



The
SONS
DRUMBEAT
Volume 38 Number 2



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(1932-2020)
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In Remembrance

So long, Mr. SR.

James J. Shannon, Jr.
1932 – 2020



James J. Shannon, Jr.

With the July 17th death of Mr. James J. Shannon, Jr., Esq., the Sons of the Revolution lost its longest-standing member and one of its greatest advocates. He was often to the fore of this organization's best interests over the fifty-five years of his membership.

Born in 1932, Jim was the son of the late James J. Shannon, Sr., and the late Virginia Walker Hisle Shannon, both of Richmond, Kentucky. His stated hometown, incidentally, was founded in 1798 by a Revolutionary War veteran, Colonel John Miller.

Jim followed his father's footsteps into law school, receiving his J.D. in 1955 from Cumberland University of Lebanon, Tennessee, his father's alma mater. The next year he was admitted to the Kentucky Bar. In the course of his career, he served as acting Judge of Madison County and became an Assistant Attorney General of the Commonwealth of Kentucky. For ten years, he served as Chairman of the Richmond Board of Adjustments.

Joining the Sons in 1965, he was quick to rise in the ranks. In 1973 he was chosen as President of the Kentucky Society. In 1976, at the Triennial Meeting held in Philadelphia that year, he was elected General Vice President of Region 3 and led the fundraising for the installation of the General Society's flag pole at the Valley Forge Visitor Center.

In 1979, the General Society held its Triennial Meeting in Lexington, Kentucky, where Jim was elected General President for the 1979-1982 term. Among the most prestigious events he attended as General President were the September 1981 signing of the Yorktown Bicentennial Proclamation at the White House, upon the invitation of President Ronald Reagan, and the Yorktown Bicentennial Celebration that October. The Celebration was attended by President Reagan and French President François Mitterrand. During that momentous occasion, he led the unveiling at the Yorktown Victory Center of two GSSR-commissioned bronze busts: one of de Grasse, the other of Rochambeau.

Jim worked tirelessly behind the scenes for the improvement and efficiency of this Society. During his tenure as General President, he formed the Executive Committee, launched the "Blue Book," and oversaw the inaugural issues of the *Drumbeat* newsletter, predecessor of this publication. All was undertaken to improve inter-Societal communications. Outside the Sons, he was just as active. He was a former Vice President of the Richmond Chamber of Commerce, former President of the Richmond Rotary Club, and former Chairman of the Madison County Chapter of the American Red Cross. He served for twenty-five years as President of the Madison County Historical Society and was a long-time Treasurer and Emeritus Director of the Telford Community Center (now YMCA).

In his retirement, he had taken up residence in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. At the 42nd Triennial in Williamsburg, 2015, then-General President Curtis P. Cheyney, III awarded Jim with the GSSR Patrick Henry Award, which he received to a long standing ovation from members and guests. Last year, still active, Jim was honored as Founder of the Palm Beach Chapter Sons of the Revolution in Florida during the 5-year-old Chapter's celebration of George Washington's 287th Birthday.

He is survived by a nephew and two nieces, six great nieces and nephews, one first cousin, and close friends of Fort Lauderdale. Rest in peace, friend.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We will miss you, Jim

On the day I learned of General President Emeritus James J. Shannon, Jr.'s death, I was in my study racking my brains on how to motivate and keep focused our members during this Coronavirus lockdown. After some phone calls and the realization that Jim had indeed crossed the 'silent stream' to the other side, I was saddened to lose a good friend.

Later that day, a Eureka moment came to me. The best way to motivate our members and keep them focused even during the pandemic would be just to share my memory of Jim and his enthusiasm for this organization. Jim Shannon was as smart as a whip and as laser-focused as any lawyer I ever knew. Always the consummate gentleman, if he had a favorite thing on his list of favorite things, it was the Sons of the Revolution.

I first met him at a General Society Annual Meeting when I served as President of the New York Society (1999-2001). He wanted to chat with me because of his love of the jewel of our State Society, the Fraunces Tavern. It was Jim, who during his tenure as General President (1979-1982), had returned the seat of the GSSR to Fraunces Tavern as the permanent headquarters of the General Society.

