time Congress authorized millions of dollars to purchase and preserve historic property.\textsuperscript{17} Preservation of the property had been transferred, somewhat reluctantly, to the National Park Service by the City of Philadelphia. The NPS could give a great deal of attention to the aging structure; attention the citizens of Philadelphia could not readily give. The structure had been leaking from the roof and needed repairs on the exterior including repointing and the interior was in need of repainting.\textsuperscript{18}

Stabilization measures and smaller scale restorations continued on the beloved monument as it aged. Currently, a $4.4 million restoration to Strickland’s steeple is underway to stabilize any deteriorated wood members and to add new lightning rods. These efforts not only preserve the building, but also the rich history associated with the structure. Independence Hall is significant because of its association with American
colonial roots, the signing of the Declaration of Independence, and the continuing evolution of American values.

Historic places are not only defined by time worn artifacts and acts by famous people, but also the changes in the meaning attached to these artifacts and people over time. An ongoing conflict over American ideals has taken place in Independence Square. Soon after the national park’s creation, a group of activists met to call attention to Communism and protest against it. A symbol of American democracy literally became the backdrop for this rally. The 1947 demonstration of the Progressive Citizens of America on the grounds of Independence Square is an example of the redefinition and expansion of Independence Hall’s meaning. Historically, the site has been a place for demonstrations against war and a bridge for the inclusion of women, people of color, sexual orientation, and other minorities in the history of the country.

From its earliest days, Independence Hall has been a gathering space to demonstrate against British policies and regulations. Speeches given by Frederick Douglass and Susan B. Anthony years later also point to the use of the building to associate minorities and gender to the important history of America. They begin to point out terms associated with “independence” including liberty and equality. Eventually, in the 1960’s, Independence Hall was, according to college students, the best place in the city to stage a demonstration. “We feel that this is a definite place that people look to when they think of freedom, and when they think of what our government stands for and what our Constitution means.” The activities and protests on the front steps of Independence Hall point to the inclusion of the place as a symbol of the nation’s founding ideals, but also the inclusion of the full rights of American citizenship.
As these ideals are being explored and expanded, attention naturally falls to the exclusion of groups and themes from the history of the Hall. Frederick Douglass spoke of this phenomenon early on in the history of the site. During a rally on the footsteps of the birthplace of independence, he pointed out the contrast between the ideals of the Declaration of Independence and the presence of slavery in the United States. In his speech “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July” he reminded all of the associations with the landmark.

The rich inheritance of justice, liberty, prosperity, and independence bequeathed by your fathers, is shared by you, not me. The sunlight that brought life and healing to you ahs brought stripes and death to me. This Fourth [of] July is yours, not mine. You may rejoice, I must mourn.23

The biased point of view of the memories of Independence Hall continues with its forgotten antebellum history. As part of the Fugitive Slave Law enacted in 1850, trials for fugitive slave cases were tried in the second floor of the original state house. Though the cases heard at the landmark were few, they were never included in published histories of Independence Hall. Centuries later, historians began documenting the struggles of minorities and their associations with the building. It is only currently that their histories are being published and remembered as part of the entire history of the United States.24 Similarly, the National Register Nomination for Independence National Historical Park was amended to include the history and significance of the Underground Railroad and its association to various buildings on the site.25

In 1732, when the Philadelphia State House began construction, it is unlikely anyone could possibly comprehend the importance of the building. In growing Philadelphia, the building was built out of necessity for a governmental center. The
history of the now named Independence Hall has grown to include the most pivotal moment in the founding of the United States of America. Its significance has also grown from the inclusion of the single Assembly Room where the Declaration of Independence was originally signed, to inclusion of the entire building, then the complex, and finally to the entire city of Philadelphia as the birthplace of American liberty. As the significance of the building grew, so did the interpretations of the word “independence.” Now, while studying this space, historians can not only examine the founding of American democracy, they can trace the evolution of American values as it relates to the restorations and interpretations of the site.

5 Ibid. 34.
7 Greiff, *Independence: Creation of a National Park*, 34.
8 Ibid. 35.
9 Ibid. 35.
12 Ibid. 35.
13 Ibid. 37.
14 Ibid. 41.
16 Ibid. 348.
18 Ibid. 125.
20 Ibid. 51.
21 Ibid. 52.
22 Ibid. 60.
24 Ibid. 491.
Chapter 4:

Bunker Hill Monument

In 1824, a group was formed to pursue the building of a monument dedicated to the first battle of the American Revolution. The monument was to memorialize the lives of those who fought for independence. These individuals were to be remembered indefinitely for their courage and passion on the battlefield. Many soldiers, both American and English, died on the battlefield at Bunker Hill. Many more worked hard to cement their memories forever in history by erecting a monument dedicated to their service to the new country.

