

American Heritage Merit Badge



Merit Badge Counselor: Erin Nimmo

American Heritage Merit Badge



1. Read the Declaration of Independence. Pay close attention to the section that begins with "We hold these truths to be self-evident" and ends with "to provide new Guards for their future security." Rewrite that section in your own words, making it as easy to understand as possible. Then, share your writing with your counselor and discuss the importance of the Declaration to all Americans.

2. Do TWO of the following:

(a) Select two individuals from American history, one a political leader (a president, senator, etc.) and the other a private citizen (a writer, religious leader, etc.). Find out about each person's accomplishments and compare the contributions each has made to America's heritage.

(c) With your counselor's approval, interview two veterans of the U.S. military. Find out what their experiences were like. Ask the veterans what they believe they accomplished.

3. Do the following:

(a) Select a topic related to the United States that is currently in the news. Describe to your counselor what is happening. Explain how today's events are related to or affected by the events and values of America's past.

(b) For the following, describe its adoption, tell about any changes since its adoption, and explain how each one continues to influence Americans today: the flag, the Pledge of Allegiance, the Great Seal of the United States, the motto, and the national anthem.

(c) Research your family's history. Find out how various events and situations in American history affected your family. If your family immigrated to America, tell the reasons why. Share what you find with your counselor.

4. Do TWO of the following:

(b) Research an event of historical importance that took place in or near your area. If possible, visit the place. Tell your counselor about the event and how it affected local history. Describe how the area looked then and what it now looks like.

(e) Visit a historic trail or walk in your area. After your visit, share with your counselor what you have learned. Discuss the importance of this location and explain why you think it might qualify for National Register listing.

5. Do ONE of the following:

(a) Watch two motion pictures (with the approval and permission of your counselor and parent or guardian) that are set in some period of American history. Describe to your counselor how accurate each film is with regard to the historical events depicted and also with regard to the way the characters are portrayed.

6. Discuss with your counselor the career opportunities in American heritage. Pick one that interests you and explain how to prepare for this career. Discuss what education and training are required for this career.

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1. Read the Declaration of Independence. Pay close attention to the section that begins with "We hold these truths to be self-evident" and ends with "to provide new Guards for their future security." **Rewrite that section in your own words**, making it as easy to understand as possible. Then, share your writing with your counselor and discuss the importance of the Declaration to all Americans.

We believe some things are obvious: all people are created equal and have rights like **life, freedom, and the chance to be happy**. Governments are made to **protect these rights**. If a government doesn't do its job, people **can change it or make a new one** to keep everyone safe and free



2. Do TWO of the following:

(a) Select two individuals from **American history**, one a **political leader** (a president, senator, etc.) and the other a **private citizen** (a writer, religious leader, etc.). Find out about each person's accomplishments and compare the contributions each has made to America's heritage.

President Truman most honorable and influential actions on American heritage include advancing the cause of **civil rights** by desegregating the U.S. military and defining America's global role during the Cold War through the **Truman Doctrine** and other key foreign policies; **Truman Doctrine and Containment**: In 1947, Truman announced a policy to provide military and economic aid to countries threatened by communism, notably Greece and Turkey. This policy of "containment" became the foundation of American foreign policy throughout the Cold War.

Marshall Plan: Truman implemented a massive aid program to help rebuild war-torn Western Europe, which fostered strong relationships with U.S. allies and helped prevent the spread of communism by ensuring economic stability.

Formation of NATO: He played a key role in the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949, a military alliance that committed the U.S. to the defense of Western Europe and remains a cornerstone of American international posture today.

Founding of the United Nations: Truman strongly supported the creation of the UN in 1945, working to ensure bipartisan domestic support and securing American participation in the new international body designed to promote cooperation and peace.

Decision to use atomic weapons: Early in his presidency, Truman made the decision to use atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which led to the end of World War II and ushered in the atomic age, a decision that remains one of the most debated actions in American history.

