

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Living History Events - FALL 2007

By Suzanne and Craig Sheumaker

authors of the new travel book *America's Living History-The Early Years* (ISBN: 978-0-9792598-0-7)

<http://www.AmericasLivingHistory.com>

July 26, 2007 – On a mid-summer afternoon in northeastern New York, we stood as witnesses on a hillside just outside the walls of eighteenth-century Fort Ticonderoga. Below us, a remarkable spectacle unfolded. A sizable force of British soldiers, in red coats and tri-corner black hats, lined up at the bottom of the hill. About a third of the men took a step forward, fired their muskets and retreated to reload, while others stepped forward to fire. Higher up the hill, French soldiers and their Indian allies shot back in defense of their fort. The air filled with smoke, shouting and the clap of musket-fire. They were re-enacting a 1758 French and Indian War battle.

In front of us, Frenchmen ran into shooting range, yelled to one another, fired their weapons and then repositioned themselves. To our left, several dozen men charged downhill to close in on the British. To our right, a group of Mohawk Indians bent low, moved forward, knelt and fired their muskets. They looked fierce – with piercing eyes focused on the enemy, bodies painted for war and heads shaved (except for a long ponytail encircled with bright feathers). A Frenchman fell nearby, victim of a British shot. One of the Indians ran to his aid. A short distance away, a cannon was loaded and wheeled forward. Its fuse was ignited. Everyone covered their ears. Even so, we heard a thunderous roar as flames and smoke shot out of the barrel. Then quickly, the soldiers dragged their cannon backward and reloaded at a safe distance from the British. And thus the battle raged.

History wasn't rewritten that day, but it certainly was brought back to life. And when the mock-war ended, we talked with "soldiers" and "Indians," visited their encampments, tasted their stone-baked bread and learned about life on the northern frontier in the 1700s. No book, no movie, no Internet search could have given us so much. To be there in person, to see even a partial re-creation, was much more real and meaningful.

Talented actors, historians and history buffs come together from throughout America, as well as Canada and elsewhere, to perform for the public at such living history events. Most are volunteers, spending their own money, but you would never guess that. The quality of their work, the authenticity of their costumes and gear, and the wealth of shared information are extraordinary.

We love visiting historical places during their special events. What about you? Want to see living history during your own road trips? Want to share special insight with your children? Want to take unique and interesting photos as history seems to unfold before your eyes? It's just a matter of deciding where you'd like to be and when. Re-enactments and historical celebrations are held regularly at national and state historical parks, World Heritage Sites and living history museums in the U.S. They supplement visitor-season tours, craft demonstrations and interpretive programs.

We used *America's Living History-The Early Years* to help us create the following topic-oriented list for September and October. (This history-travel guide provides photos and background information on premier destinations, including their websites.) Take your pick and discover a grand experience! If you have period clothing appropriate to the event, wear it. You'll be contributing to everyone's fun.

America's Native Peoples

Sept 7-9 – Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site, Collinsville, Illinois

Indian Pow Wow - Gourd, Social and "Chance" dancing. Traders and food booths with goods for sale. Sponsored by the Thunderbird Society-Eagle Lodge. 618-346-5160. <http://www.cahokiamounds.com/calendar.html>

Sept 9 – 'Iolani Palace State Monument, Honolulu, Hawai'i

Royal Garden Party - Fund-raiser in the 1880s tradition of Queen Kapi'olani. Hawaiian music, strolls in the garden, genteel lawn games, elegant supper under lantern-lit trees, carriage rides, dancing by starlight and small auction. (808) 522-0822. <http://www.iolanipalace.org/events/index.html#special>

Sept 14-16 – Ocmulgee National Monument, Macon, Georgia

Ocmulgee Indian Celebration - Creek, Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Seminole and inter-tribal groups in colorful regalia. Native American crafts, fine art and stories. Mystical music and ceremonial stomp dances. (478) 752-8257. <http://www.nps.gov/ocmu/planyourvisit/events.htm>