The design, construction, and completion of the monument was not without battles of its own. Challenges in funding dominated every stage of the monument’s life, including the current phase. The preservation of memory through the monument challenged the creativity of the Bunker Hill Monument Association. The design of the monument had to reflect the importance of the battle while being strong enough to stand on the site for centuries after it was built. The association was also challenged in raising funds without breaking up and selling the site where the important battle was fought years earlier.

On June 17, 1775 American and British military forces met near Charlestown, Massachusetts. This battle at the top of Breed's Hill, formally known as the Battle of
Bunker Hill, was a decisive fight to see which army could control nearby Boston. Though technically a win for British forces, the Continental Army fought hard and it was clear it would not be an easy struggle to tame the American forces. British troops, under the command of General Thomas Gage, met the American troops, under the command of Dr. Joseph Warren, in the early hours of the morning.

The battle lasted for several hours and, after the smoke cleared, almost half of the 2,000 Redcoats had been injured or perished in the battle. The American forces, of approximately the same size, had 600 casualties. One of the notable deaths in the ranks of the American forces was that of the thirty-four year old General Dr. Joseph Warren. Warren, a physician in Boston, had served in the local Massachusetts militia and was recognized as one of the earliest advocates for American independence. Saddened by Warren’s death, the Freemasons, of which Warren was a member, erected a monument to the memory of the slain General in 1794. King Solomon’s Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons constructed an eighteen-foot tall Tuscan pillar, topped with an urn and a plaque with the engraving “J.W. Æ 34.” on the spot where the physician was slain.

During the years after the end of the Revolutionary War, travellers came to Charlestown to visit the battlefield. Many sought out residents of the small suburb of Boston, who retold the story of the battle. Throughout the years, the stories and their orators began to sound rehearsed and distant as the first-person narrators began to decrease in numbers. Almost fifty years had passed since the battle, and Warren’s pillar remained the only monument dedicated to the battle.

The impending anniversaries of the Battle of Bunker Hill and the signing of the Declaration of Independence gave Americans the opportunity to reexamine, and
celebrate, the roots of independence. The focus of the nation was fixed on Philadelphia as the birthplace of Independence. In the early 1820s, the men of Boston began to explore the idea of creating a monument on Bunker Hill to preserve the memory of one of the earliest battles for the sovereignty of the young nation. It was also during this time, that the site of the battlefield went up for public auction. Dr. J. C. Warren of Boston purchased the land in order to preserve the battlefield. The Bunker Hill Monument Association was created in 1823. The members of the association desired three things: the aid of the Commonwealth in the erection of a monument, authority to protect the battlefield land from further development, and the preservation of several objects associated with the battle itself.

The arrival of General Lafayette in 1824 offered an opportunity to draw public attention to the monument. This attention also brought another advantage: the ability to raise money for its construction. During this time, several large donations were made to the Association and the number of members grew to include over 2500 individuals, each subscribing sums varying from $5 to $500 for the completion of the monument. A committee was formed for the erection of the monument and an invitation for designs was sent to Boston newspapers. The committee desired a granite column as a design, but the winning submission, made by Horatio Greenough, took form as an obelisk. Mr. Greenough wrote:

I have made choice of the obelisk as the most purely monumental form of structure. The Column, grand and beautiful as it is in its place (where it stands beneath the weight of a pediment and supports a long line of heavy entablature), considered as a monument, seems liable to unanswerable objections.
Mr. Greenough went on to make several arguments to the desirability of obelisks as monuments and as wayfinding tools throughout history. It was then decided his obelisk design was the best fit for the new monument (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Drawing submitted in 1824, by Horatio Greenough to the Committee of the Bunker Hill Monument Association. The final monument was based on Mr. Greenough’s design.