Up to that point, the site of the headquarters tended to shift to the State Society of the current General President. Staffing was procured locally and was dependent on demand and time of year. Until Jim's time in office, the GSSR was a relatively simple operation. Under his administration, the responsibilities, communications, and services of the GSSR increased substantially, which called for locating the Society in a permanent site. Enter the SRNY and the PSSR, along with James F. Stebbins, to solve the problem. A Permanent Fund to maintain the GSSR at Fraunces Tavern was established. A suitable location was found within the five historic buildings of the complex.

Jim Shannon was particularly proud that the GSSR was now permanently located in a historical space that not only had been frequented by Washington, Jefferson, Hamilton, Franklin, et al, but had hosted the inaugural founding dinner of the Sons of the Revolution, the famous Turtle Feast of 1883. Our common love of the Fraunces Tavern drew us together and initiated a friendship that lasted until his death. Over the years as our friendship deepened, Jim became like an older brother to me. And as my involvement and leadership in the Sons ripened, Jim became a mentor to me.

And so, when he wished a more active presence of the Sons in the Palm Beach area of Florida, where he was by that time residing, he called on me to be one of the founding members of the Palm Beach Chapter. Jim was never known to do anything half-hearted, and he assembled a dedicated group of men who shared the same zeal and fervor for the Society as he had and would serve to operate the Chapter. In a little over five years, the Chapter has developed cordial relationships with the Florida Society, and the two entities are talking of doing some joint events and meetings. For that development, I know Jim is smiling.

Aside from the Palm Beach Chapter in Florida, his other legacies in the Sons are the establishment of the Executive Committee and the "Blue Book," which traditionally is an internal volume of organizational information updated and distributed every three years. Its purpose was to standardize policies and protocols, as well as provide contact information for committee members and officers. The Blue Book is now being converted to an online publication by CL Sigmon and Sharon Toms and will be available to view once the new General Society website is complete.

Jim was multitalented, multitasked. He was active in so many organizations and projects through the years, all of them for a good cause. But we got his best. He loved his country and his Society. He always ended any correspondence about the Sons with, "for the good of the Sons." We raise a glass to you, Jim, and will miss you.

Dr. Laurence Simpson
General President, GSSR

Freedom Rang Out—Despite the Pandemic: *PSSR Alters Tradition to Maintain a Grand Celebration*

By Ben Ramsay Wolf
President, Pennsylvania Society



Ben Ramsay Wolf, left, presents a commemorative Liberty Bell to Lucy Duke Tonacci of DSDI.

The Pennsylvania Society of Sons of the Revolution nearly did not hold its annual July 4th celebration of America's independence this year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. When it became apparent the virus was going to significantly impact the Society's ability to secure the requisite permits for parading and assembly, there was real concern that our *Let Freedom Ring*® bell-tapping celebration with the Descendants of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence (DSDI) would not be held.

A Pennsylvania Society tradition since 1969, our very popular July 4th celebration was renamed "Let Freedom Ring" in honor of the nation's Bicentennial Celebration in 1976. The Pennsylvania Society has since trademarked the name. One of our Society's signature events, the celebration normally begins with a luncheon at the Marriott Philadelphia Old City, followed by a procession by the Pennsylvania Society Color Guard and Society members to Independence National Historical Park for a public ceremony in front of Independence Hall.

The event traditionally concludes with a ceremonial tapping of the Liberty Bell involving youngsters of the DSDI. But this year, the DSDI made an early decision not to send the children to the event, so as to ensure the health and safety of the organization's senior members (parents and grandparents of the bell-tappers). It was a position which we, of course, supported.

However, given the long tradition of *Let Freedom Ring*® and the importance of continuing it as our nation's Semiquincentennial (2026) approaches, we devised a way to keep this year's ceremony alive. On April 5th, I contacted Cynthia MacLeod, Superintendent of the Independence National Historical Park, to propose a smaller "Plan B" celebration to be held inside the Liberty Bell Pavilion. Although the Park was closed, Cindy agreed to our request, subject to a maximum of five people in the Bell alcove and twenty elsewhere in the building.

