Past + Present

Prohibition in Washington, D.C.

Where the Noble Experiment Flopped

The “noble experiment” of Prohibition began nationwide in 1920, but thanks to Congressional fiat and the lack of home rule, the nation’s capital ostensibly went dry on Nov. 1, 1917.

Washington was intended to be the model dry city for the country, but it ended up with more than 3,000 speakeasies and a widespread disregard for the law of the land. Even Congress employed its own bootleggers. Even the five presidents during Prohibition were not innocent of raising an occasional cocktail glass in defiance of the law.

On the centennial of the beginning of the local booze ban, author, historian, and tour guide Garrett Peck leads a cocktail-driven journey through DC’s not-so-dry past.

Afterward, enjoy samples of Prohibition-era cocktails prepared by Quilt at the Jefferson, Washington, DC.

Wed., Nov. 1, 6:45 p.m.; Ripley Center; participants must be 21 or older with ID; CODE 1L0-179; Members $35; Nonmembers $50

Cocktails courtesy of Angel’s Envy Bourbon Finished in Port Wine Casks

The Battle of Cedar Creek

Virginia’s Shenandoah Valley was both a crucial invasion route and the breadbasket for the Confederacy during the Civil War, and as a result, it was a much-fought-over region. After the Union Army seized control of the valley and burned much of the crops, Confederate Gen. Jubal Early staged a last hurrah to wrest back control. What followed on October 19, 1864 was a surprising Confederate victory in the morning, and a smashing Union counterattack in the afternoon, made possible by Union Gen. Phil Sheridan’s famous ride from Winchester. The battle was a lost cause for the Confederacy, as President Abraham Lincoln was reelected three weeks later with a mandate to win the Civil War.

Author and historian Garrett Peck leads a day-long tour of the last major battle in the Shenandoah Valley, a sequel to the New Market and Fisher’s Hill tour from this past spring. It includes a visit to Belle Grove Plantation, a National Trust property at the center of the battlefield.

NEW DATE: Sat., Dec 9; 8 a.m.–6:30 p.m.; bus departs from the Holiday Inn Capitol, 550 C St., SW, with a pickup stop at the Vienna Metro south-side Kiss and Ride kiosk at about 8:25 a.m.; dress for outdoor walking; lunch included at the Historic Wayside Inn; CODE 1ND-003; Members $150; Nonmembers $200

Written Out of History

In the earliest days of our nation, a handful of unsung heroes—including women, slaves, and an Iroquois chief—made crucial contributions to the Republic. They pioneered the ideas that led to the Bill of Rights, the separation of powers, and eventually, the abolition of slavery. But somehow, says Utah Senator Mike Lee, they have been mostly forgotten—sometimes by accidents of history, sometimes by design.

In his new book Written Out of History (Sentinel), Lee gives these four Americans their voice. They include Aaron Burr, known by history as a villain, but who was a far more complicated figure; Mercy Otis Warren, a prominent female writer in the Revolution and a protégée of John Adams, who vigorously debated against the encroachment of federal power; Canasatego, an Iroquois chief whose words taught Benjamin Franklin the basic principles behind the separation of powers; and Elbridge Gerry, who championed individual rights and greater power for the states—and without whom there would be no Bill of Rights.

Written Out of History is available for sale and signing.

Wed., Nov. 1, 6:45 p.m.; Ripley Center; CODE 1B0-224; Members $20; Nonmembers $30
The Black Sea
Civilizations at the Crossroads of Europe and Asia

Herodotus, the ancient Greek historian, painted a picture of the Black Sea as the domain of barbarians and monsters. It gave rise to some of the most enduring of the Greek myths—the intrepid Argonauts and the quest for the Golden Fleece. Indeed, from antiquity, it has been a crossroads of civilizations, empires, and strategic interests. A parade of invaders and traders—Scythians, Greeks, Romans, Tatars, Italians, Turks, and Russians—have shaped the mixed cultures that ring this ancient sea. But until recently, the Black Sea world was considered the far edge of Europe, divided between the Russian and Ottoman empires and later divided again between the communist and capitalist worlds during the Cold War.