The Wright Brothers;

Wilbur and Orville Wright were aviation pioneers credited with inventing and building the world's first successful motor-operated airplane.

Their first flight at Kitty Hawk in 1903 made global travel significantly faster, transformed military strategy, and launched the space race, making the world feel smaller and advancing America's role as a leader in innovation.

(c) With your counselor's approval, interview **two veterans** of the U.S. military. Find out what their experiences were like. Ask the veterans what they believe they accomplished.

Major Retired, SS Recipient Larry Moores (Neighbor)

Mr. Moores enlisted in US Army in 1982; his brother was attending USMA and father served in USAF. His family had service to nation embroiled into their character. He was proud to served a cause of an idea over a person. Honored to serve the nation which takes care of him and his family. **(DEC 31, 2025)**

USA LTC Retired Kenneth Bertrand; Grandpa

US Army LTC Ken Bertrand (Grandpa): Grandpa was a Army reservist for 30 years. He graduated college, was commissioned as lieutenant during Vietnam but never was sent; did 2 years active and then 29 years reserve. He Loves his country and proud to serve and be a reservist. Very proud of serving the Nation, provided Active Duty Generals perspective of Reservist who are competent in their niche skills. **(Dec 21, 2025).**

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3. Do the following:

(a) Select a topic related to the United States that is currently in the news. Describe to your counselor what is happening. Explain how today's events are related to or affected by the events and values of America's past.

The war in Ukraine shows how America still cares about freedom, like in our past wars. Russia invaded Ukraine and also tries to interfere with other countries by spreading lies online and pushing its power. Because of America's history of defending independence, we support Ukraine and try to stop Russia's interference today

(b) For the following, describe its adoption, tell about any changes since its adoption, and explain how each one continues to influence Americans today: the flag, the Pledge of Allegiance, the Great Seal of the United States, the motto, and the national anthem.

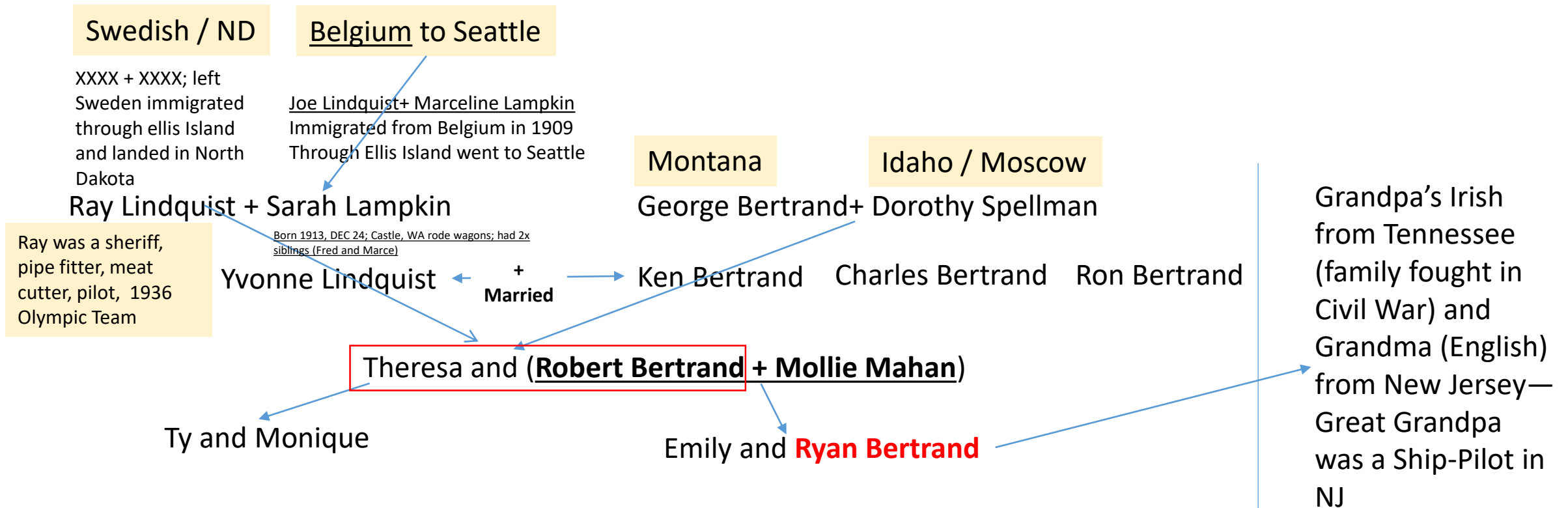
- i. the flag,
- ii. the Pledge of Allegiance,
- iii. the Great Seal of the United States,
- iv. the motto,
- v. and the national anthem.