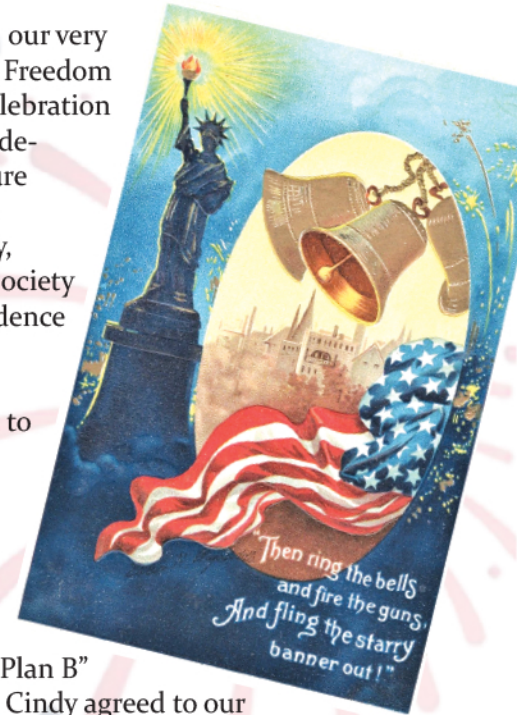


Centenarian and Honorary Bell-Tapper Lt. John Edward James, a long-time PSSR member. (See related story, pages 23-26).

The PSSR has an excellent relationship with the National Park Service and the leadership team at the Independence National Historical Park. As an organization, we want to maintain our traditional goodwill with the NPS. Therefore, Wayne Strasbaugh, our Society's Counselor, David Humphrey, Chair of the *Let Freedom Ring*® Luncheon Committee, and Tim Hennessey, Chair of the *Let Freedom Ring*® Celebration Committee, were in daily communication with me and Superintendent MacLeod.

Tim's tireless efforts culminated in DSDI President General Lucy Duke Tonacci and her husband, Mark Tonacci, taking an active part in this year's altered event. "In wanting DSDI to have a presence (albeit limited) at this year's bell-ringing ceremony, Lucy and her husband, Mark Tonacci, made the trip to Philadelphia from their home in Maryland. President Wolf and I look forward to working with Lucy and DSDI for years to come," Tim said.

Our Society considers DSDI as a key participant in our yearly *Let Freedom Ring*® Celebration. We also consider them a strategic partner in the planning for 2026. Joining Lucy in tapping the Liberty Bell this year were our Society's long-time member and recent centenarian Lieutenant John Edward James, Color Guard Captain Eric E. L. Guenther, Jr., Cynthia MacLeod, and myself.





Tim was also tasked with expanding the public awareness of our *Let Freedom Ring*® Celebration by inviting the news media and reinstating our nationwide bell-ringing initiative. He wrote letters to the following organizations for their bells to be rung throughout the land at 2:00 p.m. on July 4th:

Government:

- National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)
- United States Coast Guard
- United States Department of the Air Force
- United States Department of the Army
- United States Department of the Interior
- United States Department of the Navy
- United States Merchant Marine Academy
- United States National Guard Bureau
- Admiral Michael Gilday (Chief of Naval Operations)

Museums:

- Battleship New Jersey (Camden)
- Independence Seaport Museum (Philadelphia)
- Museum of the American Revolution (Philadelphia)
- USS Constitution Museum (Boston)

Churches:

- Pope Francis - The Holy See (Vatican City, Italy)
- American Baptist Churches USA (Valley Forge)
- Archdiocese of Philadelphia
- Augustus Lutheran Church (Trappe)
- Christ Church (Philadelphia)
- Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church (Valley Forge)
- Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania (Norristown)
- Gloria Dei Old Swedes Episcopal Church (Philadelphia)
- Moravian Church of America (Bethlehem)
- Old North Church (Boston)
- Pennsylvania Presbyterian Synod (Camp Hill)
- The Diocese of Mid-America Anglican Province of America (San Antonio)
- United Church of Christ (Cleveland)
- Washington Memorial Chapel (Valley Forge)
- Washington National Cathedral (Washington DC)
- Zion's Reformed United Church of Christ (Allentown)



L-R: Will Forbes, Andrew McReynolds, Lt. John Edward James, Ben Ramsay Wolf, Eric Edward L. Guenther, Jr., and Tim B. Hennessey.