On the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Bunker Hill, Marquis Lafayette returned to the battlefield. At 10 o’clock in the morning, 2,000 freemasons, 16 companies of voluntary infantry, and 8 corps of cavalry, marched to the battlefield. They were accompanied by thousands of visitors including the Nation’s Guest, the President of the United States, and members of the Bunker Hill Monument Association. After a brief prayer and several religious and patriotic hymns, Lafayette placed the cornerstone of the monument on the site. He made a brief speech then welcomed the president of the Association, Daniel Webster. Webster’s hour-long speech was filled with messages and associations to patriotism, nationalism, and independence. He also spoke of the importance of memory:

“We wish that this structure may proclaim the magnitude and importance of that event to every class and every age. We wish that infancy may learn the purpose of its erection from maternal lips, and that weary and withered age may behold it, and be solaced by the recollections which it suggests. We wish that labor may look up here, and be proud, in the midst of its toil. We wish that, in those days of disaster, which, as they come upon all nations, must be expected to come upon us also, desponding patriotism may turn its eyes hitherward and be assured that the foundations of our national power are still strong… You are now where you stood fifty years ago, this very hour, with your brothers and your neighbors, shoulder to shoulder, in strife for your country. Behold, how Altered! The same heavens are indeed over your heads; the same ocean rolls at your feet: but all else how changed!”

Mr. Webster’s oratorial skills brought tears to many as they remembered the fight for Independence, the memories of loved ones long gone, and as they took a moment to reflect upon the progress of the nation. The day concluded with large feasts with numerous toasts dedicated to the United States and the survivors of Bunker Hill.

The Bunker Hill Monument Association hired Solomon Willard as the architect of the monument. Willard, a self-taught carpenter, moved to Boston in 1804 to become an
apprentice and learn the art of carving wood and masonry. He worked on several notable buildings throughout the city and became respected as an artist in the community.  

When commissioned for the monument, requested to complete the job without compensation for services rendered, but, upon voting, the Association denied the request, instead granting Willard a nominal salary of $500 a year.  

Determined to use the best materials possible, Willard walked more than three hundred miles to examine different stone quarries for the granite with the highest quality.

The quarry site had been established and the workers began constructing the large monument in 1826. One of the first railroads in the United States was constructed specifically for the task of retrieving the granite for the monument and taking it to ships and wagons for transfer to the site.  

The railway, however, was not as great a benefit as originally hoped. Delays were common and the rocky ride broke a fair share of the monument pieces. Rail shipment was quickly abandoned and the large granite pieces were transported by ox-drawn wagon to the site.

By July, 1826, the foundation had been completed. By September of 1828, the monument stood at nearly forty feet, with enough material on site to raise the monument another eighteen feet higher, but the Association had spent their available funds for the project. The monument was drastically over budget. Work on the monument halted and in January 1829, Solomon Willard was fired.  

The Association continued to raise money for the project. Sarah Joespha Hale worked together with a large group of women

---

*Willard later gave several large donations to the Association from his salary on the project.*
to help raise funds for the completion of the monument. The group of women were successful and construction started again, nearly four years later.\textsuperscript{15}

Funds were, again, rapidly depleting. Though the Association attempted another intense round of fundraising, they were unable to raise enough money. June 17\textsuperscript{th}, 1834, the Bunker Hill Monument Association voted, rather regretfully, to sell ten acres of the battlefield. The acreage was subdivided into fifty shares and went for sale at $500 each with the stipulation the land was to be “kept open forever.”\textsuperscript{16} In May of 1841, work on the monument resumed. Throughout the years of inactivity on the site, new developments were seen in construction. Steam-powered engines and cranes were put to use to complete the monument, construction time was shortened considerably.\textsuperscript{17} The final stone was placed on the monument the morning of Saturday, July 23, 1842.

Once again, the Association voted for a grand ceremony on the anniversary of Bunker Hill, this time, to celebrate its completion nineteen years after formation of the Association. This celebration drew a larger crowd as transportation allowed citizens of all states to attend. Daniel Webster once again spoke at the ceremony. Like his first oration, Mr. Webster spoke of patriotism and memory, but the second address also was marked by the loss of many individuals who were present during the first oration, namely Lafayette. As he continued his speech, Daniel Webster expanded on the history of the construction of the monument, with special emphasis on the role of women.

Garlands of grace and elegence were destined to crown a work which had its commencement in manly patriotism. The winning power of the sex addressed itself to the public, and all that was needed to carry the monument to its proposed height, and to give to it its finish, when promptly supplied. The mothers and daughters of the land contributed thus, most successfully, to whoever there is of beauty in the monument itself, or whatever of utility and public benefit and gratification there is in its completion.\textsuperscript{18}
The festivities continued much like the first celebration. Feasts and patriotic toasts livened the crowd.