Today, the Black Sea remains a fascinating bridge between Europe and the Middle East and between the cultures of Eastern Orthodox Christianity and Islam. Charles King, professor of international affairs and government at Georgetown University, journeys into the turbulent past and present of this fascinating region—from ancient Greek seafarers to the glories of Ottoman Istanbul to the current issues in Ukraine.

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<tr>
<td>10 a.m.</td>
<td>Mysteries of the Black Sea World</td>
<td>Ripley Center</td>
<td>CODE 1H0-275</td>
<td>$90</td>
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<td>11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>The Age of Empires</td>
<td>Ripley Center</td>
<td>CODE 1H0-275</td>
<td>$90</td>
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<td>12:45 p.m.</td>
<td>Lunch (participants provide their own)</td>
<td>Ripley Center</td>
<td>CODE 1H0-275</td>
<td>$90</td>
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<td>1:45 p.m.</td>
<td>Odessa and Istanbul: Cosmopolitan Cities</td>
<td>Ripley Center</td>
<td>CODE 1H0-275</td>
<td>$90</td>
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<td>3 p.m.</td>
<td>Strategy and the Future</td>
<td>Ripley Center</td>
<td>CODE 1H0-275</td>
<td>$90</td>
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Traditional Roots of Modern China
How an Ancient World View Drives Contemporary Policies

Chinese civilization—encompassing history, cosmology, and elite and popular cultures—has long fascinated the West. Since the 18th century, Americans have looked at China with admiration and derision, as a font of obscure and practical wisdom, a nation of refinement and barbarism, and a source of enlightened pacifism and radical violence.

Although the United States viewed China as a threat during the Cold War, American engagement has been essential to China’s rise since diplomatic relations were established in 1979. Now, The People’s Republic is the only nation with the potential to challenge America’s international standing and change global practices in ways that harm American interests. It is critical to remember that “China” refers to one fifth of humankind, to a history and culture, and to a nation-state.

Wilson Center Kissinger Institute on China and the United States Director Robert Daly traces the nation’s 21st-century ambitions to the social and cultural practices rooted in the earliest dynasties.

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<td>9:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Pangu’s Bones: How Geography Shaped Chinese Culture</td>
<td>Ripley Center</td>
<td>CODE 1M2-931</td>
<td>$90</td>
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<td>11 a.m.</td>
<td>The Struggle for Harmony: Qi and Chinese Attitudes Toward Nature</td>
<td>Ripley Center</td>
<td>CODE 1M2-931</td>
<td>$90</td>
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<td>12:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Lunch (participants provide their own)</td>
<td>Ripley Center</td>
<td>CODE 1M2-931</td>
<td>$90</td>
<td>$140</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Culture, Technology, Wealth, Power</td>
<td>Ripley Center</td>
<td>CODE 1M2-931</td>
<td>$90</td>
<td>$140</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 p.m.</td>
<td>Three Ways To Look at China</td>
<td>Ripley Center</td>
<td>CODE 1M2-931</td>
<td>$90</td>
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Sat., Nov. 4, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.; Ripley Center; CODE 1H0-275; Members $90; Nonmembers $140
Past + Present

The Burr Conspiracy
An Early American Crisis

After the fateful duel between Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr in 1804, Burr’s political career took an interesting turn. Murder charges against him were dismissed, but the ramifications of the fatal skirmish persisted.

After serving out his term as vice president, Burr headed west, ostensibly to gather support for the creation of an empire beyond the Appalachian Mountains—or so it seemed.

Was he planning to liberate Spanish Mexico? Or was he promising land in the Orleans Territory? Rumors and innuendo, repeated in newspapers and political circles, ultimately led to Burr being tried for treason.

Historian James E. Lewis Jr. addresses the role of conspiracy and crisis in the early Republic’s politics and political culture. He also looks at how biased newspaper reports, partisan politics, the federal government, and notions of honor and gentility overwhelmed attempts to reveal the truth about the “chief villain of the Founding Fathers.”


