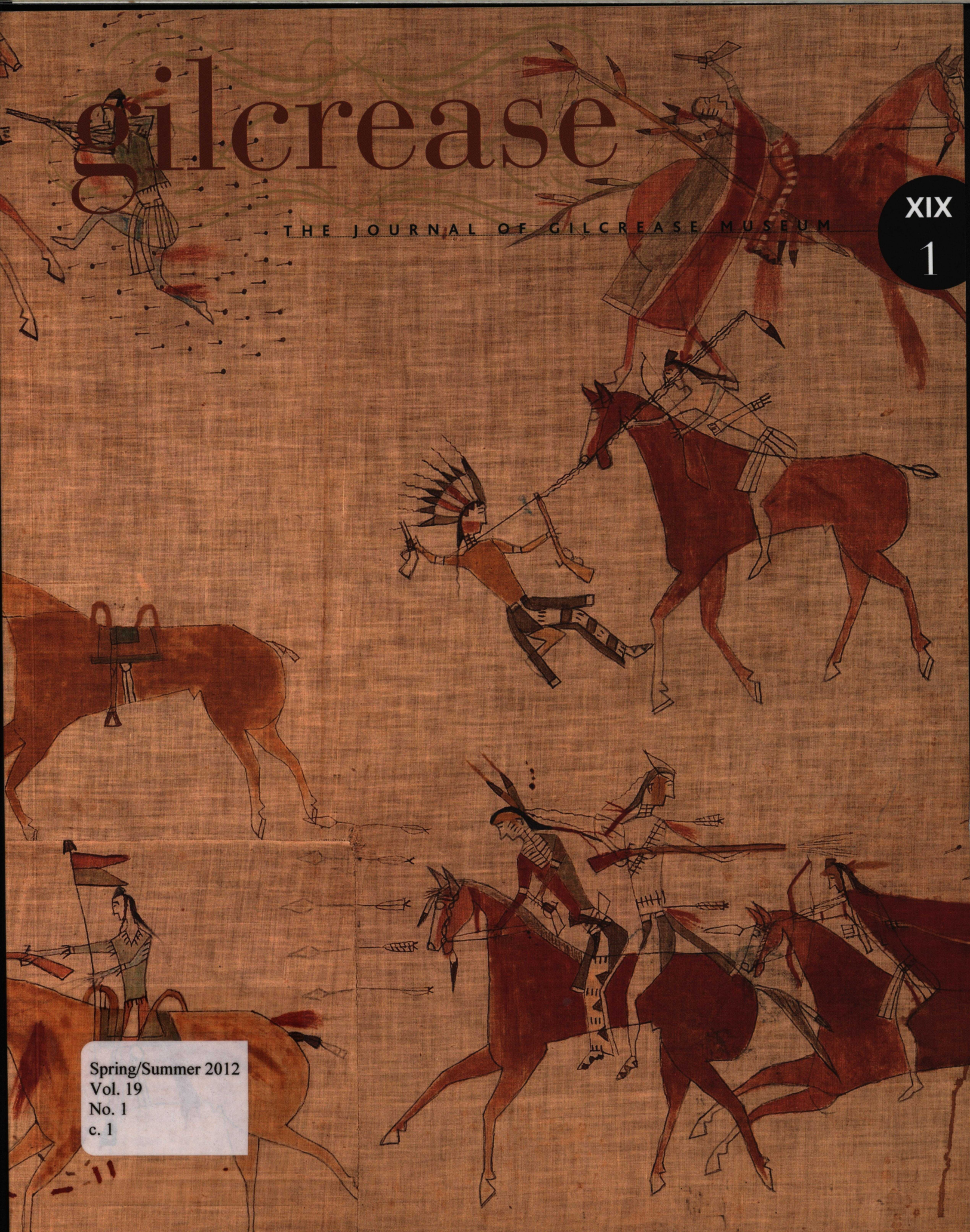


The background of the cover is a large, stylized illustration in a Native American artistic style. It depicts several warriors on horseback, rendered in shades of brown and red. One warrior in the upper left is shown in a dynamic pose, possibly leaping or falling, with arrows scattered around him. Other warriors are mounted on horses, some holding bows and arrows. The style is reminiscent of traditional Native American art, with bold outlines and a limited color palette. The title 'gilcrease' is written in a large, elegant, serif font, with the 'g' being particularly large and stylized.

gilcrease

THE JOURNAL OF GILCREASE MUSEUM

XIX

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KIMBERLY
ROBLIN

Gettysburg: Biography of a Battlefield

Gettysburg—Repulse of Longstreet's Assault. HB Hall after James Walker, 1876, engraving. GM 1526.118a

Pickett's Charge, as it is more commonly known, was the final Confederate attempt to gain ground. On July 3, despite Longstreet's reservations, the southern forces attacked. To reach the Union line they had to cross 1,000 yards of open terrain, cross a sunken road, and climb a stone wall protecting the federal position. Half died.

FACING: Robert E. Lee. Jacques Reich, 1913, etching. GM 1427.4

From a prominent Virginia family, Robert E. Lee had fought alongside many of the Union officers, but ultimately decided he could not fight against his home state and resigned his commission in the federal army at the start of the Civil War.

THE CINNAMON COUNTRYSIDE TICKED PAST the window as we entered the national park. After a half day's travel spanning two planes and three airports, the hypnotic rhythm of trees and fields had lulled me into recollecting my first visit to Gettysburg, a featured stop on a 3,000 mile tour across the eastern United States. The July temperatures and crowds of visitors had been nearly insufferable but I had always wanted to return. In cooler weather. As I refocused on the autumn landscape, not quite believing it had been nearly a decade, the trees abruptly gave way to a pair of humble, yet rocky hills as Little and Big Round Top rose into view.

I was atop the lesser within minutes, standing near General Warren as he surveyed the valley below, binoculars in hand. With the sun slipping beneath the far ridge, I followed his line



Painted by Jacques Reich, A.S.

Artist's Proof, edition limited.

Jacques Reich



of sight and tried to imagine all that he had seen and heard from his post nearly 150 years earlier. It's an exercise familiar to all historians, yet so too is the inevitable conclusion: that we cannot, in fact, ever really know what it was like. We will never witness past events, though not for lack of effort. But imagination is a powerful tool, and as I looked over at Warren it amused me that it worked both ways. I knew something in

I followed his line of sight and tried to imagine all that he had seen and heard from his post nearly 150 years earlier. It's an exercise familiar to all historians, yet so too is the inevitable conclusion: that we cannot, in fact, ever really know what it was like.



INSET ABOVE: General Warren, Little Round Top, Gettysburg National Military Park, Pennsylvania, 2010

FACING: *Abraham Lincoln*, Kurz and Allison, lithograph, GM 1526.130

At the dedication of the National Cemetery in Gettysburg on November 19, 1863, the crowd listened for over two hours as minister Edward Everett spoke. Upon his conclusion, President Abraham Lincoln gave his famous and infinitely shorter, Gettysburg Address.

2010 that he could never have known in 1863—that although the battle of Gettysburg had lasted only three days, the battle over Gettysburg had never ended.

Visitors need barely look to see evidence of the conflict. The rock star of battlefields, Gettysburg is popular and comparatively well preserved, tucked away in a photogenic valley; its acreage, once plotted with strategic maneuvers, is now punctuated by monuments resembling oversized chess pieces. The Rose Woods, Peach Orchard, and Wheatfield beckon to tourists with names belying the horror of what occurred there: that a man was killed, wounded, or captured less than every two seconds

during the combined twenty-four hours of fighting—a total of 51,000 dead, mangled, or beneath the rotting boot of a captor.

... a man was killed, wounded, or captured less than every two seconds during the combined twenty-four hours of fighting—a total of 51,000

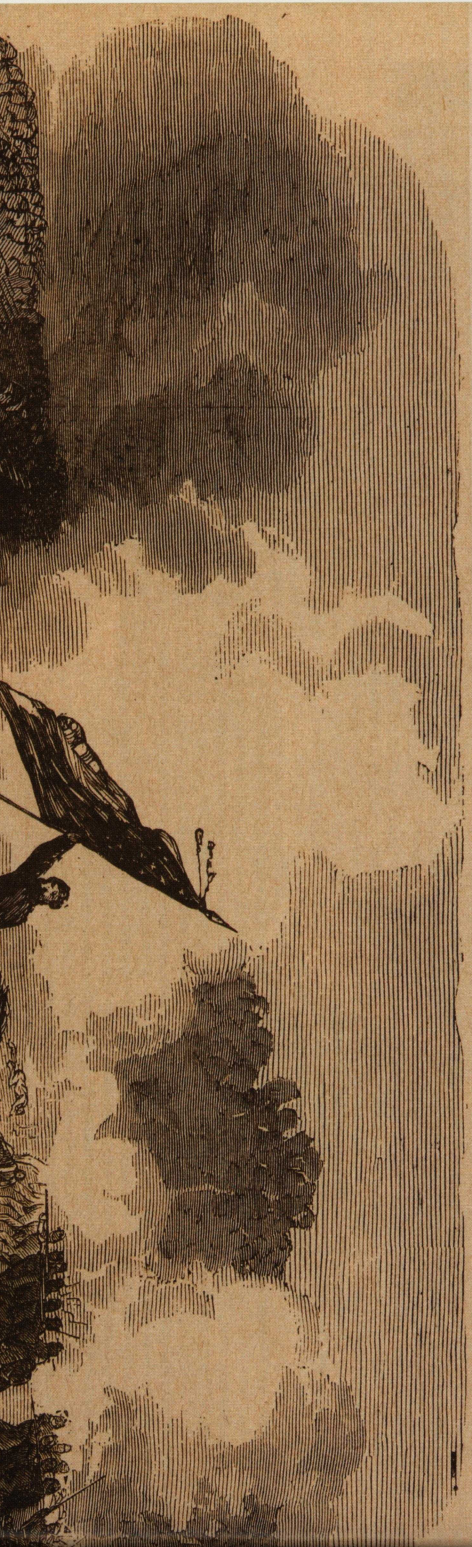
dead, mangled, or beneath the rotting boot of a captor.

