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Illustration by Lucie Rice

In zealous pursuit of safeguarding American history, DAR state societies and chapters built a nationwide network of grassroots preservationists stretching from Machias, Maine, to Glendora, Calif. Historic preservation has been a focal point for the organization from its earliest days. In an open letter that ran in several 1907 issues of *American Monthly Magazine*, Julia G. Scott, chair of the Committee on Preservation of Historic Spots, encouraged members to identify local historic sites, determine whether it would be possible to mark or purchase them, and develop plans accordingly. These preparations would ensure that “we would not be . . . taking our chances of having more historic spots pass out of our reach or meet with destruction,” Mrs. Scott wrote.

Instead of watching the endangered remnants of the country’s past disappear forever, groups of determined Daughters took action. Their efforts saved historic sites across the country, each one a record of a unique time and place, enabling today’s Americans to experience the lives of our ancestors in the very places where our shared history was forged.

Today DAR states and chapters own, operate and maintain dozens of historic sites. Whether the property houses period collections, operates as a museum or opens its doors for just a few days each year, historic home ownership demands

long-term commitment. “It’s a responsibility,” said Sharlene Shoaf, past State Regent of Ohio Society DAR, which owns the Christian Waldschmidt Homestead outside Cincinnati. “It takes a lot of our time and money, but this is what the DAR is about, and it’s our way of preserving our history.”

The DAR-owned historic properties covered on these pages represent just a fraction of the whole—a staggering fact that testifies to the extraordinary reach of Daughters’ preservation work.

### Revolutionary Roots

A number of the sites preserved by DAR groups boast connections to the Revolutionary War era. The circa-1770 Burnham Tavern is located in Machias, Maine, site of one of the earliest naval battles of the Revolutionary War. When the British ship *Margaretta* arrived in early June 1775 to pick up lumber to build barracks for British troops, citizens were



JOHN STRONG  
MANSION  
ADDISON, VT

YORKTOWN  
CUSTOM HOUSE  
YORKTOWN, VA

THE OLD EXCHANGE  
CHARLESTON, SC

THE MANSION  
NATCHEZ, MS



BURNHAM TAVERN  
MACHIAS, ME

in front of the tavern and had long obscured the view of the historic structure. Now all who approach can fully appreciate Burnham Tavern’s location on a rise at the corner of Main Street. “It’s a marvelous spot,” said Hannah Weston Chapter Registrar Valdine Atwood. “The town is trying to do some revitalization, and it’s going to be the centerpiece.”

Built in 1792, Meadow Garden is not only the oldest documented house in Augusta, Ga., but also the former home of George Walton, one of the youngest men to sign the Declaration of Independence. Walton was a native Virginian who relocated to Savannah, Ga., at age 19. In addition to signing his name to history at the age of 26, Walton also served his adopted state as governor, U.S. senator and chief justice, among other public service positions. He lived at Meadow Garden from the time of its construction until his death in 1804.

Meadow Garden narrowly evaded foreclosure and demolition in the late 19th century. The local Augusta DAR Chapter was committed to preserving the neglected site, and with the help of \$2,000 raised by the National Society, Daughters purchased the historic home in 1900. In 1960 ownership transferred to the Georgia State Society, which has operated the site ever since.

Even after 115 years of stewardship, Georgia Daughters are finding new ways to reach out to the community. This year, after a decades-long lapse, Meadow Garden opened its doors on the Fourth of



MEADOW GARDEN, AUGUSTA, GA

forced to decide between betraying their country and potentially endangering their lives. Residents met at Job Burnham’s tavern to discuss the matter.

The citizens decided to attempt to capture the ship. In the ensuing skirmish on June 11–12, 1775, both sides suffered significant casualties, including James Moore, commander of the *Margaretta*, whose injuries proved fatal. The Patriots ultimately emerged victorious.

Since 1910, the local Hannah Weston DAR Chapter has owned Burnham Tavern and operated it as a museum. According to the tavern’s website, the collections inside recreate “an image of the lifestyle of the neither rich nor famous, circa 1780.”

A recent development enabled the chapter to increase the tavern’s visibility—literally. Thanks to a bequest from a member, Hannah Weston DAR Chapter was able to buy and demolish a dilapidated commercial building that stood

July, and welcomed more than 100 visitors. And when Georgia State Regent Bea Fischer decided to devote part of her State Regent’s Project to updating the landscaping, the state society devised an interactive plan.

Students from the University of Georgia’s College of Environment and Design were invited to submit plans for historically inspired, yet modernized garden designs. “We were excited to bring in students from all over the state,” said State



PERKINS-ROCKWELL HOUSE, NORWICH, CT

Historian Amy Lawson. To explain why they chose certain plantings, each participating student made a presentation before a panel of judges composed of Meadow Garden board members and community leaders. The winning student's design influenced the professionally drafted final plans, which are in the process of being implemented.

### Touchstones of Local History

Seeing a need firsthand can serve as a powerful motivator. Local history provides an endless source of inspiration for DAR chapters' preservation projects. Faith Trumbull DAR Chapter, Norwich, Conn., has just 51 members, yet it owns two historic homes. In 1934, Mary Watkinson Rockwell Cole donated the Perkins-Rockwell House to the chapter in memory of her father, Dr. John Arnold Rockwell. The home was built in 1818 by Major Joseph Perkins using stone quarried on site. Perkins fought with the Connecticut militia in the Revolutionary War and served on Governor Jonathan Trumbull's Committee of Safety.