Mon., Nov. 6, 6:45 p.m.; Ripley Center; CODE 1A0-037; Members $20; Nonmembers $30

The Norman Invasion

William’s Unlikely Conquest

The 1066 invasion and occupation of England by Duke William II of Normandy (later known as William the Conqueror) changed the course of history. But it never should have succeeded.

English King Harold Godwinson’s army should have easily repelled William’s invading force. But as William waited in vain for the wind to allow his fleet to cross the English Channel, a Scandinavian army landed in northern England in early September 1066. King Harold defeated the Scandinavians at the Battle of Stamford Bridge on Sept. 25, but by then the winds in the Channel shifted and William landed in southern England three days later. Harold was forced to race south to meet him without his full fighting force. Thus, on October 14, the Battle of Hastings became an unlikely triumph for France.

Historian Jennifer Paxton sets the scene for the Norman Conquest and examines how its initially bitter legacy led to the creation of the England we know today.

Mon., Nov. 13, 6:45 p.m.; NEW LOCATION: Ring Auditorium, Hirshhorn Museum; CODE 1M2-932; Members $30; Nonmembers $45

Gilbert and Sullivan and the Savoy Tradition

In Cooperation with the Georgetown Gilbert and Sullivan Society

Lyricist and playwright William S. Gilbert and composer Arthur S. Sullivan formed one of the greatest theatrical teams in history. Beginning with the premiere of their first collaboration, Trial by Jury, in 1875, the stage was set for some of the most hilarious, melodious operettas ever written.

Sharp satirists of Victorian society, in their operettas Gilbert and Sullivan took no prisoners. The two happily needled the age’s rigid class system, government, monarchy, the Royal Navy, grand opera, and the reigning literary-artistic Aesthetic movement. Their works highlighted the Savoy Theatre’s stage history and brought British comic opera to its peak.

Steinway Artist and musical theater expert Robert Wyatt and performers from the Georgetown Gilbert and Sullivan Society introduce the theatrical duo and the cultural and societal trends that informed their work. Through musical recordings, film clips, and live performance, listen to excerpts from some of their most beloved works—from the Yeoman of the Guard, The Mikado, and The Gondoliers to HMS Pinafore and The Pirates of Penzance—and experience how they combined musical sophistication with scathing satire to achieve international success.

Tues., Nov. 14, 6:45 p.m.; NEW LOCATION: Ring Auditorium, Hirshhorn Museum; CODE 1M2-933; Members $30; Nonmembers $45
The Lafayette Escadrille
Legends with a Cause
In the early days of World War I, a couple of Americans who had volunteered for France talked the government into allowing American volunteers to fly alongside the French in a unit of fighter pilots called the *Escadrille Américaine*, which later became the Lafayette Escadrille. The goal was to generate publicity that would persuade the United States to enter the war. It worked better than expected.

The Americans of the famed Lafayette Escadrille risked everything to defend America’s oldest ally, and became legends in the process, helping to propel America out of neutrality. Paul Glenshaw, an aviation expert and filmmaker, draws on rare, unpublished sources to tell the story of the rash young men who took to the air and made history 100 years ago. Glenshaw also previews clips from a documentary film he is making about the Escadrille, who have been called the “founding fathers of American combat aviation.”

**Tues., Nov. 14 6:45 p.m.; Ripley Center; CODE 1W0-012; Members $30; Nonmembers $45**

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Code Girls
The Women Who Decrypted World War II
In 1942, reeling from Japan’s devastating surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States military launched a secret program to recruit young female college graduates to act as codebreakers in the newly ramped-up war effort.

More than 10,000 women served as codebreakers for the U.S. Army and Navy from 1942 to 1945. They took on highly demanding top-secret work involving complex math and linguistics and their efforts paid off: They cracked a crucial Japanese code, giving the United States an advantage in the Battle of Midway; their false communications caught the Germans flat-footed in the lead-up to the Normandy invasion; and their careful tracking of enemy vessels saved many British and American sailors’ lives.

