



Independence: The Best Park in History

Independence Featured by the National Park Service as a “National Park Getaway”

We already know how much Independence has to offer at any time of the year! Over the New Year holidays, the National Park Service featured Independence as a “National Park Getaway.” Independence was featured on the National Park Service website, and the story can still be accessed at <http://www.nps.gov/getaways/independence>.

The Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution articulate principles and values that have challenged, guided, and identified our nation. Books and webpages offer photographs and transcripts of these foundational documents, but a thorough understanding of them requires a look beyond text to context. To situate the Declaration and the Constitution in history, know their authors better, and have a great time, travelers of all ages should visit Independence National Historical Park.

One of many attractions in the city of Philadelphia, the park beckons to those searching for a winter getaway. Visitors in this season avoid summertime crowds and, in January and February, enjoy un-ticketed entry to Independence Hall. In the same two months, you can catch one of the free tours given at the exhibit “People of Independence” in honor of the birthdays of George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and Thaddeus Kosciuszko. A park ranger will introduce you to the two Founding Fathers, the Revolutionary War general, and their contemporaries, whose portraits appear in the exhibit at the Second Bank of the United States. Independence NHP includes



a collection of sites where Washington, Franklin, and others lived, met, and worked. A steel framework or “ghost house” haunts the location of the home in which Franklin lived while participating in the Continental Congress and the Constitutional Convention. A house once occupied the space delineated by the frame, which rises above a subterranean museum. The museum displays artifacts from Franklin’s

life and includes a post office and an 18th-century printing office.

Franklin joined Washington and other delegates to the Continental Congress in Independence Hall, possibly the world’s stateliest room, where the United States was born with the signing of the Declaration of Independence. In the same meeting place, representatives from throughout the new nation wrote the U.S. Constitution. The legislative arm of the government established by the Constitution convened in Congress Hall, from 1790 to 1800. Both buildings are part of the national park, which also includes archeological exhibits and an archeological lab. Visitors can watch archeologists assemble and process artifacts from 18th- and 19th-century Philadelphia that have been excavated within the park.



Ranger Johnson with children at the Liberty Bell

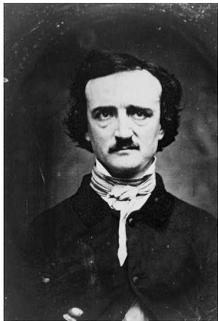
The places, objects, and ranger presentations at Independence not only enhance one’s knowledge of the Declaration and the Constitution, they afford insight into the experiences of the people behind these documents. The park, in other words, puts key texts in context and exposes visitors to the texture of late-18th-century life.

Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site

Our celebration of the Poe Bicentennial has been a great success. This celebratory year comes to an end with Poe's 201st birthday on January 16, but our fun and educational programming about Poe and his life will continue! Keep an eye on the website (www.nps.gov/edal) for more events this year.

Secrets of the Purloined Letter.

Join park rangers on Saturday, January 16th, from 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm to celebrate Poe's 201st Birthday with renowned Poe scholar Richard Kopley as he speaks about "The Purloined Letter," which Poe



himself regarded as his best tale of "ratiocination" (detective story). The free program will be at The German Society of Pennsylvania, 611 Spring Garden Street. For more information call

215-597-8780.

"Quoth the Ranger, Take a Tour!"

Celebrate Poe's 201st birthday with a special evening tour of the Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site on Poe's birthday, **January 19th**. Join the Friends of Independence for a special evening tour of the new exhibits in the Poe House and talks about the life and work of the Master of the Macabre. Warning: Spontaneous performances of Poe's work may occur through the course of the evening! Tickets for this event are \$7 for Friends of Independence or Friends of Poe members, \$15 for non-members. Contact the Friends of Independence at friendsofindependence.org.

President's House Exhibit Opening Postponed to Fall 2010

Independence National Historical Park and the City of Philadelphia, working with guidance from an Oversight Committee, will be delaying the opening of the President's House site commemoration until Fall 2010. Once complete, the exhibit will mark the site of the nation's executive mansion during the years of the federal presidency in Philadelphia. The commemoration will honor the men and women who lived and toiled in the George Washington household, including at least nine enslaved Africans. After extensive review, the Oversight Committee met on December 11 and again on December 18, 2009, and concluded that more time was needed to incorporate content and graphic design changes into the exhibit plan. The major construction of the project is already underway and will be finished by early July 2010.

The Oversight Committee met to review the status of the exhibits as presented by the consultants and to consider additional options for various aspects of the exhibit. There continues to be a lack of consensus on issues of content. However, the Oversight Committee agrees that total consensus is not the goal. There is broad agreement that the optimum visitor experience will evoke critical thought and compelling questions about the complex paradoxes that existed during the early days of the new nation.