Completed over the phone

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3. Do the following: (c) Research your family's history. Find out how various events and situations in American history affected your family. If your family immigrated to America, tell the reasons why. Share what you find with your counselor.



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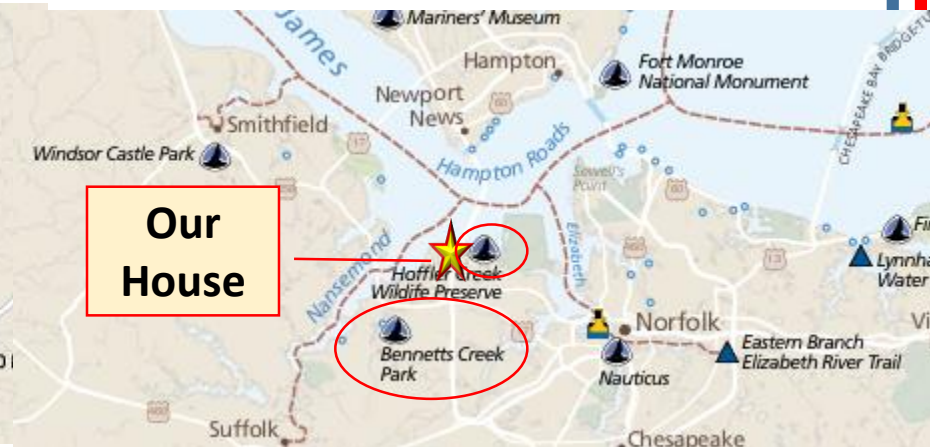
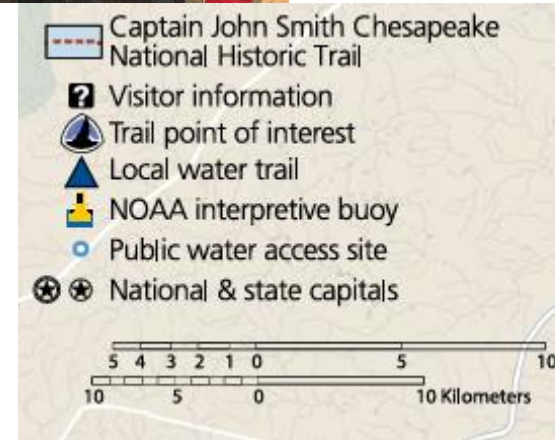
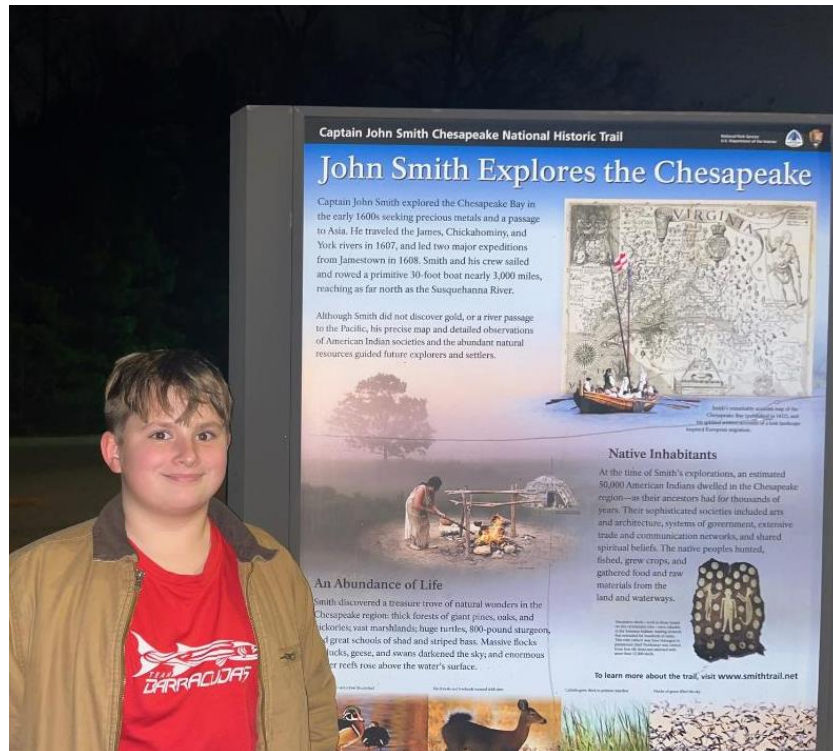
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(b) Research an event of historical importance that took place in or near your area. If possible, visit the place. Tell your counselor about the event and how it affected local history. Describe how the area looked then and what it now looks like.