In town, however, a stark contrast emerges. Robert E. Lee bobbleheads line storefront windows. The Comfort Suites Hotel looms thirty feet from the National Cemetery. Tourists stop in for homemade fudge and licorice along the road that carried many to their deaths. And on dark street corners, ghost tours materialize in greater numbers and with greater speed than any specters they promote. Simply put and simply witnessed, Gettysburg is a business. And despite the quaint atmosphere, it is big business, generating nearly \$120 million each year. Some, however, believe that its profits come at the incalculable cost of the 51,000. It is the difficulty in reconciling these numbers that generates the modern struggle, no longer waged over states' rights, but over an individual town's right to pursue economic development at the potential expense of what many consider hallowed ground.



ABRAHAM LINCOLN, facing forward. Gettysburg is a business.... and it is a big business, generating \$120 million a year...

The Battle of Gettysburg in the pages of *Harper's Weekly*, 1863
 A.R. Waud. Clockwise from top:
 Union Position Near the Centre—
 Gettysburg in the Distance (July 25). GM 5027.1749;
 Hill on the Left of the Union Position—Hazlett's Battery in Action (July 25). GM 5027.1749;
 Longstreet's Attack Upon Our Left Centre—Blue Ridge in the Distance (August 8).
 GM 5027.1751; General Crawford's Charge on the Rebel Lines (August 8). GM 5027.1751



THE REISSUE OF
HARPER'S WEEKLY
A JOURNAL OF CIVILIZATION

VOL. VII.—No. 343.] NEW YORK, SATURDAY, JULY 25, 1863.
Entered according to Act of Congress, in the Year 1863, by Harper & Brothers, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.



MAJOR-GENERAL ULYSSES S. GRANT ("UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER" GRANT).—FROM A NEW PHOTOGRAPH JUST RECEIVED FROM VINCENNA.—[SEE PAGE 475.]

The battle *of* Gettysburg ended in 1863. The battle *for* Gettysburg began soon after.

This battle began in 1864, soon after the end of the original conflict. Although the war's outcome was still uncertain, people recognized the significance of Gettysburg, not just in the number of lives lost, but an even larger context. Already undersupplied, Lee and his Confederate forces had gambled in Pennsylvania and suffered a devastating loss that would become known as the high-water—or low-water—mark of the Civil War. A group of concerned citizens formed the Gettysburg Battlefield Memorial Association (GBMA) to preserve and protect the land on which the rout occurred. Its official mission was to “prevent change in the physical aspect of the field.” This concept of historic preservation and conservation was relatively new, having been applied previously to only one battlefield, the green at Lexington where a marker was erected in 1799 to commemorate the first shots of the American Revolution. The GBMA, however, had larger ambitions. They conferred with veterans on the accurate placement of monuments and markers, but they also bought and secured land to ensure its protection. The difficulty, however, was in trying to secure such a large area. Individual objects are relatively simple to preserve and can be easily displayed in shadowboxes or museums; thousands of acres are another thing entirely.



BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG. SCENE AT THE PEACH ORCHARD.

FACING: Major General Ulysses S. Grant from *Harper's Weekly*, July 25, 1863. GM 5027.1749

ABOVE: “Scene at the Peach Orchard” from *The Confederate Soldier in the Civil War*. Ed., Ben LaBree. Prentice Press: Louisville, KY, 1897. GM 2726.69.

George Gordon Meade,
Major General, United
States Army. LC-DIG-
ppmsca-19398. Courtesy of
the Library of Congress



General Meade assumed
command of the Army of
the Potomac on June 28,
1863, just three days before
the battle would begin.



BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG—CHARGE OF THE CONFEDERATES ON CEMETERY HILL. THURSDAY NIGHT, JULY 26, 1863.
Taken & Engraved by Henry Jones

By 1868, newspapers were advertising stereoscopic views of Gettysburg, \$2 per dozen.



COPYRIGHT 1963 BY DETROIT PHOTOGRAPHIC CO.

As historic preservation continued to develop over the years, so too did a parallel movement that directly affected the efforts of the GBMA: cultural tourism. With the Civil War now safely and decidedly in the past, albeit the very near past, people wanted to experience the places that had figured so prominently in the war. Entrepreneurs quickly developed products for curious consumers, and by 1868 newspapers were advertising stereoscopic views of Gettysburg, \$2 per dozen. A year later *The New York Times* declared Gettysburg the fountain of health and tempted tourists to the natural springs on the battlefield where the paralyzed were said to stand and walk and the rheumatic to be cured. For a small fee. These were minor in comparison, however, to the vandalism that occurred in 1893 when a trolley company began laying tracks directly across the battlefield on land unprotected by the GBMA. Newspapers lamented the invasion of Gettysburg, this time not by Confederates but capitalists:

All along the line in the vicinity of the Devil's Den, there is heavy blasting and digging and filling, and great havoc is played with the face of the landscape. Huge masses of rock are displaced, great boulders are moved...the battlefield as fought over is gone and can never be restored. Its pristine beauty is lost forever. Greed has spoiled it beyond the power of recovery.

Gettysburg was not the only victim of such acts, however. The same year, the McLean house at Appomattox, where Generals Grant and Lee discussed terms of surrender, suffered similarly when it was dismantled brick by brick, board by board, and numbered and crated, to be reassembled in Washington, D.C. as a dime attraction. The businessman's finances faltered, however, and the house sat disassembled for nearly fifty years before it was discovered and rebuilt. It reopened in 1951.

Unfortunately for Gettysburg, the damage could not be undone. Although the track construction was stopped, the topography could not be restored. It did, however, bring attention to the difficulty of maintaining a battlefield and inspire men like General Daniel Sickles, who lost a leg at Gettysburg, to lobby for federal ownership of threatened lands. The government ultimately agreed, and by 1900 named five national military parks: Chickamauga and Chattanooga, Antietam, Shiloh, Vicksburg, and after the GBMA transferred their holdings, Gettysburg. A small committee of Union and Confederate veterans governed each park and oversaw the annual budget—for Gettysburg,

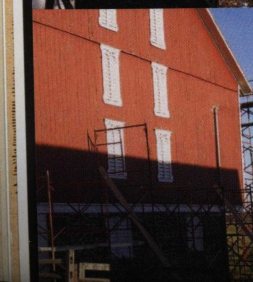
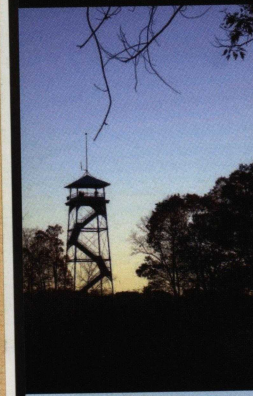
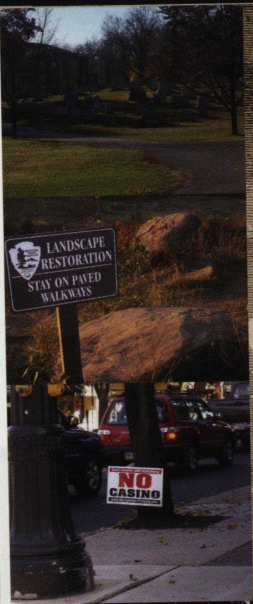


Gens. Sickles, Carr, and Graham.
Taken Near Trostle's Barn, Gettysburg
Battlefield, on spot where General
Sickles lost his leg, July 2, 1863.
LC-3617266. Courtesy of the Library
of Congress

the damage . . . did, however, bring attention to the difficulty of maintaining a battlefield and inspire men like General Daniel Sickles, who lost a leg at Gettysburg, to lobby for federal ownership of threatened lands.

FACING TOP: "Battle of Gettysburg—Charge of the Confederates on Cemetery Hill, Thursday Night, July 2nd, 1863" from *The Soldier in our Civil War*. Eds., Paul Mottelay and T. Campbell Copeland. Stanley Bradley Publishing. New York, 1890. GM 2726.71

FACING BOTTOM: Hancock Avenue, Cemetery Ridge, Gettysburg, 1903.
LC-D43-T01-10261-R. Courtesy of the Library of Congress



\$75,000. Mostly, the committees reached amicable and cooperative decisions, although not entirely without debate. In 1903 a divisive bill was proposed to build a commemorative monument of General Robert E. Lee. Union commissioners did not want a statue, prominent or not, of a Confederate leader, but fourteen years later the Virginia monument was dedicated. To date, Lee, Longstreet, and Armistead are the only Confederate generals at Gettysburg. Longstreet is tucked into the treeline, difficult to find even with a map; Lee is prominent atop the Virginia monument, forever locked in stony contemplation as he looks towards General Meade and Cemetery Ridge.