Upon presenting the property to Faith Trumbull DAR Chapter, Cole said, "Would that again we could have made it a family homestead. . . . I take great satisfaction in thinking that this house will be used in a dignified way." She also gave the chapter the original plans for the home her family called "the Stone House." Notable historical artifacts in and of themselves, the plans are doubly significant because they were drawn on the backs of Connecticut militia records. Visitors can see these documents displayed on site.

In 1951, the 200-year-old Nathaniel Backus House was scheduled for demolition. The home's namesake resident was a prominent local merchant and descendant of Norwich founders William Backus and William Backus Jr. Faith Trumbull DAR Chapter member and Backus descendant Mabel Webb organized a fundraising effort to relocate the home next to the Perkins-Rockwell House. The Backus House is currently closed to visitors due to an ongoing restoration effort.



ALEXANDER YOUNG  
LOG HOUSE  
WASHINGTON, IA



CONTINENTAL DAR HOUSE, DALLAS, TX

Jane Douglas DAR Chapter, Dallas, Texas, owns a piece of Lone Star State history with connections to two state-wide celebrations—the Texas Centennial and the State Fair of Texas, which traces its roots to 1886. Continental DAR House was built by the Continental Oil Company in 1936 as a temporary hospitality house for fairgoers. Instead of demolishing the building as planned, ownership was transferred to Jane Douglas DAR Chapter the next year. Now home to both the chapter and to David Pendleton C.A.R. Society, Continental DAR House welcomes more than 30,000 visitors during the annual State Fair of Texas, running from September 25–October 18 this year.

Washington DAR Chapter, Washington, Iowa, was only 6 years old when it received a substantial gift—the Alexander Young Log House. By 1912, when the chapter took ownership, the home had already been vacant for 30 years. The two-story cabin remains largely as it was when Alexander Young built it in 1840, with one notable exception. It was moved from its original Washington County location to Sunset Park in the town of Washington 102 years ago.

Local students tour the home to get a sense of mid-19th-century life as part of their Iowa history curriculum, but maintenance work has limited visitation in recent years. To address moisture issues, the chapter adjusted the grading around the cabin and installed a pebble sidewalk. After replacing one deteriorated log in its entirety, plans to replace a portion of another log will proceed later this year.

### When Restoration Calls

A historic property's maintenance and restoration needs are both never-ending and ever-changing. A proactive approach—while not always possible—can help prevent

issues from reaching the point of catastrophe. Earlier this decade, in conjunction with her historic preservation degree coursework, current Missouri State Regent Morgan Lake completed a full condition assessment report on Roslyn Heights, the Boonville, Mo., home owned by the Missouri State Society since 1983. Complete with a third-floor ballroom, Roslyn Heights earns its billing as “the Last of the Main Street Mansions.” The Victorian-era home built in 1895 by Wilbur and Rhoda Stephens Johnson now serves as a base for Missouri Daughters.

“We have made amazing progress addressing issues of deterioration and mediating those causes,” said Mrs. Lake. Recent projects include plaster repair in the dining room and second-floor bathroom, which contains a mural that is original to the home, and landscaping work to remediate moisture issues on the north elevation. A kitchen renovation began in July 2015.

In March 2015, Missouri Preservation honored Missouri State Society’s decades-long stewardship of Roslyn Heights with a McReynolds Award, in recognition of significant achievements in historic preservation.

For more than 75 years the Mississippi State Society has owned Rosalie Mansion in Natchez, Miss., built in the early 1820s as the home of Peter and Eliza Little. During that time Mississippi Daughters have learned that projects involving historic buildings often outstrip their original scope. The most recent example of this phenomenon came in 2013, when plans to give Rosalie its first complete coat of paint in 40 years expanded to include the restoration of the Greek Revival-style mansion’s exterior woodwork. Painting commenced only after the towering columns, fascia board, porch railings and spindles were repaired or restored as needed. The work cost a total of \$85,500. “I’m so happy to have Rosalie smiling and shining again,” said Mississippi State Regent Billie Breedlove.

The California State Society, which completed a multi-phase historic preservation project at its state headquarters building in Glendora, Calif., in late 2014, appreciates that sentiment. In 1982 the society purchased the California DAR State Headquarters, a 4,300-square-foot Craftsman-style home built for Reuben and Helen Hamlin in the early 1900s. Its notable features include the local river rock used both as an exterior accent and in the library fireplace, as well as original woodwork and light fixtures.

Following a two-year period of investigation, analysis, planning and discussion, the California State Society embarked upon a multifaceted project that included replacing the roof, repairing extensive termite damage, cleaning the exterior stone and repainting. Some of these necessary repairs were planned

from the outset of the project, but others weren’t. The termite infestation, for example, was not discovered until the insects swarmed the painting crew when workers reached the eaves. Decorative corbels had deteriorated to such a degree that experts feared they could not adequately support the roof, which already suffered from sagging and moisture issues. The results of the \$262,000 restoration project were unveiled in December 2014.

For every successful historic preservation effort covered here, there are many more chapters of the American story that also would have disappeared if Daughters had not intervened. The DAR Website’s Historic Sites and Properties database offers a more extensive chronicle of members’ collective impact, including the cemeteries, manuscripts, objects and records they preserved and the historic sites they marked. Go to [www.dar.org/historicsites](http://www.dar.org/historicsites) to browse examples across the country, searchable by state. 🏠



ROSALIE MANSION, NATCHEZ, MS



ROSLYN HEIGHTS  
BOONVILLE, MO



CALIFORNIA DAR  
HEADQUARTERS  
GLEN DORA, CA