Oct 2-6 – Oconaluftee Indian Village, Cherokee, North Carolina

95th Annual Cherokee Indian Fair - Artisans from throughout the region. Entertainment, artwork, crafts, agricultural items and traditional foods. (800) 438-1601. <http://www.cherokee-nc.com/events.php?Name=October>

European Colonization

Sept 16 – Fort de Chartres State Historic Site, Prairie du Rocher, Illinois

French Colonial Crafts & Trades - Hands-on events. 18th-century crafts, including pottery, blacksmithing, needlework, great-wheel lathe, carpentry, weaving, etc. Try the crafts yourself! (618) 284-7230. <http://www.ftdechartres.com/page/page/1396769.htm>

Oct 6-7 – El Rancho de las Golondrinas, Santa Fe vicinity, New Mexico

Harvest Festival - Bringing in the harvest, crushing grapes for wine, grinding sorghum for molasses, stringing colorful chile ristras, etc. Period music and dancing. Food. Arts and crafts. Outdoor Mass and religious procession led by Archbishop of Santa Fe. (505) 471-2261. <http://www.golondrinas.org/octevents.htm>

Oct 6-7 – Fort de Chartres State Historic Site, Prairie du Rocher, Illinois

French & Indian War Assemblage - Portraying mid-1700s life at the fort. Period camp life, military contests, demonstrations, vignettes and mock battles. (618) 284-7230. <http://www.ftdechartres.com/page/page/1396769.htm>

Oct 20 – Plimoth Plantation, Plymouth, Massachusetts

1627 Harvest Dinner - An evening of food, entertainment and hospitality re-creating the celebration enjoyed by the original English village and neighboring Indians in 1621. (508) 746-1622. <http://www.plimoth.org/calendar/month.php?mo=10&yr=2007>

Religious & Secular Groups

Sept 8-9 – **Pennsbury Manor**, Morrisville, Pennsylvania

Colonial Crossroads Festival - Cultural heritage celebration. Music, food and fun. Expected to include the English, Welsh, Scottish, Irish, French, German, Dutch, Swedish, Finnish, Native American, African and Afro-Caribbean cultures. (215) 946-0400. <http://www.pennsburymanor.org/JanDec07.htm>

Sept 15 – **La Purísima Mission State Historic Park**, Lompoc vicinity, California

Mission Life Day - The early 1800s come to life at this Spanish mission. Demonstrations of crafts and industries that enabled missionaries and Indian converts to thrive. (805) 733-3713. <http://www.lapurisimamission.org>

Sept 29 – **Old Economy Village**, Ambridge, Pennsylvania

Erntefest Harvest Festival - A time to learn about crop harvests and food preservation in the early 1800s. Churning butter, making apple schnitz and pressing apples for cider. Craftsmen at work. Children's activities and games. Baked goods and German food. (724) 266-4500. <http://www.oldeconomyvillage.org>

Oct 5 – **The Alamo**, San Antonio, TX

Fall at the Alamo - Living history demonstrations of daily life in San Antonio during the period from 1835 to 1846. (210) 225-1391. http://www.thealamo.org/october_popup.html

Oct 13 – **Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill**, Harrodsburg vicinity, Kentucky

Interpretive Performance - A Shaker Funeral - Dramatic interpretation of a 19th-century Shaker funeral provides unusual insight into this historic religious community. (800) 734-5611 ext. 1547. http://www.shakervillageky.org/events_calendar

Oct 20-21 – **Pennsbury Manor**, Morrisville, Pennsylvania

Just for Families: 17th Century Overnight Program - A chance to experience Manor life firsthand, the way Quakers did 300 years ago. Dress in period clothing. Perform the routine work of William Penn's country estate. Reservations required. (215) 946-0400. <http://www.pennsburymanor.org/JanDec07.htm>