With the national parks established, tourism continued to increase. Just as the trolley had threatened the battlefield in the late 19th century, transportation again threatened in the mid-20th. Affordable cars had given rise to the great American road trip and each summer families took to the highway, often visiting historical points of interest. Restaurants and hotels sprung up in and around the town, and by 1958 “preservationists” as they were recently known had taken notice. The *New York Times* ran an article drawing attention to the fight to save the nation’s landmarks, including Gettysburg. Attacks, they said, were constant and often came in the guise of progress or efficiency or economy.

One such attack came from the innocently named Fantasyland. Built in 1959 and located south of General Meade’s headquarters, it promised a fabulous magical wonderland of make-believe centered around a miniature golf course. Guests could putt-putt with the likes of Mother Goose, Humpty Dumpty, and Henny Penny. Supporters said it offered families a day of fun. Those against it, however, felt it was an odd juxtaposition: a park celebrating childhood innocence next to a battlefield where a country and so many men lost theirs. The National Park Service agreed and bought the acreage, forcing Fantasyland to close in 1980.

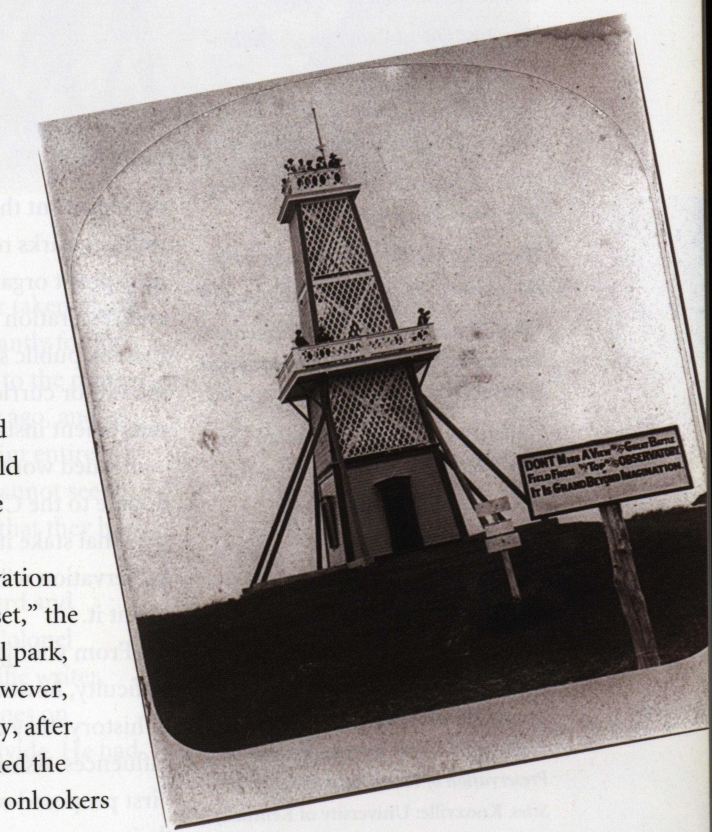
Another assault came in 1974 when investors built a 310-foot observation tower. Intrusive and largely disliked, it was called the “mutated erector set,” the ugliest commercial structure ever to intrude on the sanctity of a national park, and a new low in historical tastelessness. Its location on private land, however, meant little could be done unless Washington took an active role. Finally, after a lengthy legal process, the government acquired the land and condemned the tower. On the carefully chosen date of July 3, 2000, an estimated 10,000 onlookers watched as the tower was demolished.

... investors built a 310-foot observation tower ... called the “mutated erector set.”

FACING: *Harper's Weekly*, A.R. Waud. Longstreet's Attack Upon Our Left Centre—Blue Ridge in the Distance (August 8). GM 5027.1751

FACING, INSETS: Gettysburg National Military Park, top to bottom: hotel near cemetery; landscape restoration sign; no casino sign, town of Gettysburg; cannon on Cemetery Ridge; observation tower, Seminary Ridge; Virginia monument; Codori Barn. Photos by Kimberly Roblin.

... it was an odd juxtaposition: a park celebrating childhood innocence next to a battlefield where a country and so many men lost theirs.



Gettysburg Observation Tower. LOC 3b11174r. Courtesy of the Library of Congress

An earlier and much smaller version of the 1974 “mutated erector set.”

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The demolition symbolically ushered in a phase of unprecedented restoration and preservation that continues today. Sadly, it is already too late for roughly 20 percent of lands associated with battlefields, and another acre of land is lost to irrevocable development each hour. The National Park Service, however, in cooperation with several non profit-organizations, such as the Civil War Trust, has dedicated itself to preventing further destruction. The most direct way of achieving this is through the

Ironically, it takes money to fight the development that is so often driven by a desire to make money.

acquisition of land, thereby protecting it from further development, but it is not enough to simply preserve the battlefields. Equally critical is the restoration of battlefield conditions. This includes physical rehabilitation of buildings and landscapes; removing trees that were not present, planting trees in areas cleared in past decades, building fences that once stood, or removing obtrusive observation towers. It cannot be restoration for restoration's sake, however. It must be accurate. In summer 2010, Gettysburg removed three newly constructed fences after historians argued there was insufficient documentation to support their placement.

Ironically, it takes money to fight the development that is so often driven by a desire to make money. Although all national military parks receive federal funding, it is generously supplemented by donations from non-profit organizations and individual citizens. Without fundraising, the preservation and restoration efforts would be greatly limited. To increase public awareness and thereby public support, Gettysburg has made preservation and restoration part of the visitor curriculum. While touring the new visitor center, I noticed a prominent permanent installation on the history of preservation efforts at Gettysburg and the continued work being done. In the gift shop, patrons are asked if they would like to donate to the Civil War Preservation Trust, thereby joining the effort and having a personal stake in it. The hope is that people educated about battlefield restoration and preservation will be more likely to support the efforts than those who know nothing about it.

From young saplings to scaffolding to hewn trees, the results are apparent. The difficulty, however, is that although battlefields are the site of a precise moment in history, they do not exist in a vacuum and are subject to modern interests and influences. As one threat is deterred another arises. A casino is the latest incarnation. First proposed over five years ago, it is still brewing controversy as both sides continue their arguments. In Gettysburg signs for and against it dot local yards and business windows. The casino would sit less than one mile from the southern edge of the battlefield and have over 200 rooms and 5,000 slot machines. Supporters cite economic growth. Protesters say it would detract from the atmosphere of the battlefield. To date, no final decision has been reached.

I pondered all this as I stood by Warren once again on Little Round Top on my way out of town. While economic growth is understandably important, the residents in and around Gettysburg already possess a distinct currency; one that cannot be



Hill on the Left of the Union Position—Hazlett's Battery in Action, *Harper's Weekly* (July 25). GM 5027.1749

minted, restocked or retooled—and that is history. If the battle had never taken place, most Americans would have never heard of Gettysburg. Or more importantly for its economy, have ever visited. The place owes what economic vitality it has to the more than 51,000 men whose lives were changed or ended there over a century ago, and to sully the battlefield where so many gave so much seems to miss the point entirely. Perhaps it is a matter of perspective. Sometimes those closest to a thing cannot see it for what it is. Perhaps those in Adams County are so used to Gettysburg that they have forgotten what it means.

Unready to leave, I looked out one last time towards the Peach Orchard and the Wheatfield and into the wooded slope over my left shoulder, where Colonel Joshua Chamberlain and the 20th Maine defended their position. A prolific writer, Chamberlain is often quoted, and I thought of one of his more famous lines on Gettysburg and smiled at the realization. He had cheated the historical divide. He had known something of the future from his position in the past.

In great deeds, something abides. On great fields, something stays. Forms change and pass; bodies disappear, but spirits linger, to consecrate the ground...and reverent men and women from afar, and generations that know us not and that we know not of, heart-drawn to see where and by whom great things were suffered and done for them, shall come to this deathless field...

KIMBERLY ROBLIN is Associate Curator at the Gilcrease Museum.



ONE OF THE SPECIAL REWARDS of working at Gilcrease Museum is the chance to interact with visitors of all ages and backgrounds and to share with them insights into the collection. Such opportunities are especially rich in museums whose collections help visitors interpret the past. It is always gratifying to enter a gallery and join guests who are enjoying a work of art or some other artifact of the human experience. Whether they are visiting an old favorite or something entirely new that has captured their imagination, these occasions provide opportunities to engage in discussion and share the stories the object holds. In such moments an important role and responsibility of the museum unfolds: museums not only collect and preserve objects, but through the act of preservation they facilitate the transmission of the historical memory and associated meanings contained within their collections.