Liza Mundy, author of *Code Girls: The Untold Story of the American Women Code Breakers* (Hachette Books) tells the story of these remarkable young women who helped secure an Allied victory.

*Code Girls* is available for purchase and signing.

**Wed., Nov. 15, 6:45 p.m.; NEW LOCATION: Ring Auditorium, Hirshhorn Museum; CODE 1L0-176; Members $20; Nonmembers $30**

This program is presented in advance of the Smithsonian American Ingenuity Awards on November 29.

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Thomas Paine
The Revolutions of a Founding Father
When Thomas Paine died in June 1809 only a dozen people came to his funeral held in Westchester County near the 250-acre farm gifted to Paine by the people of the state of New York in gratitude for his role in stirring the American Revolution.

Historian Richard Bell examines Paine’s humble origins, gifts for political argument, and rise to celebrity status during the American Revolution after the publication of his immensely popular pamphlet, *Common Sense* (1776), credited by many with catalyzing a mass movement driven by the cause of independence.

He also explores the surprisingly bitter backlash Paine later experienced with the publication of *Right of Man* (1791), a manifesto in support of the social and political extremism of the French Revolution; and *Age of Reason* (1794), a defense of deism, reason, and free thought. Paine died a pariah, too radical and uncompromising for the cautious new country he had helped call into being.

**Thurs., Nov. 16, 6:45 p.m.; Ripley Center; CODE 1M2-935; Members $30; Nonmembers $45**

This program is presented in advance of the Smithsonian American Ingenuity Awards on November 29.

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What time does the program end?
Unless noted, Smithsonian Associates programs run 1.5–2 hours, including Q&A

More INFORMATION and TICKETS at SMITHSONIANASSOCIATES.ORG and 202-633-3030
Past + Present

The Protestant Reformation

October 31 this year—Reformation Day—marks the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation that began with Martin Luther’s 95 Theses. Luther’s protest against indulgences grew into a full-blown reform of doctrine and continues to reverberate today. The Protestant Reformation, however, was not a single, uniform movement, as the name suggests, and its story is complex and multifaceted. It is viewed more accurately as a series of reforms that varied by religious concerns and by region, shaped by particular political and social contexts that had gestated during the medieval period.

John M. Freymann, permanent military professor in history at the U.S. Naval Academy, reviews the emergence and development of the 16th-century reformations from the late Middle Ages into the early modern period. He examines the major shifts in religious thought and practice, including John Calvin’s theology, which spread across Europe outside German and Scandinavian lands; and the English Reformation, instigated by King Henry VIII. He also explores the Roman Catholic Church’s attempts to fight the Protestant movement and the beginnings of a new religious landscape in the Americas.

9:30 a.m. Late Medieval Background
11 a.m. The Spread of the Lutheran Movement
12:15 p.m. Lunch (participants supply their own)
1:15 p.m. Reformations throughout Europe
2:45 p.m. Aftermath
Sat., Nov. 18, 9:30 a.m.–4 p.m.; Ripley Center; CODE 1H0-298; Members $90; Nonmembers $140

Write the Stories of Your Ancestors

You’ve gathered information about your ancestors. It’s time to share their stories. Leading genealogy expert John Colletta explores the many ways to assemble and write the saga of a family.

Using vivid examples and case studies, he demonstrates how to turn biographical facts into an engaging narrative. Whether you publish digitally or on paper, for your close relatives or a broader readership, basic principles of analysis and literary expression apply. The process is engrossing, and the end product will be your unique gift to future generations.

9:30 a.m. Compiling a Multigenerational Account
11 a.m. Building Historical Context Around an Ancestral Event
12:15 p.m. Lunch (participants provide their own)
1:30 p.m. Principles of Good Writing and Storytelling
3 p.m. Do’s and Don’ts of Writing Historical Narrative
Sat., Dec. 2, 9:30 a.m.–4:15 p.m.; Ripley Center; CODE 1M2-936; Members $90; Nonmembers $140
Three Reasons to Support Smithsonian Associates

1. You want us to continue our long tradition of excellence in programming.

2. Basic memberships and tickets cover only a portion of our costs.

3. We receive no federal funding.

Demonstrate your support today. 
The returns will exceed your expectations.

