



BSA American Heritage Merit Badge Information for Scouts & Their Families

We are looking forward to working with you on this merit badge. The information below will help you prepare for a productive class.

This is a four-hour class. Scouts should plan to attend the entire session to complete the in-class work. We will meet in the Education Center at Colvin Run Mill Historic Site.

Scouts should bring:

- **water and a snack**
- **a pen or pencil**
- **any completed prework**
- **a blue card signed by the troop leader** **Note: Colvin Run Mill does NOT have blue cards.

Parents, to comply with BSA guidelines, this program requires that 2 adults be in attendance. Please consider attending with your Scout. You may learn more about this nation's heritage and your presence helps the Scouts stay focused while the merit badge counselor teaches and works with Scouts individually.

Scouts, while not required, we recommend you use an *American Heritage Merit Badge Worksheet* to organize your work for this class. Worksheets can be found at [Merit Badge Requirements and Worksheets \(boyscouttrail.com\)](https://www.boysscouttrail.com/merit-badge-requirements-and-worksheets) or [Merit Badge Worksheets \(usscouts.org\)](https://usscouts.org/merit-badge-worksheets).

Read the *Badge Requirements* section carefully so you understand which requirements will be covered in class and which requirements you will need to complete outside of class time and share with the Colvin Run merit badge counselor.

Badge Requirements

Merit Badges are not designed to be done in one 4-hour session, so Scouts will need to complete some requirements outside of this class. Any required discussion with the counselor will be part of the class, but Scouts will need to be prepared for the discussion. If all pre-work is not done, Scouts may attend the class to complete the in-class work, and we will sign-off on completed requirements. Once the work is completed, Scouts can make an appointment to meet with Colvin Run Mill staff to sign those requirements and the completed blue cards. Below is a list of requirements covered in and out of class.

Requirements that will be covered during the class

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

3. Do the following:

b. For each of the following, describe its adoption, tell about any changes since adoption, and explain how each one continues to influence Americans today:

- the U.S. flag
- the Pledge of Allegiance
- the Great Seal of the United States
- the U.S. motto
- the national anthem

4. Do the following:

a. Explain the National Register of Historic Places and how a property becomes eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Make a map of your local area, marking the points of historical interest. Tell about any National Register properties in your area. Share the map with your counselor and describe the historical points you have indicated.

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. (*Because Colvin Run Mill is listed on the National Register of Historical Places, we will explore this site for the badge.*)

Requirements that should be completed prior to the class and discussed with the merit badge counselor during the session.

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.

b. With your counselor's approval, choose an organization that has promoted some type of positive change in American society. Find out why the organization believed this change was necessary and how it helped to accomplish the change. Discuss how the organization is related to events or situations from America's past.

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.

d. With your counselor's approval, interview three people in your community of different ages and occupations. Ask these people what America means to them, what they think is special about this country, and what American traditions they feel are important to preserve.

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.

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.

5. Do ONE of the following:

a. Watch two motion pictures (with the approval and permission of your counselor and parent) 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.

b. Read a biography (with your counselor's approval) of someone who has made a contribution to America's heritage. Tell some things you admire. Explain why you think this person has made a positive or negative contribution to America's heritage.

c. Listen to recordings of popular songs from various periods of American history. Share five of these songs with your counselor and describe how each song reflects the way people felt about the period in which it was popular. If a recording is not available, have a copy of the lyrics with you.

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.

If you have questions or would like to discuss pre-approved work, contact Dawn Bova at (703-759-2771) or dawn.bova@fairfaxcounty.gov. In compliance with BSA's Youth Protection guideline, please cc your parent or guardian on emails.