Without the memories stored within them, items in museum collections lack meaning. Their meaning is invested in them by the cultures that created them and fully realized by their interpretation in the present. The essential role museums play in preserving, interpreting, and transmitting to their guests this acquired meaning is dependent upon the memories held within their collections. With the release of these stored memories, 21st-century museum visitors can discover and interpret anew the meaning of cultural artifacts. Through the release of memories, museums also help visitors increase their appreciation for the nuances of history, connect to past events, and gain a better understanding of what happened, why it happened, and the resulting consequences.

With the release and transmission of object memories, and by contextualizing their collections, museums encourage their visitors to sharpen their historical consciousness and develop a greater sense of empathy with the past. Without context, objects can be one-dimensional, lacking the fullest expression of their meaning. But when provided contextual information, museum guests become empowered to probe beyond the surface veneer of objects and begin to invest them with their own meaning. Regardless of the form this contextual assistance may take, from traditional text panels, discussions with knowledgeable museum docents and staff, or the latest means of transmitting information that 21st-century technology makes possible, contextualized objects become multi-dimensional. Museums that successfully expose the multiple levels of meaning inherent within objects can connect their visitors to the past—to times, places, and people different from them—and ultimately to aspects of themselves. And that

MARK
DOLPH

19 GILCREASE.12

We Remember, Therefore We Are

FACING: White Swan (Crow, ca. 1851–1904), *War Record*. Watercolor, ink and pencil on muslin, after 1876. GM 0226.589

is precisely how Thomas Gilcrease envisioned his museum: as a collection of cultural artifacts capable of telling the stories of the Americas through multiple perspectives. But this process of creating connections to the past for museum visitors is complicated, as it involves far more than just collecting objects and the corresponding factual information. Museums must first select the items they collect, display, and interpret. In doing so they define what deserves to be preserved, what is, or is not important, what is, or is not history. As a result of this act of selection, museums become arbiters of history, and their exhibits may be seen as supporting and validating particular narratives of history while inadvertently condemning other important stories to obscurity.

And museum visitors are rarely passive participants in this experience. On the contrary, they bring with them their own understandings of the past, gathered from an array of sources and life experiences. But this should not be seen as a deterrent to expanding historical knowledge. Our understanding of the past requires that we engage our imaginations to develop empathy with those who preceded us. At their best, museums can utilize their audience's imaginations to create a convergence between history as interpretation and history as identification. The objects preserved in museum collections, and the preserved memories within those objects, empower visitors to both affirm and challenge what they think they know, to make the familiar unfamiliar, fresh and new.

When museum objects are displayed as purely abstract examples of the past and fail to engage the imaginations of viewers, they are inevitably uninspiring. Unless they release the memory of those who made or used the objects, they may fail to create essential human connections between the past and present. The best exhibits release the stored memories within objects, opening powerful portals to past events and allowing these events to be reconstructed and re-experienced in ways that serve museums' educational missions.

Some objects, through the very intent of their construction, serve as triggers

for the release of their memories in the 21st century, just as they did for those who created them in the past. The Lakota painted bison hide in the Gilcrease collection is a wonderful example of this form of commemoration. By engaging it, museum visitors gain both an appreciation and sense of empathy for a Native American man whose name may have been lost to history, but not the memory of the significant events of his life. In place of a written document, it is possible to reconstruct and experience this man's life from the "text" of his memories and the resulting stories he left behind. For hundreds of years Native American men utilized bison hides as the canvas on which to record the important events in their lives through a series of pictographs. More than a century after these memories were recorded, museum visitors can create



Lakota painted bison hide.
Late 19th century. GM 89.49



White Swan (Crow, ca. 1851-1904),
War Record. Watercolor, ink and pencil
on muslin, after 1876. GM 0226.589

connections to the past that transport them to life on the northern plains of the 19th

century through the stories they continue to tell. The Gilcrease hide reveals the personal history of this now forgotten man, forgotten save for the memories preserved for us to re-experience in the present. He becomes our companion through time as we view the events he felt compelled to memorialize. We see depictions of important ceremonies such as the Sun Dance, bison hunts, war with rival tribes, the courting of his future wife, and the role the horse played as the most important agent of change for native people living on the Great Plains. We gain empathy, as we can easily imagine him using this record to recall his history late in life, perhaps as an aid for a failing memory, as he related a life well lived to his children and grandchildren. Despite being separated by time and space, we begin to develop connections to this man through our own memories, as we recall the important events in our own lives, and how they define and memorialize who we are.

If the name of the man who left his history as a series of painted vignettes on bison hide is lost to us in the present, that is not the case with the Crow Indian White Swan (c. 1851-1904). Much as the Lakota man left his life's memories as a series of pictures, White Swan recorded his exploits as a warrior and scout for the U.S. Army at the Battle of the Little Big Horn. Employing a similar pictographic form as the Lakota man used on bison hide, White Swan told his stories in watercolors, ink and pencil on muslin trade cloth to memorialize his army service. In the process he transcended the traditional pictographs to establish a more illusionistic technique that has become the defining style for Native American artists into the 21st century.

Where objects like the Lakota bison hide and White Swan's war record were created to serve as triggers of the memory of those who created them, many objects release memories within visitors, memories that might have remained forgotten without the chance museum encounter. Quite often visitors come upon a work in the museum that sparks a vivid recollection of their own lives and experiences. An encounter with

William Merritt Chase's *Shell Beach at Shinnecock* can evoke these kinds of powerful associations. Whereas Chase created a work that surely memorialized memories of his daughters in carefree play on a sunny Long Island beach over 100 years ago, the timeless quality of this painting has the power to elicit personal remembrances for 21st century audiences. This same quality is inherent in George Hand Wright's wonderfully narrative "before and after" painting, *Going to the Seashore and Return from the Seashore*. Whether remembered from the perspective of parent or child, visitors connect with these works because of the powerful memories they release: the anticipation and excitement experienced on some long-ago vacation; the wonder and delight of hearing the roar of the ocean when we first collected shells and pressed them to our ears.

But a work such as *Going to the Seashore and Return from the Seashore* provides more than the release of memories, for it affords us the opportunity to contextualize it, and in the process learn how this painting reflects the cultural transformation of the time and place of its creation. From this perspective, Wright's painting allows for a discussion with visitors of how the United States was rapidly transforming itself in the late 19th and early 20th centuries from a rural, agrarian nation into one that was increasingly urban and industrialized. This in turn can lead to exploring the many consequences of the American Industrial Revolution, such as the creation of an expanding middle class that had both the time and financial wherewithal to find respite from the often unsanitary, overcrowded cities of the day in a family outing to the seashore, the chance to escape the city for the Arcadian renewal found in nature.

Going to the Seashore and Return from the Seashore, George Hand Wright.
Oil on canvas, no date. GM 0126.2265



A similar desire to find relief in nature from the excesses of industrialization can be found in perhaps the most popular, familiar, and iconic work in the Gilcrease collection, Thomas Moran's *Shoshone Falls on the Snake River*. Even at its most basic level of appreciation, *Shoshone Falls* captivates visitors with its awe-inspiring vision of the sublime found in nature. Gilcrease visitors experience Moran's astonishment, reverence, and respect for nature. They don't need to know where the falls are, for they could be anywhere. They don't need to know who Thomas Moran was, and why he is considered one of the foremost painters of the American West, although the most cursory viewing of *Shoshone Falls* surely confirms the genius of its creator. Nor do they need to know why Moran felt compelled to paint this landscape. No, at its most basic, elemental level of meaning, *Shoshone Falls* possesses the power to envelop its audiences in the rapture of pure astonishment. But *Shoshone Falls* has far more to offer 21st-century audiences when its cultural memory is more fully released and resulting meaning is contextualized.

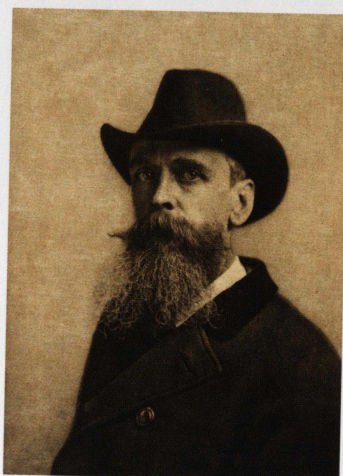
William Merritt Chase, *Shell Beach at Shinnecock*. Oil on canvas, after 1892.
GM 0126.2252



Completed in 1900, *Shoshone Falls* can be interpreted in part as Moran's reaction, indeed his protest, to the overt commercialization of Niagara Falls. By the last third of the 19th century Niagara had become degraded and spoiled by vacation and honeymoon cabins perched along its cliffs, with the falls merely a backdrop to an array of stunts such as high-wire walkers crossing back and forth across the chasm and daredevils riding in barrels over the falls into the abyss below. In contrast to the highly

commercialized Niagara, Moran found Shoshone to be the "grandest waterfall" in part because "there were no houses or people to spoil the grandeur of the mighty torrent... and it was beyond words magnificent." In *Shoshone Falls* Moran depicted a landscape devoid of human activity, and in the process transformed it into a place of value, an iconic symbol of something wild and natural, and as such, the kind of place many Americans wanted preserved.