We wish to thank Tim for his dedicated endeavoring to raise awareness of LFR across the country and internationally. I have every expectation that this list will grow exponentially in the coming years.

—*photos and text submitted by Ben Ramsay Wolf, Tim Hennessey, and Fred Stein*

The Growing Uses of the GSSR Medallions

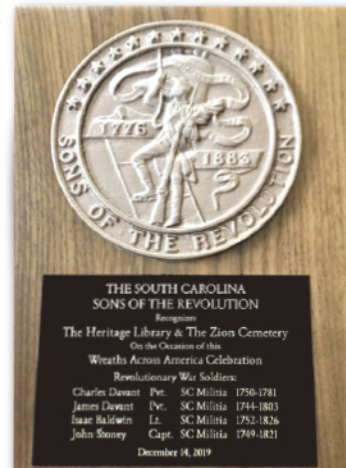


The GSSR medallion at Fort Thicketty, SC.

Members who want to show support for the General Society and wish to further promote the name of the Sons of the Revolution are turning to more creative uses of the GSSR grave marker medallions. Earlier this year, for example, the South Carolina Society gifted a medallion to the City of Gaffney, S.C., and the Cherokee [County] Historical and Preservation Society on July 25th, during the 240th Anniversary of the Taking of Fort Thicketty (see related story, page 21).

The accompanying photo, left, shows an aluminum medallion temporarily hung on the casing of the fort's entryway. Region 3 General Vice President Ivan Bennett says the aluminum version will soon be replaced by the sturdier bronze medallion to be fixed permanently at the fort. In addition to the medallion at Fort Thicketty, late last year the South Carolina Society presented the Heritage Library on Hilton Head

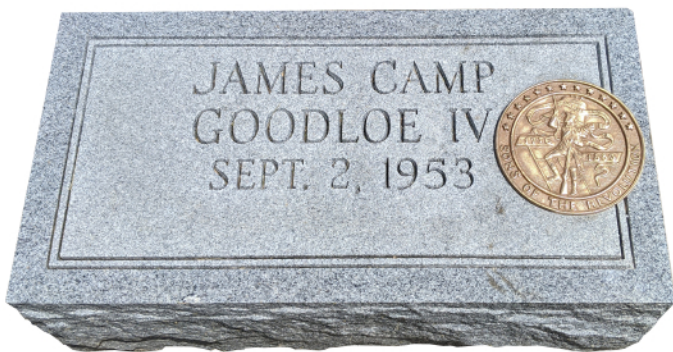
Island with a plaque featuring an aluminum medallion. The plaque recognizes four Patriot militiamen buried in the library's Zion Cemetery.



The SCSR plaque presented to Heritage Library, Hilton Head Island.

Marking Headstones

Elsewhere, the medallions are being used to mark SR member headstones as well. Most recently, VSSR member James C. Goodloe, IV, Ph.D., installed a medallion on his own headstone in a Richmond cemetery. Of course, one detail still awaits to be added! The first instance of a medallion purchased to mark the grave of an SR member was in 2019, when General President Emeritus Mitchell Bush and his wife, Leslie, bought and installed a medallion on her father's headstone after his decease. Edgar M. Burkett had been a long-time SR member.



Yet, the most traditional use of the GSSR medallion has been for marking the gravesites of our own patriot-ancestors. The ceremonies themselves can also enhance a State Society's visibility. Such a ceremony would be a wonderful opportunity for a Society Color Guard to be present and display colors, but it is not mandatory. The ceremonies may also be done in conjunction with other hereditary societies. Always, the presence of descendants and the cooperation of the cemetery or private land owner need to be pre-arranged.

Grave marking ceremonies are one of the more visible events that promote the Society and honor our ancestors.

The process is straightforward, and for guidance the General Society has a booklet for sale entitled, "Prayer Book Memorial Service and Grave Marking Ceremony."

The booklet contains an outline of the ceremony and a script for the participants. Cost is a modest \$5.00, plus shipping and handling.



The markers can be ordered by visiting the NCSR website, www.nc-sor.org, and clicking on the Tickets/Shop tab to download an order form.

