A VOYAGE ALONG THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI RIVER
New Orleans to Memphis
aboard the paddle-wheeled American Splendor
March 5–13, 2024
Featuring special guest lecturer Doris Kearns Goodwin
Dear Commonwealth Club Members,

Join us for a deep dive into U.S. history and culture aboard the 185-berth American Splendor, a riverboat built in 2016 in the classic paddle-wheeler style, on a voyage up the Mississippi River from New Orleans to Memphis.

Begin in New Orleans, enjoying the distinctive architecture of the French Quarter, the gorgeous homes of the Garden District, and the renowned National WWII Museum. Then cruise upriver on the American Splendor, visiting the sugar plantations, Creole cottages, and lush landscapes of Bayou country; the city of Natchez, Mississippi, whose architectural grandeur reflects the prosperous Steamboat Era of the early 1800s; and Vicksburg, where a 47-day Civil War battle raged before control of the Mississippi River was taken by the North. Conclude in Memphis, exploring historic Beale Street to the rhythm of the Blues.

The American Splendor offers modern amenities among surroundings of 19th-century riverboat opulence, including lovely cabins--most featuring private balconies--in the style of a bygone era, fine cuisine, and lively performances by onboard musicians.

What makes this Mississippi River experience stand apart is the incredibly rich educational program, beginning with a keynote address in New Orleans by Presidential Historian and Pulitzer Prize-winning Author, Doris Kearns Goodwin. She will discuss her Lincoln Prize-winning book Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln. Throughout the trip, travelers will also enjoy panel discussions and opportunities for direct engagement with an outstanding lineup of lecturers.

This unique journey along one of North America’s great waterways is expected to sell out, I encourage you to reserve your space today by contacting us at travel@commonwealthclub.org or (415) 597-6720.

We look forward to traveling with you,

Kristina Nemeth
Travel Director
Study Leaders

Doris Kearns Goodwin is a world-renowned presidential historian, public speaker and Pulitzer Prize-winning, New York Times #1 best-selling author. Since 2020 she has served as executive producer for the History Channel’s miniseries events Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt, with more to come!

Goodwin is the author of seven critically acclaimed and New York Times best-selling books, including her most recent, Leadership in Turbulent Times, which incorporates her five decades of scholarship studying Presidents Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt and Lyndon Baines Johnson. Goodwin was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in history for No Ordinary Time: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt: The Home Front in World War II.

Goodwin graduated magna cum laude from Colby College. She earned a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Government from Harvard University, where she taught Government, including a course on the American Presidency.

Ed Baptist, Professor of U.S. History at Cornell

Philip Deloria, Professor of Native American History at Harvard University

Andy Flory, Professor of Music at Carleton College

John Meffert, consultant on heritage conservation
Itinerary

TUESDAY, MARCH 5
**New Orleans, Louisiana**
Arrive in New Orleans and check into the centrally-located InterContinental New Orleans, just blocks away from the French Quarter and the bustling Riverwalk. This evening, meet fellow travelers at a festive welcome reception and dinner featuring a keynote address by Presidential Historian and Pulitzer Prize-winning Author, Doris Kearns Goodwin.

INTERCONTINENTAL NEW ORLEANS (R,D)

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6
**New Orleans**
After a morning lecture, spend the day exploring New Orleans, including the distinctive architecture of the famous French Quarter and the extravagantly styled and landscaped homes of the Garden District, plus the highly acclaimed National World War II Museum. Board the American Splendor in the afternoon to begin the journey up the mighty Mississippi River.

AMERICAN SPLENDOR (B,L,D)

THURSDAY, MARCH 7
**Oak Alley, Laura, and Whitney Plantations**
Explore historic Oak Alley, a grand Greek Revival plantation home famous for its namesake double row of 18th-century canopy oak trees lining the approaching path. Nearby Laura Plantation, a restored Creole plantation, is a fascinating contrast to Oak Alley, offering further insight into the stories and culture of this area’s inhabitants and boasting twelve buildings on the National Register of Historic Places, including slave quarters. The Whitney Plantation, the only plantation museum in Louisiana with a focus on slavery, features historic buildings, museum exhibits, modern memorials, and first-person slave narratives that give a voice to enslaved people who worked and lived in Louisiana.

AMERICAN SPLENDOR (B,L,D)

FRIDAY, MARCH 8
**Baton Rouge**
Arrive in Baton Rouge, a busy port town and Louisiana's state capital. Take walking tours of the character-filled neighborhoods near the city center, marveling at the rich art and architecture along the route, including the Old State Capitol and its unexpected stained glass. For those that feel adventurous, board a small boat for a guided tour through the ecologically rich Louisiana Bayou for a chance to glimpse the local waterfowl and other Bayou residents.