Thomas Moran, *Shoshone Falls on the Snake River*. Oil on canvas, 1900.
GM 0126.2339



Great Hot Springs, Yellowstone Park,
Thomas Moran. Oil on canvas, 1893.
GM 0126.2342

Thomas Moran. Photogravure by
Napoleon Sarony. GM 4326.6126

In this sense *Shoshone Falls* reflected the emerging American ethos of the late 19th and early 20th centuries that valued wild places in the American West like the Yellowstone country, Grand Canyon, and Shoshone Falls. Preserved, these places could serve as sanctuaries for the soul in an increasing urbanized country, places where it was still possible to fully experience nature—if only in the American imagination—and reap the spiritual rewards of renewal and redemption that undisturbed nature seemed to offer. Leaders of the period's Progressive Movement saw these wild places as worthy of preservation. As a consequence, Theodore Roosevelt, the nation's first Progressive Era president, would use his authority to establish five new national parks and the Antiquities Act of 1906 to further this ethos of protecting and preserving the nation's treasures.

Today's audiences continue to experience the power of *Shoshone Falls* as it transmits to the present the collective memory and meaning of what was deemed important to Americans at the time it was painted. From this perspective, Moran's masterpiece reflects the growing demand of his time, as well as our own, that special places need to be saved and preserved for the intrinsic qualities they possess for both present and future generations of Americans. These shared memories and meaning remind us of both the persistence and continuity of the past in our lives. As writer and historian Wallace Stegner explained, "We simply need that wild country available to us, even if we never do more than drive to its edge and look in. For it can be a means of reassuring ourselves of our sanity as creatures, a part of the geography of hope." With Niagara as an example of what might befall these special places, *Shoshone Falls* serves as a plea for



Thomas Moran, *The Grand Canyon*.
Oil on canvas, 1913. GM 0127.2351

preservation—that even so wild and sublime a place as this is not out of the reach of human manipulation—for any valued place could fall victim to the deeply rooted and relentless American need to control, manage, and commoditize nature for commercial purposes.

The deeper meaning contained within *Shoshone Falls* is complicated and illuminates an unyielding reality of the American West. The ultimate fate of the Snake River was to be dammed upstream of the falls. With human manipulation, the power of nature could be harnessed and transformed for the benefit of human physical needs, needs that would overpower those human desires that required preserving the sublime found in undisturbed nature. The construction of the dam was seen as a necessity, for the truth of the West is that it is an overwhelmingly arid place, not the well-watered garden so many had imagined it to be, that commercial interests demanded it become. By damming the Snake to create a vast reservoir of precious water, the garden could become a reality.

Shoshone Falls continues to engage audiences with its memory and duality of meaning. It powerfully transmits the essence of the sublime that generations of Americans found, and continue to find, in nature's wild places while simultaneously reflecting the tensions over preservation. These tensions remain unresolved,



reverberating from the past to the present, tensions between persevering natural wonders and exploiting them to provide the vital resources so necessary for a dynamic nation.

The preservation of cultural artifacts of the past as different as *Shoshone Falls* and the Lakota painted bison hide is obviously a vitally important role for museums. But it is the less obvious responsibility of preserving and releasing the memories stored within these items that allows museum visitors to fully invest them with meaning. Without the preservation and release of the cultural memories stored within museum collections, and the resulting construction of meaning that springs from those memories, museum objects are merely empty vessels unable to transmit their stories to us in the present. To fully realize the stories within objects, and the connections to the past those stories can make, museums must not only collect and preserve the artifacts of human creativity but also serve as storehouses for the cultural memories their collections possess. They must become the nexus where culture, history, and memory meet to fully engage the imaginations of their visitors. This is what makes Gilcrease the very special place it is. It is a place where we form connections with the past by remembering who we were as a way of understanding who we are.

MARK DOLPH is Coordinator of Volunteer Services at the Gilcrease Museum.



FACING: Detail, Lakota painted bison hide. Late 19th century. GM 89.49

BELOW: Thomas Moran, *Niagara*. Wood engraving, circa 1881. GM 1526.434

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American Mecca: Mount Vernon

AFTER losing his father in 1742, the boy looked up to his older brother. Lawrence epitomized what education, good manners, and hard work could confer. The large tract of land their father had left him certainly helped, and the household Lawrence and his family established there drew the young lad close. One day he would be the owner of Mount Vernon. The land his older brother had tended would be his responsibility, and it would be his dinner table around which country gentry would congregate. For Lawrence and George Washington, the place was home, but over the decades the home took on a life of its own. From rustic lodge to country house, and from the general's house to the "American Mecca," as many visitors termed it, this seemingly simple structure was transformed from a gentlemen planter's home into something much more.



Mount Vernon, 2011.
Photo by Malinda Blank

FACING: *Life of George Washington—The Farmer*.
Color lithograph, ca. 1853.
LC-DIG-pga-02419
Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division

General Washington and his Family,
George Perine. Engraving.
GM 1526.949

Mount Vernon became one of the first truly American historical landmarks. It stood witness to the founding of a country and the struggles of a fledgling nation. Indeed, it also became one of the country's first tourist attractions, receiving both wanted and unwanted visitors as soon as President Washington left office. When it faced the deterioration that comes with age, a small group of women led by Ann Pamela Cunningham championed its importance to history through newspaper articles and fundraising events, uniting women across the nation to save the home of the first president. By 1858, the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association acquired enough money to purchase the home and some of the land surrounding it. Miss Cunningham and her followers created the first association dedicated to preserving a historic home in the United States, and their hard work, even through the difficulties of the Civil War, saved Mount Vernon. Their forward-thinking policy of keeping the home as the president and first lady knew it has meant that today visitors can walk the grounds and see the place where the seeds of a new nation were planted. By looking to the future, they gave us a glimpse of our past.



Geo. Washington Parke Custis.

Gen. Geo. Washington.

Eleanor Parke Custis.

Martha Washington.

William

GEN. GEORGE WASHINGTON AND HIS FAMILY.



Mount Vernon with Outbuildings
Shown From the Far Side of the
Driveway, John Rubens Smith.
Watercolor, ca. 1828
LC-DIG-ppmsca-31794
Library of Congress Prints and
Photographs Division

Mount Vernon, the Home of
Washington, Middleton, Strobridge &
Co, after Kern. Lithograph, ca. 1861.
LC-DIG-pga-03139. Library of
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Cost Sterl 9. 15s.

Giff Washington
1760

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M DCC. XXVIII.

Mount Vernon remains in the hands of the Ladies' Association today. The curators, archaeologists, historians, and conservators who work there share in the legacy left by Miss Cunningham and contribute to her dream of preserving the home for future generations. In the early days of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, the group relied on historical descriptions, drawings, and eyewitness accounts to restore the home and grounds to their 18th-century glory. Curators now examine paint samples microscopically to determine the original colors chosen by the home's 18th-century inhabitants, and rely on excavations and scientific analysis of old buildings, gardens, and even refuse pits, to learn about life on the plantation during Washington's time. Although work on the house began in 1860, every year brings new findings and adds depth to the history of Mount Vernon and its most famous residents, George and Martha Washington.

In the early 1800s, a ritual sprang up among visitors to the new national capital of the United States—taking a boat trip down the Potomac River to visit Mount Vernon. Tourists arriving at the plantation made their way up from the dock toward the tomb of the president. From there, they might go up to the house, knocking on the door and asking to enter. As visitors left, many took leaves, the bark from trees, or flowers as mementos of their pilgrimage. As the home passed through the hands of the Washington family, the scores of visitors wanting to enter the home and tramp across the grounds were seen as a nuisance by the plantation's owners. Bushrod Washington, nephew to the former president, used the home as a part-time residence and found the number and character of the tourists so intrusive that in 1822 he publicly declared "Permission will not in future, be granted to Steam-Boat Parties, to enter the Gardens, or to walk over the grounds, nor will I consent that Mount Vernon, much less the Lawn, shall be the place at which eating, drinking and dancing parties may assemble."

FACING: *New Principles of Gardening*, Batty Langley. London, 1728. GM 3276.167

AT RIGHT, TOP: *Washington as a Farmer*, unknown artist. Engraving in Joel Tyler Headley's *The Illustrated Life of Washington*, New York, 1860. Department of Special Collections and University Archives, McFarlin Library, The University of Tulsa

Although Washington read primarily historical accounts of military engagements, his interest in farming led him to collect a wide variety of books on the latest gardening and agriculture discoveries, including this volume in the Gilcrease archival collection. Using the latest techniques available in the field of archaeology and dendrochronology (the study of tree rings to determine age), experts at the Mount Vernon Estate excavate garden beds to discover the types of plants Washington would have grown in his gardens and fields.

AT RIGHT: *George Washington Receiving Instruction from his Mother*, Louderback-Hoffman Co. Engraving in Joel Tyler Headley's *The Illustrated Life of Washington*, New York, 1860. Department of Special Collections and University Archives, McFarlin Library, The University of Tulsa

In 1735, when George Washington was three, his father Augustine purchased a small home overlooking the Potomac River in the Virginia colony. When he moved the family to a new property, he transferred the land to his son, Lawrence, who gave the estate its famous name. When Washington's father died, Mount Vernon became a home away from home for the young George.