To learn more about levels of support and insider benefits, visit smithsonianassociates.org/levels or call 202–633–3030 (M–F, 9–5)
Indiana Jones: The Eternal Explorer
The Politics of Archaeology, Empires, and Exploration

The dashing archeologist-adventurer Indiana Jones as both a movie character and an archetype offers a lens through which to examine the political controversies and historical contexts of archaeology and exploration from Pompeii to the Space Race. Justin M. Jacobs, associate professor of history at American University, leads the expedition into real-life and Hollywood-style history.

Jacobs considers common themes—and unique exceptions—drawn from the personalities and careers of some of the most famous explorers and archaeologists of the past 250 years. He looks at the longstanding association of archaeologists and scholars with espionage, considers the modern museum’s relationship with archaeologists as innumerable antiquities showed up in Western collections, and describes the cast of characters that helped the historical equivalents of Indy to get what they wanted.

The nationalist tide of resistance that ended Western expeditions reached its climax with Howard Carter and the tomb of King Tut in 1923, and ended just prior to World War II. The romance associated with these long-ago adventures has been kept alive by Hollywood, especially in the Indiana Jones films. But do they make any historical sense? Jacobs weighs fact against cinematic fiction to examine the ways in which popular culture intersects with the truth of the past.

DEC 7 Who Was Indiana Jones?
JAN 4 Why Does That Belong in a Museum?
FEB 1 Who Enabled Indiana Jones?
FEB 22 Who Confronted Indiana Jones?
MAR 22 Did Hollywood Get It Right?

5 sessions; Thurs., Dec. 7–March 22, 6:15–8:15 p.m.; Ripley Center; CODE 1B0-230; Members $90; Nonmembers $140

Individual sessions: Dec. 7 (CODE 1B0-231); Jan. 4 (CODE 1B0-232); Feb. 1 (CODE 1B0-233); Feb, 22 (CODE 1B0-234); March 22 (CODE 1B0-235); Members $20; Nonmembers $30

World Art History Certificate elective: Earn 1 credit

The Olmec Culture
Monuments, Masterpieces, and Mysteries

The Olmec culture flourished in several civic and ceremonial centers along the Gulf of Mexico more than 3,000 years ago, from 1500 to 400 B.C. Best known for their carvings of colossal stone heads, the Olmec were masters of monumental sculpture, and also produced an array of other distinctive artworks in stone, ceramic, wood, and jade. Olmec civilization, as it was named, was found to be older than that of the Aztec or the Maya, and may well have been the “mother culture” of all Mesoamerican civilizations. Their civilization also provides some of the earliest evidence of urban planning and systems of numbering and glyphic writing in North America.

George L. Scheper, senior lecturer in advanced academic programs at Johns Hopkins University, provides a cultural overview of Olmec achievements.

9:30 a.m. The Discovery
11 a.m. The Olmec World: San Lorenzo and La Venta
12:15 p.m. Lunch (participants provide their own)
1:30 p.m. Masterpieces of Art and Iconography
3 p.m. A Civilization in Context

Sat., Dec. 9, 9:30 a.m.–4:15 p.m.; Ripley Center; CODE 1M2-937; Members $90; Nonmembers $140

Published ticket prices are subject to change, depending on availability.
Unpublished Black History
Rediscovered Images from the New York Times

In February of 2016, a team of New York Times staff members discovered dozens of unpublished photographs in the newspaper’s archive. The images shed light on African American history over the past several decades, covering topics from politics to music to sports and the arts, as well as revealing views of everyday life. Included in the findings were a 27-year-old Jesse Jackson leading a rally of 4,000 people in Chicago; Rosa Parks arriving at a Montgomery Courthouse; and Aretha Franklin backstage at the Apollo Theater.

The images have been collected in Unseen: Unpublished Black History from the New York Times Photo Archives (Black Dog & Leventhal), offering a behind-the-scenes look at many important photos and the stories behind them.