Figure 3

A photograph of the Bunker Hill Monument, dating c. 1870’s, shows the completed monument, context building infill around the site, and the creation of the lodge. Photograph from George Washington Warren’s *The History of the Bunker Hill Monument Association.*
The site containing both the grand obelisk and Warren’s monument were now open to the public. Tourists and travelers paid admissions to the park to fund its upkeep. A small fee of 20 cents was required to ride to the top of the monument. The Association also began to consider the construction of a granite lodge to compliment the monument and to house various relics from the battle. Admission proceeds went to the construction of the lodge, which also contains the Tuscan pillar devoted to the memory of Warren.

The onset of the Civil War led to the expansion of the role of the Bunker Hill Monument. On its June anniversary in 1861, a Union flag was adorned on top of the monument to remind the country of the patriotism and nationality that helped gain independence for the entire country in the previous years. The flag was taken down on November 25, 1866, on a day set apart by President Johnson as a day of national Thanksgiving for the cessation of the Rebellion.

As time passed, buildings and streets encroached onto the land parcelled off by the Association. Soon, all that was left of the battlefield was a small park containing a grand monument and a small lodge containing relics from the Battle. By 1919, the Association could no longer care for the site and sold it to the state of Massachusetts under the Metropolitan Park Commission of Boston. During the 1950s, the monument fell to deplorable conditions due to overuse and inadequate maintenance. Holes due to erosion appeared across the lawn and near the base of the monument. The concrete staircases started to crumble and much of the mortar in the monument had deteriorated. Despite its conditions, the Monument was included in the National Register of Historic Places when it was created in 1966. The site was transferred to the National Park Service
in 1976 and was included in the Boston National Historic Park.\textsuperscript{23} The monument was repaired and the masonry was repointed in the early 1980’s. A more recent $3.2 million restoration from 2005 to 2007 made the site and monument fully handicap accessible. The restoration effort also improved site irrigation and called for a lighting system at the base of the monument, to illuminate the granite obelisk at night.\textsuperscript{24} The monument remains open to any member of the public daring to tred the 294 steps to the top.

The monument was successful in marking the spot where the Battle of Bunker Hill began over 200 years ago. It has withstood a variety of challenges from inadequate funding during its construction to improper maintenance and years of overuse by thousands of visitors. Though the site of the battlefield has been filled with buildings, houses, and roads, the commemoration of the Battle of Bunker Hill lives on through Warren’s monument, the relics housed in the lodge, and the grand obelisk. Unfortunately the land being preserved by the Bunker Hill Monument Association had to be parcelled to pay for the grand monuments, begging the question about which preservation practice is appropriate: Conservation of the entire site or preservation of memory through monuments.


3 Ibid. 20.


13 Ibid. 211.


20 Ibid. 386.

21 Ibid. 360-368.


23 Ibid, 44.

24 Ibid, 45.
Chapter 5:

Conclusion

America needed a reason to celebrate in the early 1820’s. Civil unrest plagued the rapidly growing country. As new states entered the evolving Union, the question of slavery drove a gap, further dividing the north from the south. Bitter political battles further divided the nation as the parties argued over the strength and role of the federal government. The changing generations also led to a change in demographics including geographic factors, education levels, religion, and gender roles.

The shift into the new generation brought a new way of thinking and the younger generation started to value their heritage. As the numbers of the older generation dwindled, their heirs developed an appreciation for their memories. The fiftieth anniversaries of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the Battle of Bunker Hill, the loss of presidents Jefferson and Adams, as well as a visit from Marquis Lafayette promoted the commemoration of the memories of the older generation. These events kicked off a whirlwind of celebrations that eased the tensions of the American people, at least for a little while.

Not only had these events sparked an interest in American history, they began to lay the foundation for the preservation of American history through the use of books, and the conservation of battlefields and buildings associated with the Revolution. New memorials sprang up across the country. Memorials to important people, including Joseph Warren and Marquis Lafayette, or associated with important events like the
signing of the Declaration of Independence or the Battle of Bunker Hill were constructed. Americans began to associate these places, spaces, and people with valuable history lessons.