Coincidentally, letters began to appear on the desks of editors at large national newspapers lamenting the state of the tomb of George Washington and its lack of a monument, and insinuating that the home was not being cared for properly. "The fame of General Washington is the property of the nation," wrote Charles H. Ruggles to his sister, and therefore "the successor to the estate of so illustrious a man should permit any of his Countrymen to examine whatever may awaken recollections of his greatness or afford a glimpse of his private life." In just twenty years after Washington's death, his home had been transformed from a country plantation into a physical link to America's past. Boating parties disembarking on the banks of the Potomac outside Mount Vernon no longer saw a working plantation with slaves, crops, and animals. Tourists came to glimpse the greatness of George Washington, to walk where he walked, and to connect to a Revolutionary generation that was rapidly disappearing by the 1830s.

As the cries regarding the state of Mount Vernon grew louder, the public's vision for the estate found an unlikely ally in Pamela Ann Cunningham. In 1853 Miss Cunningham's mother happened to pass by the estate and wrote to her daughter that she was saddened at how deteriorated the property looked from the river. Seized with a sudden passion, Cunningham, referring to herself as "a Southern Matron," composed a letter to the editor of the *Charleston Mercury* addressed to "the Ladies of the South" and entreated them to exert their efforts that "the means may be raised from the mites of thousands of gentle hearts, upon whom [Washington's] name has yet a magic spell, which will suffice to secure and retain his home and grave as a sacred spot for all coming time."

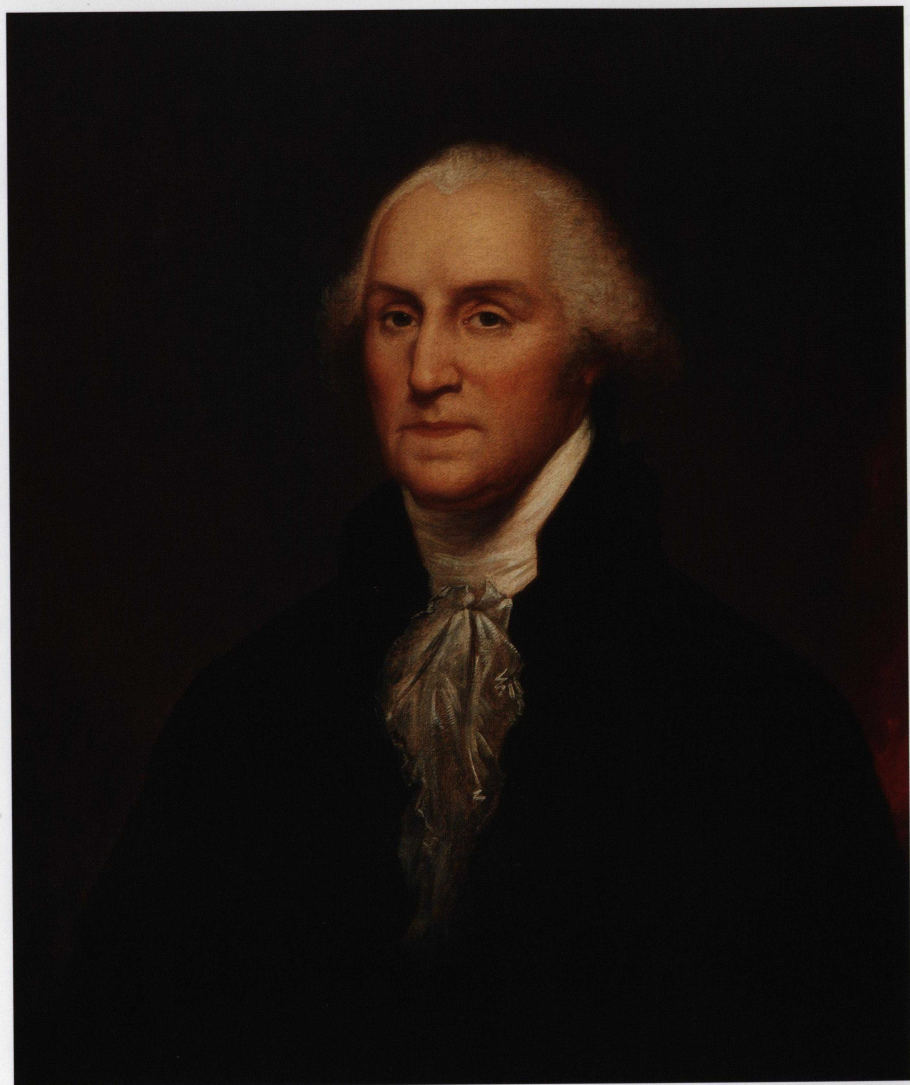
The appeal may have come as a surprise to the home's owner at the time, John Augustine Washington III, who had hoped that the federal government or the State of Virginia might be interested buyers. Despite his initial dismissiveness towards the Ladies' Association, the group continued to grow, collecting funds from every state in the Union. When at last the state and federal government passed on purchasing the estate, Washington agreed to sell to Cunningham's group. In April 1858, an \$18,000 down payment was made, with the balance of the \$200,000 owed by 1862. An active

FACING: *Washington's First Interview with Mrs. Custis*, W. H. Ellis after Felix O. C. Darley. Engraving, ca. 1865. TL2011.60



Greenhouse and slave quarter wings at Mount Vernon, 2011. Photo by Malinda Blank

The wings of this building, recreated by the team at the Mount Vernon Estate, served as barracks for nearly 60 people enslaved at the property. The center portion served as a greenhouse. Destroyed by fire in 1835, the greenhouse and slave quarters were rebuilt in the early 1950s as part of an effort to bring out the stories of all of Mount Vernon's inhabitants. Archaeological digs and contemporary accounts allow historical discussions to evolve, enriching the visitor's experience and displaying the estate as it was in George Washington's time.



George Washington, Rembrandt Peale.
Oil on canvas. GM 0126.1005

fundraising campaign, including subscriptions to a newsletter, plays and oratories, and appeals to schoolchildren, allowed the Ladies' Association to pay off their debt and take possession of the home two years earlier than expected. Then the real work on the house began—an effort that continues to this day.

Over its more than 150 year history, the goals for the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association have only changed slightly. According to Associate Director of Preservation Dennis Pogue, while the original emphasis was on preserving the buildings and grounds “as George

Washington knew them,” today’s staff uses the latest scientific techniques to explore what that really means, researching all aspects of the home and the grounds to ensure that even the smallest of plants are accurate for the 18th-century plantation. Emphasis is placed on aspects of the past that particularly pique the curiosity of today’s visitor. The recreation of the slave quarters, an intensive project several years in the making, was not only a response to visitors’ queries about the enslaved people at Mount Vernon, but also an effort to reflect contemporary scholarship on slave life in early America. While some projects at Mount Vernon are undertaken because of necessity, like installing a new water line, Pogue says that these projects “serve as opportunities for us to do research and make improvements over what had been done in the past.” Mount Vernon is not a stagnant site preserved in black and white but a constantly evolving place where different threads of history are illuminated with every new project.

While the excitement of working at an ever-changing site energizes the staff at Mount Vernon, not all their changes are met with unanimous approval. For example recently, after much research, the house was repainted. During a new analysis of extant paint fragments, Pogue and his team discovered that the original house was not bright white but rather a soft buff color. Although some visitors may be disappointed that the

Mount Vernon of their imaginations is not the Mount Vernon of reality, once docents and staff explain, they walk away knowing that what they’ve seen is much closer to the real Mount Vernon as Washington knew it. These interactions with the public also provide staff with the opportunity to showcase the important work they’ve done on the estate. Staff and visitors alike take a journey through Washington’s life, uncovering new details about the man and his home every year. Recent projects have rebuilt Washington’s whiskey distillery, once one of the largest in the nation, and focused on Washington’s hands-on role as a farmer exploring innovations in tools and compost and his role as a designer, finishing the buildings and gardens at Mount Vernon. While upcoming projects to replace fences and gates and repaint the dining room may not seem to the average visitor like extensive work, even these slight changes “will be a truer representation of the rooms that Washington knew,” according to Pogue. Even the smallest of projects at the estate seem to reflect the Ladies’ Association’s original intent to preserve the mansion and the grounds as the Washingtons knew them.

While objects and buildings capture the public’s memory and help us walk in the footsteps of Washington, it was the man himself that drew crowds to his farm after he left office. Mount Vernon became a place of quiet, of solemn contemplation, and of reverence for our first president, for the revolutionary generation, and for the hopes and dreams of a nation. Mount Vernon today represents that for many of its visitors. Says Dr. Pogue,

I think that most people come because on some level they want to make some connection to the past, and because George Washington is such an icon in American history. I hope that they go away with some additional appreciation of Washington’s life and character, and because he is such a compelling example of thoughtful public service, I hope that message comes across.

Mount Vernon, the nation’s first preservation project, funded by the women and children of the nation, has resonated with viewers since the very beginning because of the stories it tells about George Washington and about ourselves as Americans. As research continues, Mount Vernon will go on to enlighten thousands of visitors each year about Washington, the founding of a country, and our shared cultural history. As George W. Clymans, a returning Confederate veteran from the Civil War wrote in an account of his visit to Mount Vernon in 1865, “We have seen the place where our beloved and venerated Washington’s remains repose. A visit to Mt. Vernon is one which will never be regretted by a lover of his country.” Through hard work and great foresight, hundreds of people have labored to ensure that the Mount Vernon Mr. Clymans saw exists for future generations.

