

Colonial Williamsburg

The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation
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www.amrevmuseum.org

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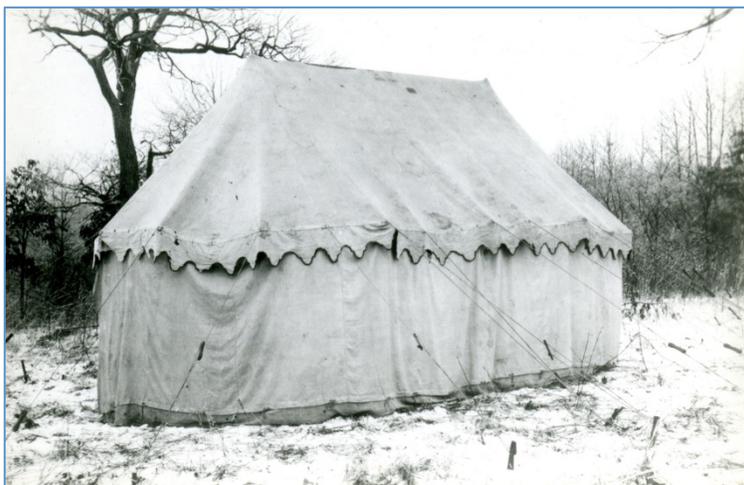
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The First “Oval Office” Replica to be Erected for the First Time Nov. 15-17 In Colonial Williamsburg’s Revolutionary City

The Hand-Sewn Marquee Tent Was Crafted by Historic Trades Tailors



The original marquee as pictured in a 1911 photograph.

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. (November 12, 2013) – Colonial Williamsburg will erect the recently completed replica of Gen. George Washington’s marquee — the first “oval office” — for the first time during the grand opening Nov. 15-17 of James Anderson’s Blacksmith Shop and Public Armoury. The weekend marks the first public display of the reproduction of the marquee tent that served as Washington’s field headquarters throughout most of the American Revolution. The tent, the first of two to be made, will be on display at the Secretary’s Office adjacent to the Capitol at the east end of Duke of Gloucester Street.

Historic Trades tailors constructed the reproduction entirely by hand during the late spring through early fall for the Museum of the American Revolution, which is planned to open in Philadelphia in 2017. The museum, which owns the original marquee, wanted a replica made for a variety of uses, including testing the mounting system for the original artifact, in advance of the museum’s opening.

The reproduction marquee is made of linen fabrics, some of which were woven by Historic Trades artisans in Colonial Williamsburg's Weaving Shop. Several other Colonial Williamsburg trade shops also participated in reproducing the tent and its pieces. Carpenters and joiners fashioned wooden poles to support the structure. Blacksmiths forged iron hardware and pole fittings. Wheelwrights assisted with small wooden fasteners and paint. Cabinetmakers turned the wooden finials that go atop the tent poles. The completed marquee measures 22 feet long, 15 feet wide and ten feet high.

The original sleeping and office tent — a national treasure — was one of a pair of marquees made for Gen. Washington in early 1778, at the end of the Valley Forge encampment. Washington returned to his Mount Vernon home with his tents and other military equipment in December 1783 after he resigned his commission. Following his death in 1799 and the death of his wife, Martha, in 1802, Washington's military effects, including the tents were sold at private auction to Martha's grandson, George Washington Parke Custis. The tents were displayed periodically at the Custis home, Arlington House, during the ensuing decades until his death in 1857. While Union Army units occupied Arlington House during the Civil War, many of Washington's military possessions were taken into federal custody until they were returned to the Custis/Lee family in the early 20th century. Various elements of Washington's field headquarters are now held by institutions including the Museum of the American Revolution, the National Museum of American History, George Washington's Mount Vernon, and the National Park Service.

The reproduction tent, and associated research on General Washington's field equipment, is funded in part by a generous grant to the Museum of the American Revolution from the Acorn Foundation Fund for History in Memory of Alexander Orr Vietor.

For more information about the marquee tent, visit <https://www.facebook.com/FirstOvalOffice>, <http://www.firstovaloffice.org/> or <http://bit.ly/fooaopr>.

The Museum of the American Revolution will be the nation's premier museum dedicated to the complete story of the American Revolution. To be built in historic Philadelphia, just steps from Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell, the museum will feature a distinguished collection of objects, artifacts, artwork, and manuscripts from the period of the American Revolution that will bring to life the original "greatest generation" and engage people in the history and continuing relevance of the American Revolution. For more information, visit www.AmRevMuseum.org or call toll free, 877-740-1776.

The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation preserves, restores and operates Virginia's 18th-century capital of Williamsburg, Va., as a 21st-century center for history and citizenship. Innovative and interactive experiences, such as the street theatre Revolutionary City® and the RevQuest: Save the Revolution! series of technology-assisted alternate reality games, highlight the relevance of the American Revolution to contemporary life and the importance of an informed, active citizenry. The Colonial Williamsburg experience includes more than 400 restored or reconstructed original buildings, renowned museums of decorative arts and folk art, extensive educational outreach programs for students and teachers, lodging, culinary options from historic taverns to casual or elegant dining, the Golden Horseshoe Golf Club featuring 45 holes designed by Robert Trent Jones and his son Rees Jones, a full-service spa and fitness center, pools, retail stores and gardens. Philanthropic support and revenue from admissions, products and hospitality operations sustain Colonial Williamsburg's educational programs and preservation initiatives.

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