Road to Independence

Sept 8-9 – **Fort Ticonderoga**, Ticonderoga, New York

Revolutionary War Encampment - Over 500 re-enactors. Portrayals include British Regulars, Loyalists (Americans loyal to England), German auxiliaries, Native Americans, Continentals (American Regulars) and militia. Daily battle re-enactment. Encampment where you can see how soldiers and their families lived, what they wore, what they ate. Reproduction goods for sale. (518) 585-2821. http://www.fort-ticonderoga.org/visit/calendar_of_events.htm

Sept 8-9 – **Fort Frederick State Park**, Hagerstown vicinity, Maryland

Garrison Weekend - Re-enactors perform living history demonstrations and provide perspective on the life of English soldiers during the French and Indian War. (301) 842-2155. <http://www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/western/fortfrederick.html>

Sept 15 – **Historic Brattonsville**, McConnells, South Carolina

Sweat of our Brows: The African American Experience - Chronicles the lives of Africans from their homeland to America. Activities center around kinship bonds (extended family practices), family, religion (*the invisible church*), work (house and field labor) and achievement. Dancing, singing and other performances. Foods and refreshments. (803) 684-2327. <http://www.chmuseums.org/calendar/brattonsville.htm>

Sept 15-16 – **Saratoga National Historical Park**, Stillwater, New York

230th Anniversary of the Battles of Saratoga; Stillwater Heritage Weekend - Re-enactors representing 1777. Americans and British set the scene with tents, campfires, weapons firings and special programs. You can participate in a court-martial, "reconnaissance" party and mock drill; see colonial wares; watch open-hearth cooking. (518) 664-9821 ext. 224. <http://www.nps.gov/sara/planyourvisit/events.htm>

Sept 21-22 – Historic Jamestowne, Colonial National Historical Park, Yorktown, Virginia
Bacon's Rebellion Weekend - Daytime living history and evening walking tours relate the details of Bacon's Rebellion at Jamestown in 1676, including a symbolic burning of the townsite. Jointly sponsored by National Park Service and APVA Preservation Virginia. (757) 259-1600. <http://www.nps.gov/colo/planyourvisit/events.htm>

Sept 22-23 – Fort Boonesborough State Park, Richmond vicinity, Kentucky
The 1778 Siege of Boonesborough - Battle re-enactments. Militia and settlers camps, Native American village, merchants, traders, food and fun. (859) 527-3131 ext. 216.
<http://parks.ky.gov/findparks/recparks/fb/events>

Sept 29-30 – Daniel Boone Home & Boonesfield Village, Defiance, Missouri
Pioneer Days - Pre-1840s folkways festival and encampment. Good time to also explore the Boone legacy. Artisans, music, historic encampment, black powder shoot, food. (636) 798-2005.
http://www.lindenwood.edu/boone/special_events.asp

Sept 29-30 – Fort Frederick State Park, Hagerstown vicinity, Maryland
Garrison Weekend - Re-enactors perform living history demonstrations and provide perspective on the life of English soldiers during the French and Indian War. (301) 842-2155.
<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/western/fortfrederick.html>

Oct 13-14 – Fort Ligonier, Ligonier, Pennsylvania
Fort Ligonier Days - Good fall foliage trip. Commemorates the 1758 battle between British and French forces during the French and Indian War. Also celebrates the pageantry and color of Scottish Highlanders, American Provincial Troops and French Marines. Daily battles. British and French military encampments. (724) 238-9701.
<http://www.fortligonier.org/fortdays.htm>

Oct 19-21 – Middleton Place, Charleston vicinity, South Carolina
Charleston Garden Festival - Focused on environmentally sound gardening. Reminds us: "what's old is new again." Speakers, vendors, exhibition gardens, demonstrations, tours, festive meals and gatherings. See the Stabeyards to learn about African American life here. (About 100 slaves created the original terraced gardens in the mid-1700s.) (843) 723-9293. <http://www.charlestongardenfestival.org>

Oct 19-21 – Yorktown Battlefield, Colonial National Historical Park, Yorktown, Virginia
Yorktown Day & Yorktown Victory Weekend - Commemorates the 226th anniversary of America's Revolutionary War Victory at Yorktown. Friday ceremonies, a parade and tactical demonstrations by the Commander-in-Chief's Guard. Special weekend programs and tours. Complementary events at nearby Yorktown Victory Center. (757) 898-2410. <http://www.nps.gov/colo/planyourvisit/events.htm>