Special thanks to Dr. Dennis Pogue, Associate Director of Preservation and Dr. Esther White, Director of Archaeology, for taking the time out of their day to meet and visit with me about their work at Mount Vernon. Without their insight, this article would not have been possible.

AMANDA LETT is Registrar at the Gilcrease Museum.

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AFTER YEARS of embargoes and protests to the British crown, the United States declared war on Great Britain on June 18, 1812. In March 1813, armed vessels blockaded the eastern seaboard of the United States, cutting off all sea trade to the city of Baltimore. While preparation for the coming conflict was underway, the commander of Fort McHenry, Major George Armistead, commissioned a garrison flag to fly over the fort. It was sewn by a Mrs. Pickersgill of Baltimore. Over time, American flags in general have come to be thought of as “star spangled banners.” But the one that flew over Fort McHenry is considered the original “Star-Spangled Banner” because it inspired Francis Scott Key to write the song titled by that name which became our national anthem.



Saving the Star-Spangled Banner



The Star-Spangled Banner on view in Flag Hall, National Museum of American History, 1994. The flag had been kept in the care of the Armistead family until it was loaned, then later gifted, to the Smithsonian Institution. Image by Smithsonian Institution photographers

FACING: The Star-Spangled Banner after treatment. This image was assembled from 73 separate images taken by Smithsonian Institution photographers. ©Smithsonian Institution, 2003



The Storming of Fort George, May 27, 1813 from *Harper's Weekly*, May 29, 1858. GM 3426.6017

The impetus for the Star-Spangled Banner Preservation Project was the April 1994 mechanical failure of a screen intended to protect the flag from light and air-borne soiling. When examined after the screen failure, it was discovered the flag had become covered with dust in spite of the the screen. Staff were concerned that less apparent changes had occurred which might imperil the flag.

At this time, controversies were surfacing over the cleaning of paintings and sculptures. For example, some questioned the cleaning of Michaelangelo's famous statue *David* and the removal of smoke and candle residues from frescoes at the Sistine Chapel. A critic held that Michelangelo anticipated such changes over time and the works should be allowed to age naturally. The same argument was made against removing the "golden glow" caused by yellowing varnish from works by Rembrandt and Rubens. Sensitive to these events, in November 1996, fifty textile conservators, historians, curators, and scientists were invited to a three-day international conference to discuss strategies for preserving the flag. When discussions began, opinion heavily favored very limited intervention. After three days, the decision was made to remove the flag from its exhibition space and undertake extensive examination and documentation of its condition with the goal of devising the most appropriate treatment plan. The participants were invited to continue their involvement in the project and many stayed on, forming the nucleus of the Technical Advisory Group. This group met periodically during the project to review and evaluate the pertinent research. They advised, discussed options, and offered their recommendations to the management of the National Museum of American History. The final decision to approve the proposed treatment rested with the director of the museum.

THE FLAG

The Star-Spangled Banner was requisitioned as a forty-two-foot by thirty-foot flag; it is currently approximately thirty-four feet from hoist (the edge attached to the flag pole) to fly (the edge furthest from the pole). Seven known fifteen-star national flags date to the War of 1812. Comparison shows some similarities but also many differences among them in manufacture, which impact condition and longevity. England was the most likely source for the wool fabric used to make the Star-Spangled Banner. It is made of single-ply bunting, considered inferior to the more standard two-ply bunting. The stars are cotton and a number of them are pieced together. Cotton was being manufactured in the Baltimore area but was still costly or scarce, and therefore valuable enough to use every bit possible. The unhemmed top and bottom edges provided insufficient structural stability, resulting in visible damage. The irregular seamed edge of the doubled area located at the hoist suggests that this is not the original position of the header. It is likely that damaged areas were doubled over to provide a solid area for the reattachment of the header after the battle. The interior raw edges of the linen sleeve indicate that it was cut from a wider fabric. The sleeve contained three-ply rope with iron thimbles, used to attach the flag to the halyard. There is no apparent damage to the interior of the sleeve from contact with the rope, whose heavy coating of pitch most likely diminished the amount of deterioration caused to the linen.

IDENTIFICATION OF CONTAMINANTS

The harmful contaminants found on the flag fall into two categories, the potentially reactive materials—calcium, sodium, iron, magnesium, chlorine, sulfur compounds; and the potentially abrasive materials—carbon, silica, aluminum. Analysis revealed the cellulose of the stars was very acidic; this probably reflects the absorption of nitrogen- and sulfur-containing compounds during the battle. As the degradation products are generated, they increase the acid levels within the textile, accelerating the deterioration of the fibers. Heavy concentrations of iron, which would be expected from the explosion of ordnance, were not found and may have been removed by prior cleaning efforts such as a cleaning with gasoline in 1948 which would have stripped any protective lubrication from the surface of the woolen fibers along with the embedded particles.

In May 1970 the flag fibers seemed in good condition, but in September of that year a major fire occurred in the building that housed the flag. When the fibers were examined in 1981, they were soiled and deteriorated, with 80 percent of their tensile strength lost. The condition of the Star-Spangled Banner was compared to that of the Fort Niagara flag, manufactured in the same decade. It was in a fire about the same time as the Star-Spangled Banner. The Fort Niagara flag was cleaned immediately after the fire, which might account for its better condition. The Star-Spangled Banner was not cleaned. The conditions in Flag Hall probably aided the attachment of the soot and smoke particles to the flag. Vacuum cleaning the flag in 1982 likely broke up the remaining soot particles but did not remove them. Trace analysis was attempted by the laboratories at the USDA research facility in Wyndmoor, Pennsylvania. Researchers were able to identify the byproducts of wood combustion, wood pyrolates, di- and triglycerides, nicotine, and phosphates (presumably from flameproofing treatments of the exhibition carpet and fabrics). There was a high level of elemental carbon and sulfur. This mixture of components suggests there are residues from the building fire that consumed Plexiglas, flame-proofed carpeting, wood, plaster and plastics. Detectable



Detail of the rope and thimble from the Star-Spangled Banner. Image by M. Zinsmeister

amounts of chlorine were also found on the blue wool fibers. Random deposition of chlorine from the fire, or the use of chlorinated water to scrub the air at NMAH, might explain why some fibers are damaged while others are not.

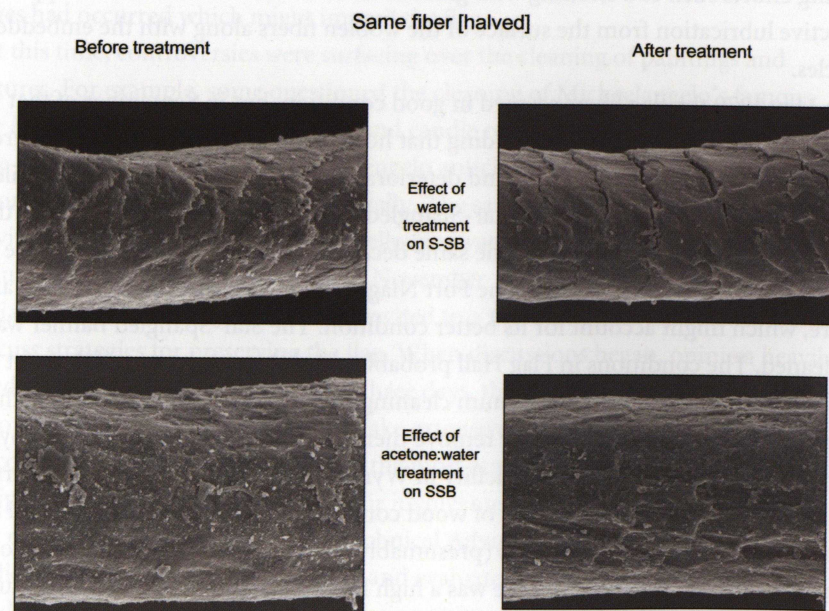
The flag is too large and too fragile to be immersed in liquid. It cannot be easily moved or rolled. So, rather than an allover cleaning by immersion, conservation staff concentrated on developing a sequential spot-cleaning process for the flag.