Darcy Eveleigh, Times photo editor, and Rachel Swarns, a journalist and contributing writer on race and race relations for the newspaper, offer a look at the photos and the once-hidden window into history they reveal.

Unseen is available for purchase and signing.

Mon., Dec. 11, 6:45 p.m.; Ripley Center; CODE 1L0-186; Members $20; Nonmembers $30

Hannibal’s Oath
The Life and Wars of Rome’s Greatest Enemy

In the spring of 218 B.C., Hannibal and his army of 90,000 foot soldiers, 12,000 cavalry, and 37 elephants prepared to leave New Carthage in southeastern Spain to undertake a seemingly impossible mission. His goal was to cross the Alps and surprise Rome with an attack from the north, in an attempt to break the republic’s hold on Italy.

Although thousands of men lost their lives in this dangerous quest—more than in any of the battles that followed—their general’s leadership abilities and strategic foresight ensured the success of their mission. By crossing the Alps with an entire army, Hannibal secured his name in history.

Drawing on his new biography, Hannibal’s Oath: The Life and Wars of Rome’s Greatest Enemy (Da Capo Press), historian John Prevas discusses Hannibal’s extraordinary character in the context of his legendary success and ultimate failure, and the events that made the Carthaginian general a larger-than-life figure.

Hannibal’s Oath is available for purchase and signing.

Wed., Dec. 6, 6:45 p.m.; Ripley Center; CODE 1L0-181; Members $20; Nonmembers $30

The Ghosts of Langley
How the CIA’s Leaders Shaped the Agency

By its very nature, the Central Intelligence Agency’s operations and history are necessarily cloaked in secrecy. What can outsiders really expect to learn about how it operates? John Prados, a senior fellow of the National Security Archive based at George Washington University, offers a clue: Organizations reflect the characters and personalities of their founders and giants—for better or worse.

Through a critical examination of CIA leaders past and present, Prados offers a window into the often-unknowable workings of the world of Langley. He looks at a series of CIA leaders, including George Tenet, Richard Helms, and Frank Wisner, analyzing their influences on the agency both during and after their tenures. In the process, he surveys key operations in modern CIA history—both successful and controversial—and offers insights into the agency’s potential evolution.


Thurs., Jan. 18, 6:45 p.m.; Ripley Center; CODE 1W0-018; Members $30; Nonmembers $45

More INFORMATION and TICKETS at SMITHSONIANASSOCIATES.ORG and 202-633-3030
The Screenwriter and the Superstar
Frances Marion, Mary Pickford, and The Girls in the Picture


In 1914 Frances Marion, then 25 years old, leaves her husband and her Northern California home, determined to live as an artist in Los Angeles. There she begins writing stories for the booming new medium of film. She also befriends the high-spirited actress, “America’s Sweetheart” Mary Pickford. They were to find their ambitions challenged by both the men around them and the limitations imposed on their gender.

Benjamin discusses this story of friendship and forgiveness, as well as her approach to capturing the dawn of a glittering new era, from its myths and icons to its possibilities of seduction, and heartbreak.

The Girls in the Picture is available for purchase and signing.

Mon., Jan. 22, 6:45 p.m.; Ripley Center; CODE 1L0-185; Members, $20; Nonmembers, $30

“Who Are You?”
How Passports Changed Travel—and the Idea of Identity

It’s difficult to recall, but there was a time when “proof of identity” was not a part of everyday life. Today, the passport has become an indispensable form of identification. But how and why did this document take on such a crucial role? And how have recent border controversies heightened its importance?

Craig Robertson, author of The Passport in America: The History of a Document, traces how this document became the most reliable answer to the question, “Who are you?” The passport originated as American travelers’ official letters of introduction addressed to foreign governments. It was not until after World War I that passports were required to cross American borders.

Robertson discusses how the passport has become entangled in negotiations over border security, citizenship, and racial and gender identities. He also examines how new technologies have re-shaped the document, such as the 2007 makeover that enhanced passports’ security features, introducing a chip containing the holder’s biometric information.