AMERICAN SPLENDOR (B,L,D)

SATURDAY, MARCH 9
**St. Francisville**
Spend the day in the once-thriving cotton port of St. Francisville to learn about the town's rich legacy. Explore the magnificent...
mansions and plantation homes of the Historic District, including the Rosedown Estate and Garden, one of the few privately maintained formal gardens of the 19th century; Myrtles Plantation, reputed to be one of the most haunted homes in America; and the Oakley Plantation, the home of John James Audubon. **AMERICAN SPLENDOR (B,L,D)**

**SUNDAY, MARCH 10**

**Natchez, Mississippi**

Natchez suffered little destruction during the Civil War and as a result, is home to one of the largest concentrations of restored pre-Civil War properties in the United States. Visit three of these historic homes: Longwood, with a unique octagonal design; Rosalie, which served as Union headquarters during the Civil War; and Stanton Hall, constructed in 1851 and regarded as one of the most opulent mansions of its day. Then learn about the African American experience in Natchez with visits to the Forks in the Road historic site and the Natchez Museum of African American Culture. Also enjoy free time to explore central Natchez, including the option to have lunch ashore. **AMERICAN SPLENDOR (B,L,D)**

**MONDAY, MARCH 11**

**Vicksburg**

Vicksburg was one of the keys to victory in the Civil War. General Grant’s successful 47-day siege in the summer of 1863 brought control of the Mississippi River into Union hands. Visit the National Military Park, considered to be the best-preserved battlefield in the United States; the ironclad gunboat Cairo; and the Lower Mississippi River Museum, with exhibits on ancient Vicksburg and an aquarium featuring local fish species. There will also be time to explore historic downtown Vicksburg independently. **AMERICAN SPLENDOR (B,L,D)**

**TUESDAY, MARCH 12**

**Cruising the Mississippi**

During a full day of cruising, relax on deck and enjoy the passing scenery and the varied river traffic along with the continued lecture program. **AMERICAN SPLENDOR (B,L,D)**

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13**

**Memphis, Tennessee / Home**

Upon arrival in Memphis, disembark for a tour touching on the city’s diverse heritage including indigenous groups, cotton tycoons and enslaved people, Civil Rights icons, and musicians vital to the growth of the Blues and Rock ‘n’ Roll. After lunch on iconic Beale Street, transfer to the airport for afternoon flights home. **(B,L)**
General Information

PROGRAM RATES INCLUDE
All accommodations, meals, and excursions as specified in the itinerary, including 8 breakfasts, 8 lunches, 8 dinners, one hotel night in New Orleans, and 7 nights aboard American Splendor • Comprehensive program of briefings, lectures, and presentations • Keynote address by Doris Kearns Goodwin • Motorcoach transfer to airport for all participants on group departure day • All gratuities to porters, wait staff, guides, drivers, and shipboard personnel for all group activities • Entrance fees and port charges • Welcome reception and dinner with drinks included • Daily cocktail hour and nightly entertainment aboard American Splendor • Filtered water on motorcoaches • Comprehensive packet of pre-departure information • Professional tour managers throughout the program

AIR ARRANGEMENTS
Airfare is not included in the program rates. Valerie Wilson Travel, Inc., can help with airline arrangements for this trip and can be reached at 877-376-1754. You are also welcome to book your air transportation through your local travel agent, an online travel site, or the airline of your choice. Further information about making flight arrangements will be sent to confirmed participants.

WHAT TO EXPECT
We consider this to be a moderately active program, with considerable walking at some destinations. Daily activities can involve up to two miles of walking, unaided, over varied terrain (e.g., uneven walkways, steep and sandy trails, dirt streets and paths in some locations). Participants must be physically fit, in good health, and capable of undertaking this level of activity without assistance from tour staff. In March, the weather is generally mild and comfortable, with high temperatures usually in the mid-70s, and rain is always a possibility. The American Splendor has been chartered for this departure.

A NOTE ABOUT RATES
Tour rates are based upon current fuel prices, taxes, tariffs, and a minimum number of participants. While we will do everything possible to maintain the listed prices, they are subject to change. If there are significant changes, details will be advised prior to departure.

American Splendor allows guests to experience the nostalgia of classic paddlewheeler travel while enjoying modern comfort and amenities. Recently renovated, American Splendor features serene color palettes, luxurious textiles and linens, new furniture and carpets, and updated artwork and flourishes. From the staterooms and suites to the lounges and dining rooms, the new décor pays homage to the legendary Mississippi River. On board, guests can relax in a casual ambiance while admiring panoramic views of the passing scenery. Each spacious stateroom is outward-facing, allowing commanding views of the riverside landscape, and includes all of the amenities you expect from a fine hotel. These staterooms also offer a sitting area, desk, and full-size bathrooms, and most feature floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors with a private balcony. With only 180 guests, fellow travelers will quickly become new friends.

Program Rates (per person)

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New Orleans to Memphis

board the paddle-wheeled American Splendor

March 5–13, 2024

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NAME #1

SIGNATURE                          DATE

NAME #2                             DATE

MAILING ADDRESS

HOME PHONE                                           MOBILE PHONE

EMAIL(S)

MEMBERSHIP

We require membership in the Commonwealth Club to travel with us. Please check one of the following options:

❑ I am a current member of the Commonwealth Club
❑ Please renew my membership with the credit card information provided here
❑ I will visit commonwealthclub.org/membership to sign up for a membership

PAYMENT

❑ Please charge the deposit to my credit card (circle one):
  VISA          MasterCard          AmEx          Discover

NAME ON CREDIT CARD

SIGNATURE AS IT APPEARS ON CREDIT CARD                                              DATE

CARD #                          EXP. DATE  SECURITY CODE

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❑ Enclosed is my check for $__________($1,000 per person, payable toCriterion Travel), to reserve
❑ place(s)

on A Voyage Along the Lower Mississippi River.

SINGLE TRAVELERS

If this is a reservation for one person, please indicate:

❑ I prefer to have single accommodations
❑ I plan to share accommodations with

❑ I’d like to know about roommates

I understand that if a roommate cannot be found by the final payment deadline of November 6, 2023, I will pay the single rate.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Bed preference (not guaranteed): ❑ One bed  ❑ Two beds

W/We have read the tour information section of the brochure and agree to the Terms and Conditions stated herein:

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