RESEARCH PROGRAM TO SUPPORT THE CONSERVATION EFFORT

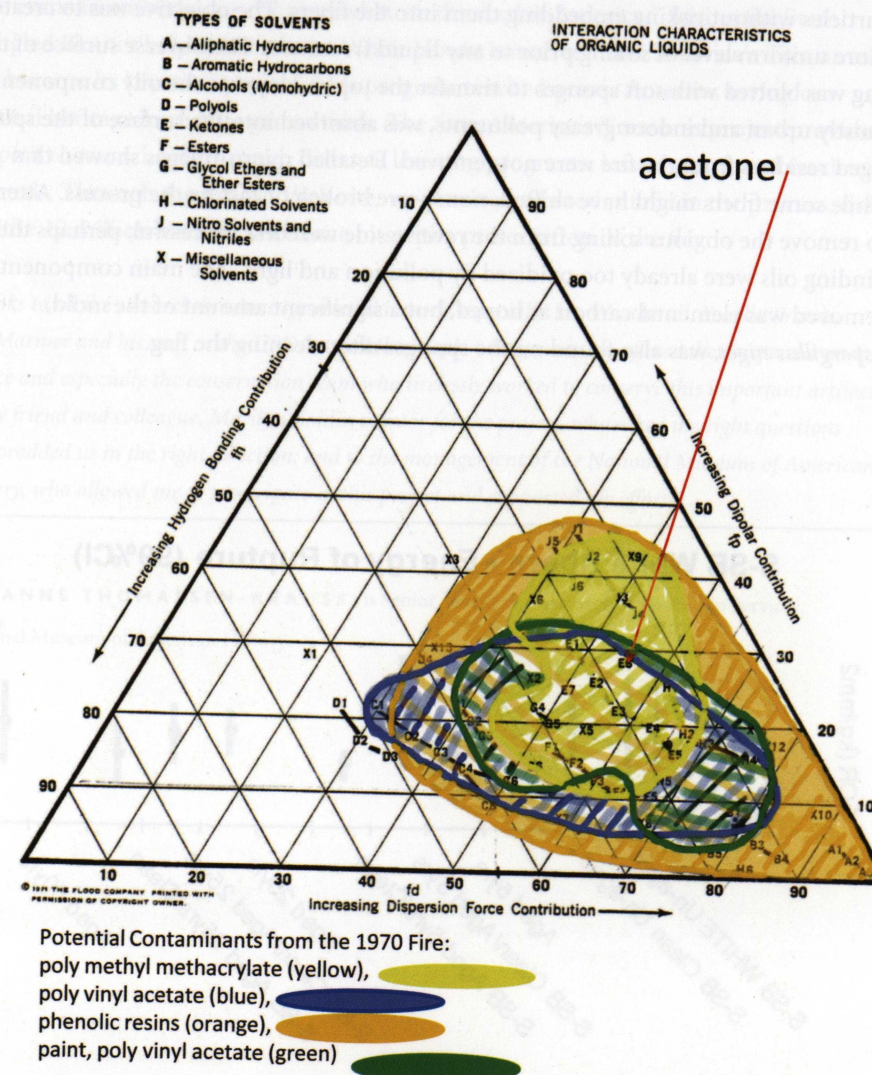
The flag had been on almost continuous display for ninety years when conservation work began. Given that all cleaning treatments are irreversible, any attempt to remove deposited soils had to be carefully considered. A formal research program was organized, supported by in-house expertise and contracted research staff. The goal was a thorough investigation of the condition of the artifact, including the reasons for its deterioration. In addition, the research program sought to validate the conservation by demonstrating a significant benefit to the flag from the proposed treatment. Research results were presented to the advisory group.

Approximately 20 percent of the flag has been lost, seen as visible holes and pervasive loss of individual fibers and yarns. Individual fibers were analyzed. The fibers of the Star-Spangled Banner retain about 15 to 40 percent of what would have been expected to be their strength in 1813. The individual fibers, while able to flex, were fragile and rigid, unable to elongate under stress. Researchers Ian Weatherall and Fenella France believed changes in humidity might be partially responsible for the diminished strength. Such changes repeated during the decades of exhibition could generate microscopic flaws in the fibers. When stressed, the locked-in twist of the fibers caused them to break rather than slip within the yarn. After being kept at a constant relative humidity level of 50 percent for about four years in the conservation laboratory, a small improvement in the tensile strength of the fibers was seen.

Comparison of fibers before and after water exposure, and before and after acetone/water exposure. Images by F. G. France



Levels of cystine, an easily light damaged amino acid which provides structural stability for wool protein, are greatly reduced, with only about half the expected amount remaining. This identifies photodegradation as one cause of deterioration. In 1948, stitches from a treatment done in 1914 were still nearly invisible, dyed to blend in with the wool they covered. In 1964 the flag was moved to a new location and dramatic lighting was provided by fluorescent fixtures attached to the perimeter of the display frame. The lights were white and blue, high energy light sources. By 1994, the 1914 stitches had faded and were visually altering the wool they covered, making it appear faded and dull. As the light bulbs were not filtered for ultraviolet radiation, deterioration of the linen support, hanging straps, and artifact itself resulted. Studies of wool irradiated with 410 nm blue light showed "post irradiation" changes, suggesting that even intermittent exposure may cause significant changes over time. Analysis of the red, white, and blue wool fiber fragments separated from the dust collected in 1982 show extremely oxidized protein. Most likely these fragments are the severely light-damaged ends of wool fibers.



TEAS diagram showing possible contaminants from the 1970 fire and potential solvents. Compiled by S. Thomassen-Krauss

Before you can decide whether to clean or not, you must evaluate the potential for the solution to interact with both the fibers and the contaminants on the fibers. Researchers noted that wetting the yarns caused the fibers to swell into a dense mass that collapsed upon drying, making it nearly impossible to separate them into individual fibers. Investigation showed that the wool protein had become much more water soluble than expected, with approximately a 1.7 percent loss of material. When Triton X-100, a neutral detergent, was added to the water, the soluble protein removed increased to 2 percent. While the amounts do not seem significant, the expected amount of loss based on the artificially aged samples was 0.1–0.2 percent.

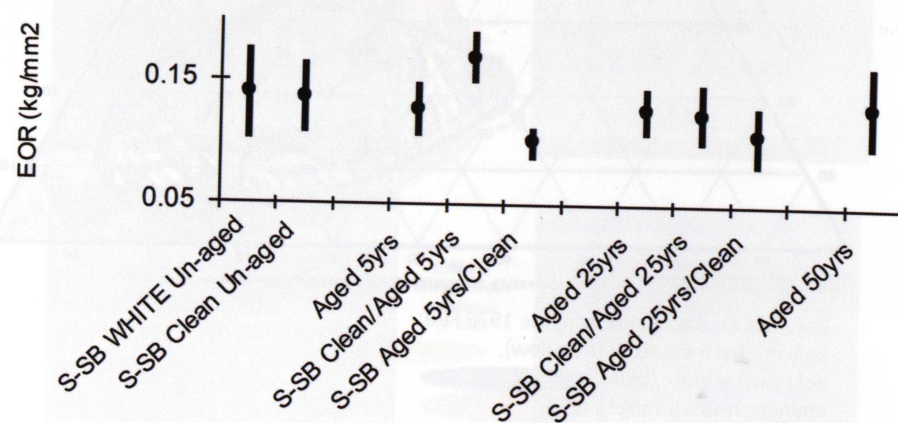
Because of the water sensitivity of the wool, solvent-based options were investigated. Amino acid analyses indicated virtually no soluble protein (0.2 percent) was extracted in the acetone solutions.

While initial solvent exposure caused changes in mechanical properties, subsequent exposure to solvents did not cause further change. The solvent cleaning of the flag with gasoline in 1948 might be at least partly responsible for the decreased strength we find.

Knowing that the particles on the surface of the fibers were very small in size, with a high concentration of carbon, it seemed reasonable to try to first remove these particles without risking embedding them into the fibers. The objective was to create a more uniform level of soiling prior to any liquid treatment. The obverse surface of the flag was blotted with soft sponges to transfer the top soil layer as the oily component, mostly urban and indoor greasy pollutants, was absorbed into the surface of the sponge. Aged residues from the fire were not removed. Detailed micro-images showed that while some fibers might have shifted, none were broken or lost by the process. Attempts to remove the obvious soiling from the reverse side were less successful; perhaps the binding oils were already too oxidized by pollution and light. The main component removed was elemental carbon as hoped, but a significant amount of the mold, *aspergillus niger*, was also found on the sponges after cleaning the flag.

Research detailing effects of immediate treatment of the flag versus postponing treatment. F. G. France, 2003

S-SB White fibers - Energy of Rupture (99%CI)



EVALUATION OF FIBER CONDITION POST-TREATMENT

It was important to insure that any treatment undertaken would do no harm. What would happen to the fibers during the next 500 years of their existence, the predicted lifetime of the fibers. Actual fibers of the Star-Spangled Banner were tested.

There was a risk that a solvent might remove water from the fiber, increasing fragility when handled. The final solvent mixture contained just enough water to prevent this. Investigations showed the addition of water in the solvent produced the desired cleaning without producing undesirable changes in strength, elongation and extensibility of the flag fibers.

The question was also asked whether we needed to act now. Test data showed that after five years, any attempt to clean the flag would result in measurable damage, so the time was now. With this information, the museum was confident that it was acting in the best interest of the artifact.

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No other symbol is more recognized by Americans than the flag. President Clinton expressed the feeling of many when he said "this star-spangled banner and its successors have come to embody our country, what we think of as America." Saving the Star-spangled Banner helped launch the White House initiative "Save America's Treasures" and became its keystone project. This program reached across America, saving our cultural heritage for future generations. The Save America's Treasures project provided support to our schools through distance learning programs, lesson plans, and teacher's manuals. Through the project Web site, we involved a broad public in the process, not just the 12 million visitors who came to see the preservation of the flag.

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MUSEUMS AND MEMORY

Thomas Gilcrease in the gallery with schoolchildren, 1950s. GM 4327.7943.