Thurs., Jan. 25, 6:45 p.m.; Ripley Center; CODE 1W0-017; Members $25; Nonmembers $35

Inside Camp David

Deep in the woods of Maryland’s Catoctin Mountains sits an intensely private complex that serves as the presidential family retreat: Camp David. Invitations to this exclusive getaway go only to a select few, while the rest of us have been left to wonder, “What is it really like?”

Rear Admiral Michael Giorgione addresses that question with Inside Camp David: The Private World of the Presidential Retreat (Little, Brown and Company). A former Camp David commander, Giorgione served under both Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, and has a first-hand understanding of the connection between the first family and this notable sanctuary.

For the past 75 years, presidents and national and international leaders have converged at Camp David to converse and also relax. It was where FDR and Churchill planned D-Day; the 1978 Camp David Peace Accords took place; George W. Bush slept the night after 9/11; and Barack Obama taught his daughter Malia how to drive.

Giorgione describes a rarely seen side of the presidency and historic moments he witnessed at Camp David.

Tues., Jan. 23, 6:45 p.m.; Ripley Center; CODE 1L0-182; Members $20; Nonmembers $30

Location Changes

Our programs occasionally move to a different location from the one published on tickets.

We do our best to inform ticket holders of location changes by mail, phone, and email.

You are advised to confirm the location by calling our customer service staff at 202-633-3030 (M–F; 9–5)

You can also visit smithsonianassociates.org for the most up-to-date information.
Chris Matthews on Bobby Kennedy's Indomitable Spirit

It took a lot of hard work, but before he was killed by an assassin's bullet in 1968, Robert F. Kennedy had emerged, victoriously, from behind the shadow of his brother John. In the new biography, Bobby Kennedy: A Raging Spirit, MSNBC's Hardball anchor Chris Matthews, who also wrote the best-selling John Kennedy: Elusive Hero, draws a more in-depth portrait of RFK. He was often ignored by his father and overshadowed by his older brother. He resisted taking the easy way, enlisting in the Navy as a common sailor rather than accept a chance to be a naval officer. It was a choice that opened a life-changing personal and political path, connecting him with people from all walks of life who would turn out for him in his 1968 presidential campaign.

Matthews shines a light on all the important moments of RFK’s life, a man who was both a pragmatist and an unwavering idealist who could inspire millions.

Bobby Kennedy: A Raging Spirit (Simon and Schuster) is available for sale and signing.

Wed., Jan. 24, 7 p.m.; Ripley Center; CODE 1H0-312; Members $30; Nonmembers $45

Scotland and England

An Imperfect Union?

Scotland is the only part of the island of Britain never to have been conquered by England. Yet Scotland, over the centuries, has always had to reckon with its powerful southern neighbor, and the recent campaign for Scottish independence demonstrates that the question of Scottish sovereignty is far from settled.

Historian Jennifer Paxton explores the remarkable story of the struggle to define Scottish identity over the past thousand years, as the country went from proudly independent kingdom to junior partner within Great Britain. While many Scots benefited from the economic opportunities that came with the British Empire, recent political events, including the Brexit vote, have caused some Scots to reevaluate the position of Scotland within the United Kingdom.

9:30 a.m. The Making of Scotland
11 a.m. The Wars of Independence and the Rise of the Stuarts
12:15 p.m. Lunch (participants provide their own)
1:30 p.m. The Union with England and the Jacobite Threat
3 p.m. The Making (and Unmaking?) of the British

Sat., Jan. 27, 9:30 a.m.—4:15 p.m.; Ripley Center; CODE 1M2-940; Members $90; Nonmembers $140

1968

The Tumultuous Year That Changed America

Nineteen sixty-eight was one of the most consequential years in our national history, comprising 12 months of social, economic, and political shocks, mixed with violence, and portrayed dramatically in an increasingly sensationalistic and anything-goes popular culture. The impact has endured for the past 50 years.