The Battle of Yorktown was the last big fight of the Revolutionary War. American and French soldiers surrounded the British and made them surrender, which helped our country finally become independent. Back then, Yorktown looked like a smoky battlefield with dirt roads, farms, trenches, and cannons blasting. Today, it's calm and clean, with grassy fields, rebuilt forts, old houses, and a nice riverfront. It's hard to believe such an important battle happened in a place that now feels so peaceful.

(e) Visit a historic trail or walk in your area. After your visit, share with your counselor what you have learned. Discuss the importance of this location and explain why you think it might qualify for National Register listing.

Walking by the water on the Captain John Smith Trail made me feel like an explorer. I learned that in 1607–1609, Captain John Smith paddled about 3,000 miles around the Chesapeake Bay and met many Native American villages. This trail matters because his map helped settlers understand the land and water long ago. It's protected now so people can remember that early journey, enjoy nature, and learn about the people and history of the Bay.



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5. Do ONE of the following:

- (a) Watch two motion pictures (with the approval and permission of your counselor and parent or guardian) that are set in some period of American history. Describe to your counselor how accurate each film is with regard to the historical events depicted and also with regard to the way the characters are portrayed.

#1: *the Longest Day*: When I watched *The Longest Day*, I thought it showed D-Day in a really realistic way for an old movie. It explains how huge the invasion was and how many soldiers from different countries worked together. The battles, uniforms, and maps looked pretty accurate, and the characters acted brave but also scared, which felt real. Even though some scenes are Hollywood-style, it still helped me understand what D-Day was like and why it was such an important mission.”

#2: *The Great Escape* is about Allied soldiers during World War II who are captured and held in a German prison camp. They plan a huge escape through tunnels, showing bravery, teamwork, and clever tricks. The movie shows real WWII events, like prisoner-of-war camps and Nazi guards.

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6. Discuss with your counselor the career opportunities in American heritage. Pick one that interests you and explain how to prepare for this career. Discuss what education and training are required for this career.

Here are three career opportunities in **American heritage**:

Museum Curator – They manage collections of historical artifacts, plan exhibits, and teach visitors about history.

Archaeologist – They study ancient sites and artifacts to learn about past cultures and American history.

Park Ranger – They protect historic sites, educate the public, and lead tours about American history.

National Park Ranger might be most exciting.

To prepare:

Education & Training:

Focus on history, science, and environmental studies in school.

Participate in Scouts, hiking, camping, and volunteering at local parks.

Later, earn a **college degree in history, archaeology, or environmental science**.

Complete **internships or seasonal work** at national or state parks.

This career combines adventure, helping people, and learning about American heritage!

