THE TENT’S TRAVELS

The almost 250-year-old tent now calls the Museum of the American Revolution home. Before the museum opened, it had been displayed by others for over 100 years. Sometimes, it was even displayed outdoors! It is now very fragile.

To make sure the tent could be seen for many more years to come, people called conservators had to carefully clean and repair it. Since it was in good condition, it could be put on display. Find some of the special tools the conservators used to restore the tent and protect it from future wear and tear. Which one would you want to use?

We know a lot about the tent’s history, but over the years, information, such as how the tent was set up or what it looked like inside, was lost to historians. Many people knew where the tent was set up, but no one knew if Washington stayed dry inside when it rained. So, the Museum worked with historic craftspeople to create a replica tent. Making a new tent out of the same materials in the same way the original tent was made, in the same shape and size, means we could take it outside and learn how it worked. (We even learned that we could stay pretty dry in the rain.)

That replica now travels around the country, visiting historic sites and other spaces. Visitors can go inside, touch the walls, learn about the tent, and discover the amazing story of what it means for a tent to be more than just a tent. Maybe the tent will visit a place near you!

Scan to learn more about the replica tent and the First Oval Office Project.

THE MEMORY OF WASHINGTON

What is so special about a tent? Even now, what is so special about an old tent that has holes and missing pieces? And why would anyone care about something that looks so plain and ordinary? There are all questions that get asked about the tent. Maybe you are wondering the same thing. Or maybe you already know the answers because you have something — like a bear, blanket, or toy — that looks old and worn on the outside, but that means a lot to you. You should know it’s true in whether it’s new or fancy, but in the stories that it holds. The places it has been, the people it has interacted with, and the stories it has witnessed make it unique.

The same is true for this tent. It belonged to George Washington, the first Commander in Chief of the United States. Washington and his generals welcomed him back; and it saw the United States torn apart by civil war. What is so special about a tent is the stories it holds. The places it has been, the people it has interacted with, and the stories it has witnessed make it unique. The same is true for this tent. It belonged to George Washington, the first Commander in Chief of the United States. Washington and his generals welcomed him back; and it saw the United States torn apart by civil war.

Ask a museum educator if you’re right!

Below is a list of many key pieces of the tent. Use the numbers 1 through 7 to label them in the order YOU think they need to be used to set the tent up correctly.

Ask a museum educator if you’re right!

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1. Tent Pins
2. Outer Walls
3. Inner Walls
4. Tent Poles
5. Marquee
6. Tent Roof
7. Ropes
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KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

As you explore this exhibition, here are some words you might see:

REPLICA An exact or close copy of an object.
RELIC An object from the past that is considered historic or special.
CONSERVATION What is done to keep historical objects in good condition.
MARQUEE Another word for a large tent.

In this exhibit… George Washington had many tents as part of his camp: one for sleeping, one for holding kids’ dinners, and more for his bags and supplies. This exhibit focuses on the world around his sleeping tent.
Welcome inside General Washington’s home away from home! Take a look at the large oval on the floor, which gives you an idea of the size of the tent where he slept, ate, got dressed, and worked. You can also look inside the out to see some of the actual furniture that lived in the tent along with him.

Did you notice that the bed has hinges on it? It also has check out the camp stools! They fold, too, so that they can fit together inside a trunk. Washington’s aids and generals, like Alexander Hamilton and the Marquis de Lafayette, regularly visited the tent to receive orders or carry messages to the General. The Commander in Chief’s Guard had the job of protecting, moving, and setting up all of General Washington’s tents and belongings. Find the image of a soldier from the Commander in Chief’s Guard to find out if you could have been part of this special group.

FILL IN THE BLANK

Look around to find the answers to these questions and fill in the missing letters.

WORD SEARCH

People who visited the tents were sometimes given pieces of it to take with them as souvenirs. People who visited the tents were sometimes given pieces of it to take with them as souvenirs.