

THE AMERICAN CONNECTION

George VI stated "The History of York is the History of England", George III could equally have said that "The History of York is the History of the U.S.A."



York was once the capital of the United States, the birthplace of the Articles of Confederation and where the words 'The United States' were first spoken. That's York, Pennsylvania of course, not the ancient city of York in England.

The original York, England after which York, USA takes its name was 1,670 years old when its American offspring was founded back in 1741. York, Pennsylvania was named after York in England. New York and New York County were named after James, Duke of York when the British captured the Dutch

colony and changed the name of its capital from New Amsterdam to New York. James, Duke of York, stayed at the Treasurer's House in 1679 when on a visit to York, but didn't enjoy the entertainment laid on for him. He persuaded his brother King Charles II to rescind the city's charter.

The Grand Old Duke of York

"The Grand Old Duke of York he had 10,000 men", goes a popular American scouting song. The song refers to Frederick II, Duke of York. The rhyme was composed as a slur on the military activities of the Grand Old Duke who at the time was aged 26 and Commander in Chief of the British Army. When the Duke visited the races on York's Knavesmire, the crowd were so pleased to see him that they unhitched the horses of his coach and pulled it by hand. The Duke's visit was sadly marred by him being taken ill with measles.

York Minster

In 1984, the south transit caught fire and the 'bosses' (the large carvings) had to be replaced. A competition was held by Blue Peter, the children's TV programme to come up with six replacements. 34000 entries were whittled down to 6 and two of these have an American theme: 'Neil Armstrong landing on the Moon' and 'Space Exploration', where the American Flag is depicted.

The Astronomical Clock

This shows how the sky would look approaching York and Yorkshire and is dedicated to the allied airman who flew from North Yorkshire during World War II (many of them were Americans). The Book of Remembrance lists the names of those airmen flying from North Yorkshire who lost their lives.

The Gee Monument

The monument to Gee was looking a bit neglected when an American visitor to the Minster by the name of Gee organised a world-wide collection from members of the Gee family to restore it. The majority of them were American.

Micklegate Bar

In 1572 the head of Penniman was placed on Micklegate Bar for treason. His son gathered the family together and set off to New England to start a new life. The Pennimans are now a well-established New England Family.

The Walls of York

In the 18th century a stonemason was given the task of repairing the city walls, his name was James Disney – is this perhaps where his ancestor James Disney came up with the idea of Disney World in America? In the 1850's the City Council wanted to pull down the walls of York as they were no longer needed. One of the many arguments put up against that action was: 'the American people are starting to visit the old country, the walls have an historic interest'. American visitors have visited York ever since to walk and enjoy our city walls.

The River

New York's river was once called the Ouse, the name of York's river today.

Merchant Adventurers' Hall, Fairfax House and Treasurer's House

The Merchant Adventurers would almost certainly have financed the expeditions to the New World.

Fairfax County, USA was named after the Fairfax family, their family home was in Skeldergate, York. Thomas Fairfax lived in the Treasurer's House and of course there is also Fairfax House.

American Yorkies

W. H. Auden, the poet and writer was born in York but emigrated to America and became an American citizen. Lindley Murray was an American Quaker from Pennsylvania, who moved to York for health reasons. He became a leading Quaker in York and was an English teacher at The Mount School for girls. The English Grammar book that he wrote was in use until fairly recent times. Two Streets in Holgate, now a suburb of York where he once lived, are named after him – Lindley Street and Murray Street.

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