There are several themes that Committee members are committed to portraying. The issue of slavery in the new democracy is a dominant feature. It is a topic that is rarely addressed in history classes and it is an important fact that has had far-reaching impact on American society, especially given that the nation's successful economy was due in large part to the system of forced labor. The Executive Branch of Government is another important topic for visitors to encounter in

the site. It was at the Philadelphia Presidential mansion that the first two presidents set the tone for how the nation would be governed. They met with important heads of state from various countries and they negotiated with leaders of Indian nations. The intricate lives of the people



who lived at the house, indentured and enslaved, is a central story for this site. The voice of protests from the African American community that resulted in the funding of the site is yet another theme, a story of passion and the importance of participation in civil society.

With numerous stakeholders for the President's House, and both historic and modern perspectives to be accounted for, the Oversight Committee has a challenging task ahead. It was agreed that a few more weeks to take the time to reassemble the research into a more compelling interpretation would do justice to this important national project.

Staff Transitions at Independence

It's a season of transition, with familiar faces moving on and a number of new staff joining the Independence team. Please visit www.friendsofindependence.org for images of all our new and departing staff.

We hope all our partners, friends and neighbors will join us in offering our thanks and appreciation to Independence staff who are moving on to new adventures: Steve Sitarski, Chief of Interpretation; Mary Jenkins, Interpretive Program Specialist; John Gray, IT Specialist; Steve Murphy, Gardener Supervisor; Bob King, Interpretive Ranger; James Crouch, Electrician; Isabel Ziegler, Museum Curator; Heather Honnold, Law Enforcement Ranger; and Mike Thacker, Park Guide.

The park and our partners have been fortunate to work with these dedicated National Park Service employees, and we wish them all the best in their future endeavors.

At the same time, we are pleased to be able to welcome the following new staff to the park: Nicholas Iannelli and Eli Bowers, Law Enforcement Rangers; Robert Boyer, Joy Springer, Sharon Wilkinson and Beth Mansfield, Specialists for the National Park Service Facility Management Software System; Daryle Steiner, Darryl Williams, Keith Boyd and Paris Blackwell, Maintenance Division.

Images and information about all the new and departing staff are available at www.friendsofindependence.org. As you visit Independence, keep an eye out for our new staff and please join us in offering them a warm welcome to the park and to Philadelphia!



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

<http://www.nps.gov/inde>

Independence National Historical Park

143 South Third Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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Conservation and Cleaning for the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

Washington Square Monument is protected and preserved through cleaning process

Later this winter, conservators working with the National Park Service will steam clean the monument of George Washington in Washington Square to remove organic material from the memorial's wall and surrounding marble.



Originally scheduled in December, the cleaning had to be delayed because of freezing temperatures. Organic material on the statue could promote mold growth, and will be removed as soon as temperatures rise.

The statue of George Washington in Washington Square stands before a reminder that, "Freedom is a light for which many men have died in darkness."

Washington Square is one of the original squares in the 1682 plan for the City of Philadelphia as designed for William Penn. It became a Potter's Field or Strangers' Burial Ground in 1706 and also served as a burial ground for the town's free and enslaved Africans. During the Revolutionary War it doubled as a military cemetery; more than 2,000 soldiers – both patriots and prisoners of war – were buried there and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier of the American Revolution was established in 1953.



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EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

The park will offer a variety of free, ranger-led programs in the coming months. For more information about the park and programs, visit our website at www.nps.gov/inde or follow us on Twitter (twitter.com/independencenhp) or Facebook!

Jefferson in Philadelphia, Wednesday - Sunday at 10:00 am. Join a park ranger for a presentation about Thomas Jefferson's life in Philadelphia while he was writing the Declaration of Independence in 1776. This free program program will be offered in the [Declaration House](#) .

Barnacles and Bullets, Saturday and Sunday at 11:00 am. Learn about life on the high seas and life in the camps at [New Hall Military Museum](#). A park ranger will use replica artifacts to interpret the lives of our sailors, marines and soldiers during the revolution.

Franklin's Glass Armonica, Saturday and Sunday at 3:00 pm. Did you know Benjamin Franklin was a musician? He invented his own instrument called the Glass Armonica after seeing wine glasses being played in England. Hear a demonstration of his instrument in the [Underground Museum](#) in Franklin Court!

The following special programs are offered in the Portrait Gallery in the Second Bank:

Philadelphia's Benjamin Franklin, [Saturday January 16 & Sunday January 17, 2010 at 1:00 pm](#). Despite his 304 years, Benjamin Franklin remains ageless in his many portraits. Join a Park Ranger for a fascinating tour of the [Second Bank](#) Portrait Gallery featuring Ben and his many friends and some enemies.

The Many Faces of George Washington, [February 13 and 14, 2010 at 1:00 pm](#). Celebrate George Washington's Birthday with this special tour of the many portraits of Washington. The Portrait Gallery also features a portrait of Martha Washington and many friends and comrades. Join a park ranger to see the generals, diplomats and congressmen he knew.

Generally Speaking, [February 7, 2010 at 1:00 pm](#). Celebrate Thaddeus Kosciuszko's birthday (February 4, 1746) a few days late. Join a park ranger for a special tour of the Second Bank Portrait Gallery featuring Kosciuszko and other notable foreign Generals who helped American win independence.