

THE UPSTAIRS HALL

In this large hallway most of the winter's social activities took place. According to family tradition, the large camp chest to your left was left by Washington as a gift to Mrs. Ford. The folding cot would have been used by "Will," Washington's favorite servant, who as a matter of custom, slept close to the General's bedroom.

... Proceed to the next room on your left.

THE AIDES' AND GUESTS' ROOM

Most of Washington's aides slept in this room as evidenced by the number of folding cots and traveling chests. However, when important guests came to the House, the aides moved into other quarters. In May of 1780, LaFayette stayed here as had the Spanish Ambassador Don Juan De Miralles. Unfortunately, De Miralles died while here as a guest of the Washingtons.

... Directly behind you is the Washingtons' bedroom.

GENERAL AND MRS. WASHINGTON'S BEDROOM

This room was occupied by the Washingtons for seven months. Of special note is the Queen Anne mirror, the Windsor chair, and the Chinese Chippendale dressing table which is attributed to Benjamin Randolph of Philadelphia. All were used by the Washingtons. Mrs. Washington spent most of her time here entertaining guests, sewing, or reading by the window.

... Proceed down the staircase to your right. (Notice how narrow these stairs are.) Advance to Washington's private office.

WASHINGTON'S PRIVATE OFFICE

It was in this small room that General Washington carried out much of the daily business and correspondence which enabled the Continental Army to survive the brutal winter of 1779-80. In April of 1780, a Congressional Committee met with General Washington in this room to inquire about the status of the Army.

On your left is an 18th Century strongbox of the type used to secure gold and silver coinage. The green Windsor chair is a Ford family piece.

In the early spring of 1780, Washington constructed a log office next to this room for his staff use. The structure no longer stands.

... Now enter the main hall behind you, and proceed to the last room on the right.

As you enter the hall, notice the three Pennsylvania low-back Windsor chairs, circa 1750. These are the earliest known American-style Windsor.

WASHINGTON'S CONFERENCE AND DINING ROOM

In this room the daily activities of Washington's staff were performed. Washington also used this room to meet with officers and citizens. At 3 p.m. daily, Washington, Mrs. Washington, his staff, and guests began the main meal of the day. At least three courses were served, and the meal took in excess of two hours to consume. But much of that time was used to informally discuss military topics, such as supply, recruitment, and strategy for the spring campaign.

Of special interest is the Chippendale desk thought to have been here during the winter of 1779-80. Also observe the Chippendale mirror, a Ford family piece, with a Phoenix bird arising from the top. By 1780, the Phoenix bird motif evolved into the young nation's symbol, the American Eagle.

In the back of the fireplace is an iron plate with the British Royal Crest cast on its obverse. This is called a "Fireback" and was used to radiate heat into the room. Finally, the set of white dishes in the back of the room are Queensware. During his stay in this house, Washington ordered a set of this English earthenware which was completed before he left for his next home at the Dey Mansion near present-day Wayne, New Jersey.

Following Washington's departure in June 1780, the Ford Mansion once again became a private residence. Nearly a century later, Henry Ford, Jacob's grandson, specified in his will that the House be sold at public auction. The two highest bidders formed a historical society, the Washington Association, in 1872. This Association is still active today and continues to assist the National Park Service. In 1933, Morristown became the first National Historical Park.

This completes your tour of the Ford Mansion. Should you have any questions, please ask the National Park interpreters.

ADMINISTRATION

The Ford Mansion is part of Morristown National Historical Park and administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A Superintendent, whose address is Morristown, N.J. 07960, is in immediate charge of the park.

FOR YOUR SAFETY, please take care while walking through this old house, especially in mounting and descending stairs.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

FORD MANSION



WASHINGTON HEADQUARTERS 1779-80

Built between 1772 and 1774, in the Georgian style, the Ford Mansion was one of the grandest homes in the Morristown area. Its builder, Jacob Ford, Jr., had enjoyed a comfortable life since his birth in 1738. In 1762, he left the family homestead in nearby Whippany to manage their three iron foundries in Mount Hope, Burnt Meadows, and Middle Forge.

