



“The View from the Forge”
A Monthly Podcast of the News & Events at Valley Forge NHP
July 2007

Hello, my name is Mike Caldwell, Superintendent of Valley Forge National Historical Park. I'd like to welcome you to “The View from the Forge” – a monthly podcast of news and events from Valley Forge National Historical Park. Here with this month's edition is park volunteer, John Grossman.

The park received a \$10,000 challenge cost share grant supporting work with our partner, The Valley Forge Convention and Visitors Bureau, to develop multiple media versions of the successful Quest for Freedom program. Several years ago, the bureau, working with the park and other historic sites, developed a themed tour focused on African American history of both the Revolutionary War and Civil War periods. This grant will fund transferring that programming to media rather than live programming only so that it can be shared more widely over the web and in other venues.

Our summer programming is in full swing. There are more things to do at the park than ever before! Here is just a sample of what you might want to do. All of them are great for adults *and* kids.

- Take a load off at a Once Upon a Nation Storytelling Bench. These benches are guaranteed to educate and entertain. You can find them in three locations around the park—at the Welcome Center, at the National Memorial Arch, and at Washington's Headquarters. Storytellers, trained at Once Upon A Nation's unique month-long Benstitute, share riveting stories of the encampment and how it became a turning point in the Revolutionary War. Short, five-minute stories are told to anyone who comes to visit one of the signature, 13-foot, curved Once Upon A Nation benches.

- Another new program is “Valley Forge: After Hours.” You can spend an intimate evening in a historic setting with key figures of the Valley Forge Encampment, such as General George Washington and Alexander Hamilton. Begin at the park Welcome Center and be transported by trolley to Washington's Headquarters for a picnic supper. Continue with a campfire on the Grand Parade, where Continental soldiers will tell tales of the winter. The program runs Saturdays through September 1 at 5:30pm and lasts 3 hours. There is a fee charged.

- Also new this year is a 90-minute bike tour of Valley Forge on Saturdays and Sundays at 11:00am. Hear about the park's vital natural history, and find out why the natural

features led General Washington to choose Valley Forge for the Continental Army's six-month encampment in the winter of 1777-78. Tours depart from the main Welcome Center parking lot, adjacent to the bike rental facility.

- Make sure to join a gallery talk. You can wiggle your way into 18th century clothing, touch and learn about artifacts discovered in a recent archeological dig, or think kind thoughts about modern medicine as you handle surgical tools and hear about medical practices during the encampment. Talks take place at the Welcome Center gallery Monday through Friday at 10:00am, 12noon, and 2:00pm.

For additional program information visit our Welcome Center or go on line at www.nps.gov/vafo.

The park has just released its slate of Educational Programs for the 2007/2008 school year. These programs are designed for grades three through eight, but may be adapted for the upper grades. This year the park will offer the three programs:

“Riding Through History”

This two-hour program is designed to give students a hands-on history lesson by getting them out into the park to see for themselves what the winter encampment was like for Washington and the soldiers of the Continental Army. Park rangers board your bus and take you on a guided tour of Valley Forge, featuring stops at a reconstructed encampment site and a visit to the original building used by General Washington as his headquarters.

“Soldier Life”

During this one-hour program, students have the opportunity to learn about what life was like for the average soldier at Valley Forge. Through hands-on activities, students discover who the men and women of the Continental Army were, and why they joined the army. This program also emphasizes the accomplishments of the army at Valley Forge; accomplishments which enabled them to eventually win our independence.

“Ranger Mondays”

Bring Valley Forge to your school or group. On Mondays, park rangers are available to visit at your site and present a one hour program about Valley Forge. Rangers dressed as either Continental Soldiers or Regimental Camp Followers bring their *kit* with them to help bring alive the story of the brave men and women who encamped at Valley Forge. (The program is available within a 30-mile radius of the park).

For schedules and pricing information go to our website at www.nps.gov/vafo and click on the “For Teachers” link.

That's all for this month's “View from the Forge.” As always, for more information visit the park's website at www.nps.gov/vafo. Please come back next month for a new edition of “View from the Forge”. This is park volunteer John Grossman. Thanks for listening and we'll see you in the park!

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