These earliest efforts by the country’s first preservationists laid the foundation for the later movements. Most often, the Mount Vernon Ladies Association is credited as one of, if not the first preservation effort in the country. Preservation practices prior to this group remain unexplored. Without the help of Lafayette, and individuals at Independence Hall, and the Bunker Hill Monument Association, the restoration at Mount Vernon could have been completely different. Each person or group shows the challenges of preserving memory and the importance time has on the way people view these events.

In hopes of preserving the memory of the American Revolution, Lafayette toured the country, making toasts to nationalism, patriotism, and the country’s progress. At the same time, Philadelphians saved, and restored, albeit incorrectly, the place where the Declaration of Independence was signed. The Bunker Hill Monument Association saved one of the first American battlefields, then sold it off piece by piece to pay for an expensive monument to commemorate the occasion. Exploring the histories of these people, places, and shrines is necessary to gain an overall understanding of the changing collective memory of the American people fifty years after they gained independence.

Marquis Lafayette can be seen as the link between a variety of seemingly unrelated events, including the restoration of Independence Hall and the monument at Bunker Hill. His return to American soil in 1824 and 1825 gave the opportunity for Philadelphia and Boston to begin the preservation of the memories associated with the
Revolutionary War and the struggle for American independence. Though only two sites connected with his tour were explored here, he, without a doubt, left a lasting impression on every city he visited and every historic venue where he rested. Cities, rivers, and mountains were renamed due to Lafayette’s presence and in honor of his memory. Women and children threw flowers at his feet as he walked down their streets, armies volunteered to escort the Nation’s Guest from town to town, begging him to stay longer at each location. Many cities built triumphal arches for the French nobleman to pass under; while others sold memorabilia to commemorate the historic event. Americans wanted to embrace the only remaining Revolutionary War general and celebrate his legacy and preserve his memory. His presence unintentionally provided a catalyst for the preservation of buildings and sites associated to national heritage.

Philadelphia, upon hearing of the Marquis’ plans to visit the city, quickly repaired the room where the First Continental Congress met to declare freedom and planned a new government. Philadelphians associated Lafayette with independence, and in turn started to re-evaluate the significance of their old State House. Similarly, the Bunker Hill Monument Association asked Lafayette to return to the site where American troops died while fighting one of the first battles for their freedom. Lafayette helped lay the cornerstone to a monument in tribute to the fiftieth anniversary of a battle at which he did not participate. The importance of Lafayette’s association with the American Revolution is undeniable as it was extremely important to the preservation of national heritage.

During his period, his presence became a touchstone to Revolutionary nostalgia. Over time Americans and historians altered their perceptions of Lafayette’s role in United States History. Similar to the Revolutionary nostalgia era in the 1820s,
historians started to reevaluated Lafayette in order to learn more about him. They compared his celebrity status during the America Revolution and years following drastically and his reputation on the European stage. The successful military career in America contrasts with the unsuccessful attempts to establish democracy in France. Many started to believe the final tour of the United States was Lafayette’s last effort to promote his political ideas while cashing in on his fame. Historians started to recast Lafayette as a mediocre personality at best and began to debate Lafayette’s impact in both the French and American Revolutions. As memory of him faded from American history books, his legacy continued, living on through the places named in his honor and through the histories of Independence Hall and the Bunker Hill battlefield.

The story of Independence Hall, in contrast, remains a prominent part of the memory of America. Located in the middle of Philadelphia, the architecturally and historically significant building is dwarfed by surrounding structures that are vastly different in both appearance and scale. Its modest design and construction points to its age, yet it continues to be one of the most recognized, and valued historical buildings in America.

Unique to the story of Independence Hall is the rapid growth and change to its significance. In 1732 when it was constructed, it was simply a place for government. The signers of the Declaration of Independence used the structure out of convenience. It was conveniently located in the middle of the struggling colonies; therefore it was a perfect place to meet. Philadelphians almost abandoned the building when the capitol changed cities, using it instead for a museum of curiosities. It was not until the brink of its demolition that the city saved the structure by purchasing it from the state. Lafayette’s
visit in 1824, as well as the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, brought the first restoration effort to the room where the delegates sat to draft the document.

The room had been altered as its uses changed and a series of inadequately researched restorations of the room further deteriorated any salvageable historical evidence. Work also began on the exterior of the building, reconstructing the lost bell tower then a full exterior reconstruction was slated for the centennial anniversary of the signing of the Declaration. Instead of recognizing a single room as a historic place, the entire hall began to become significant for its association with Independence. Finally, when the National Park Service and the Independence Hall Association created Independence Mall and Independence National Historic Park, a much larger site, including several objects like the liberty bell and other adjacent buildings, had become historically significant to the nation’s history.