Oct 20 – Peter Wentz Farmstead, Philadelphia vicinity, Pennsylvania
Laerenswaert Colonial Craft Fair - Colonial craft demonstrations, entertainment and food bring this 18th-century farmstead to life for the entire family. (610) 584-5104.
<http://www.peterwentzfarmsteadsociety.org/events.html>

Oct 20-21 – Claude Moore Colonial Farm, McLean, Virginia
The Market Fair - Recalling the foods, crafts, fine wares and fun of 18th-century America. Children's activities. Music. General entertainment. (703) 442-7557. http://www.1771.org/market_fair.htm

Our New Nation

Sept 7-9 – Fort McHenry National Monument, Baltimore, Maryland
Defenders' Day - The Star-Spangled Banner Weekend - War of 1812 re-enactors, parades, military bands, barracks activities, artillery and musket demonstrations, civilian activities, children's programs, symbolic ship-to-shore bombardment, privateer's auction of captured goods, evening fireworks show. Every day has something unique. (410) 962-4290. <http://www.nps.gov/fomc/planyourvisit/events.htm>

Sept 8 – Monticello, Charlottesville, Virginia

Heritage Harvest Festival - Family-oriented educational event to promote healthy gardening practices and preserve heirloom plants. Workshops on fruit and vegetable preservation and seed saving. Tomato and apple tastings. Special tours of the Monticello Kitchen Garden and Montalto, the neighboring “high mountain.” Some technical workshops. Food vendors and free samples. (540) 894-9480. www.HeritageHarvestFestival.com

Sept 15 – The Farmers’ Museum, Cooperstown, New York

Harvest Festival - Old-time agricultural fair. Performers (people and dogs), artisans, exhibitors and vendors. Wagon rides, harvest foods and crafts. Historic games and races. (888) 547-1450. <http://www.farmersmuseum.org/farmers/calendar>

Sept 15-16 – Mount Vernon, Mount Vernon, Virginia

18th-Century Craft Fair - Colonial-attired artisans demonstrate 18th-century crafts and sell traditional wares such as baskets, woodcarvings, tin and ironwork, leatherworkings, weavings, paper-cuttings, furniture, etc. 18th-century entertainment including music, fire eating, sword-swallowing, puppet and magic shows, rat-catchers and gypsies. Specialty food. Potomac River sightseeing cruises from Mount Vernon’s Wharf. (703) 780-2000. <http://www.mountvernon.org/calendar/index.cfm/fuseaction/current>

Sept 21-23 – Conner Prairie, Fishers, Indiana

Country Fair - 1886 agricultural fair, farm-power show, music, farm fun, food and shopping. (800) 966-1836. <http://www.connerprairie.org>

Sept 26-30 – Old Bethpage Village Restoration, Old Bethpage, New York

Long Island Fair - Artisans, musicians, dancers, singers, puppet shows, horticultural displays, vintage baseball, children’s activities, an 1800’s working carousel, craft competitions, vendors and tours of the historical village. (516) 572-8400. http://www.nassaucountyny.gov/agencies/parks/WhereToGo/museums/central_nass_museum/old_bethpage_rest.html

Sept 29-30 – Mount Vernon, Mount Vernon, Virginia

Revolutionary War Encampment - Re-enactors camp in authentic tents, prepare meals, and demonstrate the drills and maneuvers used by General Washington’s army. Musket and artillery demonstrations. Fife and drum performances. Living history activities. (703) 780-2000. <http://www.mountvernon.org/calendar/index.cfm/fuseaction/current>

Oct 20 – Rocky Mount Museum, Piney Flats, Tennessee

Spirit of the Harvest - Celebrating the harvest with blacksmithing, soap making, apple butter and apple cider. Storytelling and other history-oriented activities. (888) 538-1791. <http://www.rockymountmuseum.com>