It began in January with the start of the devastating Tet offensive, which persuaded many the Vietnamese war was unwinnable. Soon after, Lyndon Johnson announced he would not run for re-election, generating a near-chaotic political dynamic.

The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.’s assassination on April 4 ignited riots. Then Robert Kennedy was murdered in June after winning the California Democratic presidential primary. Many Americans felt that a toxin of hatred and divisiveness was spreading everywhere.

Summer saw street riots accompanying the Democratic National Convention, and the year ended with Richard Nixon’s impending inauguration—someone who, despite a pledge to unite the country, made it even more divisive.

Author, journalist, and historian Ken Walsh reviews the extraordinary year, and its lessons for a nation confronting new political and social turmoils.

Tues., Jan. 30, 6:45 p.m.; Ripley Center; CODE 1H0-302; Members $25; Nonmembers $35
The Making of a Monarchy
English Kings, Queens, and Their Mums

The title Queen Mother has been used since at least the late 16th century, but the role itself has been significant since the 12th, when Eleanor of Aquitaine participated actively in the reign of her son Richard I. During the Wars of the Roses, mothers of kings played a similar role, exerting influence from the bedchamber to the battlefield. The mothers of the Yorkist and Lancastrian claimants to the English throne orchestrated the end of the Wars of the Roses and the creation of the Tudor dynasty. The English monarchy was threatened by the Civil War and execution of Charles I. The restoration of the monarchy through his son Charles II was overseen by the new king’s mother, who influenced the reigns of both her sons. Years later, a German princess made her mark when her daughter became Queen Victoria and began her reign under the watchful eye of her mother.

As England entered the 20th century, when Edward VIII gave up the throne for the woman he loved, his brother George VI had to lead the country through its darkest hour. Their mother, Queen Mary, directed the monarchy through this and lived to see her granddaughter crowned Queen Elizabeth II.

Tudor and Renaissance scholar Carol Ann Lloyd Stanger considers the women who rocked the royal cradle and changed the course of English history.

9:30 a.m. 12th–14th Centuries: Nation-building, the Crusades, and the Wars of the Roses
11 a.m. 15th–16th Centuries: The Tudors, Stuarts, and the Reformation
12:15 p.m. Lunch (participants provide their own)
1:30 p.m. 17th–18th Centuries: Civil War, Restoration, and the Establishment of Great Britain and the British Empire
3 p.m. 19th–20th Centuries: British Imperialism, World Wars, and Modern Monarchy

Sat., Feb. 3, 9:30 a.m.–4:15 p.m.; Ripley Center; CODE 1M2-942; Members $90; Nonmembers $140

The Lives of Benjamin Franklin

At his death in 1790, Benjamin Franklin was the most famous man in America, rivaled only by George Washington. Born the tenth and youngest son of a humble candle-maker in Boston in 1706, Franklin’s rise to prominence and power first in Philadelphia, and then in London and Paris, was nothing short of meteoric. His very public achievements—in business, science, philanthropy, politics, and diplomacy—were remarkable in his day, and even more so by the standards of our own.

In an absorbing day-long program, historian Richard Bell explores four aspects of the public and private life of America’s favorite Founding Father, tackling his experiences as writer and printer, inventor (he was America’s first technophile) and philanthropist, husband and father, and reluctant revolutionary. In fact, Franklin treasured his identity as a proud subject of the British Empire and came late to the role of American revolutionary. But once converted, he became the new nation’s most ardent and useful advocate.

To help participants better understand this wonderfully flawed and familiar figure, the day includes reading and discussion of a few short pieces written by Franklin.

9:30 a.m. Laid Out In Books: Writer, Printer, Ventriloquist
11 a.m. The Turkey in the Thunderstorm: Tinkerer, Optimizer, Improver
12:15 p.m. Lunch (participants provide their own)
1:30 p.m. The Silk Neglige: Husband, Father, Flirt
3:15 p.m. You Are Now My Enemy: Loyalist, Traitor, Patriot

Sat., Feb. 10, 9:30 a.m.–4:15 p.m.; Ripley Center CODE 1M2-944; Members $90; Nonmembers $140