Ford had recently married Theodosia Johnes, daughter of the local Presbyterian minister. Jacob and his growing family remained at the foundries until 1772. At that time his father asked him to return to Morristown to oversee the entire Ford family holdings. Young Jacob was given two hundred acres of land and began construction of this mansion, the first house he owned.

Within a year of the mansion's completion, the American Revolution began. Ford, a patriot, immediately raised and equipped a militia regiment and constructed a gunpowder mill. In the winter of 1776, during the disastrous New Jersey "Mud Rounds" Campaign, Colonel Ford became ill, returned home, and died. Informed of Ford's death, General Washington ordered a full military funeral with all honors — a compliment Mrs. Ford never forgot.

Two years later when Washington returned to Morristown for the "Hard Winter" of 1779-80, Mrs. Ford offered the General full use of the mansion as his military headquarters. Washington accepted and the Ford Mansion became the military capital of the nation for nearly seven months, December 1779 to June 1780.

Picture, if you will, the Mansion as it looked in 1780. There had been such numerous and severe blizzards since December that nearly four feet of snow covered the ground. The temperatures remained continually near zero, yet there was constant activity at the house.

THE MAIN HALL

As you entered the house, you would have passed guards stationed outside the front door. These were members of the "Life Guard," whose sole purpose was to protect General Washington. If you had official business with the General or his six Aides-de-Camp, you would have been ushered to one of the seats lining the walls. Notice how bare the hall looks. As Continental troops had a tendency towards pilfering, Mrs. Ford removed all furnishings and accessories of value.

... Proceed to far right end of hall.

THE FORD BOYS' ROOM

During General Washington's occupancy of the House, Mrs. Ford retained two rooms for herself and her family. Her three boys: Timothy, 17; Gabriel, 15; and Jacob III, 8; occupied this room. Gabriel enjoyed hunting and collecting souvenirs from the soldiers. Timothy joined the local militia and in June 1780, was wounded at the Battle of Springfield. While recovering at home, General Washington inquired many times about his



MRS. FORD'S BEDROOM

The first impression you may have is the crowded nature of this room. Recall that Mrs. Ford and her daughter, Elizabeth, dined, slept, and entertained in this single room. Also, Mrs. Ford moved most of her valued possessions into this room with her. Notice the built-in cupboards containing a collection of quality china and glass. These cupboards retain their original paint, made of brick dust and buttermilk. The curly maple linen press is an original Ford family piece, as are the chairs surrounding the tea table.

... Now proceed up the staircase.

THE SERVANT'S QUARTERS

In normal times only six servants occupied these quarters, but during the winter of 1779-80, nearly twenty attempted to sleep in these two unheated rooms. General Washington's servants were supervised by his housekeeper, Mrs. Thompson.

... Proceed to the room above the small staircase.

COLONEL HAMILTON'S ROOM

Alexander Hamilton was one of Washington's more colorful aides. While stationed here, he courted Betsy Schuyler, who was living nearby. They married in December, 1780.

The folding camp beds are examples of the type of equipment most officers carried in their assigned baggage wagons.

... Proceed now to your left.

health. The smaller bed you see here is called a trundle, and could be pulled out from under the main bed at night.

... Proceed next into the kitchen hall to your right.

THE KITCHEN

With all the servants of Mrs. Ford, General Washington, and his Aides, attempting to prepare meals for the day, the kitchen was an area of tremendous activity. At least nine separate meals were cooked here daily by some twenty to twenty-five servants. This crowded situation caused Washington to build a log kitchen next to this one.

Surrounding the fireplace are scattered cooking utensils such as a hooded broiler, a copper brazier, and a square waffle iron. Notice also the abundance of copperware and pottery, indications of the owner's wealth. The large opening in the fireplace is a bake oven.

... Proceed to the next room on your left.

MRS. FORD'S PANTRY

Because General Washington needed a large storage area for his food supply, Mrs. Ford used this room for her foodstuffs instead of the basement. In this small room she kept her entire winter's supply of flour, dried fruits and vegetables, smoked and dried meats, beans, apples, sauerkraut and salt. Also included would be jugs of cider and vinegar, boxes of cheeses and breads, teas, and bags of sugar. As in the kitchen, the ceiling would hold supplies of dried herbs to be used as seasonings and medicines.

... Proceed now to the right front of this hall.