As Independence National Historic Park grew in significance and became a vacationer’s destination, the meaning of Independence grew to accommodate a wide variety of connotations. Equality for women and people of different races or sexual orientation became the target of Independence Hall as rallies and demonstrations were staged on the steps and lawn of the hall. Anti-war and anti-communism protests also redefined the role of “independence” in the American vocabulary.

Periods of inadequate maintenance and vacancy as well as the deconstruction of contributing structures necessitated various reconstruction and restoration attempts. Luckily, after a series of unfortunate and inaccurate restorations, the city of Philadelphia required its chapter of the American Institute of Architects to be in charge of future
research and restoration plans. As one of the National Park Service’s first historic parks, Independence Hall will continue to be maintained, preserving the building almost indefinitely.

The complex story of commemoration is highlighted with the Bunker Hill Monument. The unfortunate history of the site leads to an interesting question of how to preserve memories associated with land. Unlike the memorabilia left behind after Lafayette’s tour and the building now come to be known as Independence Hall, the battlefield in Boston has virtually no distinguishable features to mark its importance.

The land upon Bunker Hill was purchased and conserved in order to ensure its survival, and remain a place where the nation would remember one of the first battles for independence. The Bunker Hill Monument Association was then formed to commemorate the site with a monument, following in the footsteps of the Freemasons who, years before on that very site, erected a monument in order to commemorate the death of one of their own members. The Association chose a thoughtful and appropriate design for the monument. The group sent out countless letters in order to raise funds for its erection. They saw Lafayette’s presence as a chance to gain not only nation-wide recognition, but also sponsors willing to donate money for their cause.

Thousands watched as Lafayette laid the cornerstone to a monument that still lacked the necessary construction drawings, which commemorated an event in which he did not participate. Years later, after the monument construction officially began, that same cornerstone had to be extracted and moved to its official place at the base of the
monument. Upon completion of the monument, the same audience returned to the site for another grand celebration to commemorate the Battle at Bunker Hill.

Unfortunately, after a series of disastrous setbacks and errors in funding, valuable land was sold to pay for the monument’s completion. Only three acres of the battlefield, out of the original twelve, had been saved. What remains today is a small park in an urban part of a rapidly expanding city. Charlestown became part of the city of Boston and blocks of buildings boxed in the open fields.

Without this monument, would the thousands of people who were present at the commemoration, or the hundreds of thousands who have visited the monument since its completion, remember the Battle of Bunker Hill and Dr. Joseph Warren? Would the conservation of the battlefield without these monuments have been as effective? Both are interesting questions and both are impossible to answer. As seen in the case of Lafayette, collective memory can begin to fade without a constant representation of the importance of the time period, whereas the building associated with independence will continue to withstand the constantly changing perception of American history.

These stories of Independence Hall, Bunker Hill, and Lafayette highlight the account of national preservation practices in the United States. Their national importance was recognized and promoted. Over time, their memories grew to include a mixture of objects and buildings spanning a variety of time periods and levels of significance. Their evolution grew to include a wide range of associated ideals and themes. They will continue to showcase the progression of American progress, history, and values.

The preservation movement keeps evolving not only in the buildings, structures, and objects being preserved and restored, but also with its impact throughout history.
Time is an extremely important factor in the decision to preserve or ignore the memory associated with these objects. Lafayette’s presence had a significant impact when he came at the tipping point of the evolution of American memory. The preservation of Independence Hall and the struggles to conserve Bunker Hill after Lafayette’s Triumphal Tour provide valuable learning tools and excellent insights into the ever-evolving collective memory of the nation.

As the country continues to evolve and mature, it is inevitable that the tastes, memories, and associations of its people will continue to change. What is preserved and the steps taken to do so will evolve as well, creating a rich vocabulary of sites, structures, building, and objects associated with a wide variety of historic periods in the United States. The preservation of these objects is an important tool to document and evaluate collective memory and valuable associations with periods and events that are important to American history.
Bibliography


Nichols, Frederick D. “Main Building, South Elevation.” Historic American Building Survey HABS PA, 51- PHILA, 6-2, 1939.