Opening the West

Sept 1-3 – Historic Fort Snelling, St. Paul, Minnesota

Family Life on the Frontier – Family event about life at a frontier military post. Demonstrations in preserving food and storing supplies for winter. Skits portraying family life and issues universal to all eras, including birth, marriage and death. Chance to participate in crafts and cooking. (612) 726-1171. <http://events.mnhs.org/calendar/Results.cfm>

Sept 15 – Frontier Culture Museum, Staunton, Virginia

Men at Work: Historic Trades Weekend – In addition to regular living history activities. Good time to see the historic farms. Three of the homes were transported from Germany, Northern Ireland and England (representing lives left behind); two are relocated American farmsteads. (540) 332-7850. <http://www.frontiermuseum.org/events.php>

Sept 15-16 – North West Company Fur Post, Pine City, Minnesota

Fall Gathering - Ojibwe Indians, voyageurs and fur traders prepare for the winter trading season and compete for the title of best all-around voyageur. Traditional music, children’s activities, camp life and historical merchants. Festive Saturday night dance. (320) 629-6356. <http://www.mnhs.org/places/sites/nwcfp>

Sept 15-16 – Colonial Michilimackinac, Mackinaw City, Michigan

King's 8th Regiment Encampment - British redcoat re-enactors camp at the fort. Militia marching and musket firing. Period life demonstrations. (231) 436-4100.

http://www.mackinacparks.com/parks/colonial-michilimackinac_7

Oct 6-7 – Mansker's Station Frontier Life Center, Goodlettsville, Tennessee

Fall Encampment - Costumed interpreters demonstrating the life of early Tennessee settlers, including cooking, blacksmithing, woodworking, etc. Book signing by author inspired by the real-life capture and captivity of Mary Neely in August of 1780. (615) 859-3678. <http://www.cityofgoodlettsville.org/historic/calendar>

Oct 6-7 – Forts Folle Avoine Historical Park, Danbury vicinity, Wisconsin

Dagwaagin Gabeshi - Fall encampment of traders and rendezvous campers. An opportunity to learn about 19th-century clothing and traditions while visiting replicas of two early 1800s fur trading posts and an Ojibwe Indian village. (715) 866-8890. <http://theforts.org>

Oct 6-7 – Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site, La Junta vicinity, Colorado

Santa Fe Trail Encampment - Major event celebrates traders, tribes and travelers associated with the Santa Fe Trail. Their camps, set up near the fort, will be open for touring. Over 60 living history volunteers bring the mid-1800s post back to life (719) 383-5023. <http://www.nps.gov/beol/planyourvisit/events.htm>

Oct 13-14 – Pricketts Fort State Park, Fairmont, West Virginia

Fall Festival - Traditional crafts and fall activities recalling the 18th century. Fun opportunity to visit a place where early settlers could "fort up" when their lives were in danger. (800) 225-5982. <http://www.prickettsfort.org>

Oct 20-21 – Caesar's Creek Pioneer Village, Waynesville, Ohio

Harvest Fest & Gathering - Celebrating harvest time as it was 1800. Preparing for winter. Making apple butter, hominy, candles, etc. (513) 897-1120. <http://www.caesarscreekvillage.org/ScheduleOfEvents2007.html>

Oct 20-21 – Fort Osage, Sibley, Missouri

Territorial Militia Muster - War of 1812 encampment. Observe the training and drilling of a garrison of Regular Soldiers and Volunteer Militia as they prepare to fight the British. The setting is a replica of one of the first American military outposts on Louisiana Purchase land – built under the direction of Captain William Clark after he passed here during the Lewis & Clark Expedition. (816) 650-5737. <http://www.fortosagenhs.com>

© 2007 Suzanne and Craig Sheumaker - All rights reserved.

www.AmericasLivingHistory.com

Please feel free to use all or part of this article in your newspaper or newsletter, post it on your blog or email it to friends, family, whomever. We ask only that you credit the authors and include a link to our website. Thank you!