The ceremony booklet can be ordered by visiting the GSSR website at www.sr1776.org/ and clicking on the Merchandise link.

ANNUAL GIVING CAMPAIGN

"It should be the highest ambition of every American to extend his views beyond himself, and to bear in mind that his conduct will not only affect himself, his country, and his immediate posterity; but that its influence may be co-extensive with the world, and stamp political happiness or misery on ages yet unborn."

—George Washington, to the Pennsylvania Legislature 12 September 1789

THE GENERAL SOCIETY SONS OF THE REVOLUTION INTRODUCES:

THE "SOCIETY OF '83"

How do you become a member of the Society of '83?

By giving \$1,000, \$10,000 or \$20,000



\$1,000 - \$9,999*

Membership in the Society of '83 signified by a buff-colored rosette jacket to be worn around your Society rosette.



\$10,000 - \$19,999 (Captain Level)*

Membership in the Society of '83 signified by a blue rosette jacket.



\$20,000 or more (General Level)*

Membership in the Society of '83 signified by a gold rosette jacket.
You will also be recognized in the Drumbeat.

What will your gift accomplish?

Aside from helping meet the day-to-day operating costs of the General Society, your gift could be used to fund one or more of the following projects::

- Creation of a Revolutionary War media app intended for school students.
- Creation and distribution of Revolutionary War educational programs to schools.
 - Promotion of scholarship through speakers, publications and awards.
- Implementation of a more active website with regular updates of content, links to important events, a Revolutionary War calendar, a members-only section, etc.
- Acquisition and preservation of artifacts concerning the Revolution and our own history.
 - Provision of funds to assist State Societies with recruiting new members.
 - Provision of funds to start new State Societies where we are not currently represented.
- Provision of funds for GSSR Society Regional Vice Presidents and other GSSR Society General Officers to travel to the various State Societies to bring all of our members closer and encourage them to be more involved.

What sort of gifts can you make? The General Society can accept gifts in any number of forms, including:

**Cash/checks • Appreciated securities • Life insurance
Real estate • Distributions from IRAs and other retirement accounts**

**The amounts do not have to be given in one year to qualify you for the Society of '83. They may be given over a period of up to ten years. For example, if you pledge to give \$1,000 to the Society each year for the next ten years (a total gift of \$10,000), you would qualify for the Captain level and would receive the blue rosette jacket.*

To recognize recent generous gifts, membership in the Society of '83 will be recognized retroactively. All of your donations to the annual campaign since July 1, 2015, will count towards your total donations to determine your gifting level.

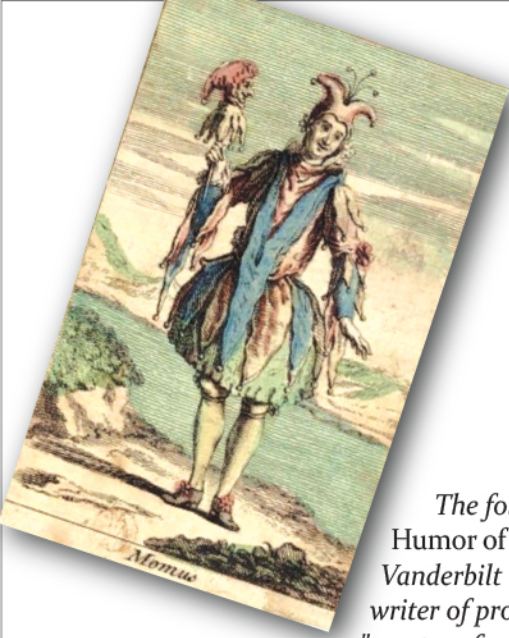
Please do not forget to inquire whether your employer matches charitable gifts. The General Society qualifies for support from most companies.

The General Society is a 501(c)(3) organization. Gifts to the General Society are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

THE “SOCIETY OF ‘83” 2018-20 DONORS



<i>Charles D. Carroll</i>	<i>EU</i>	<i>\$29,000</i>
<i>Ivan Bennett</i>	<i>SC</i>	<i>\$3,000</i>
<i>John M. Daniel</i>	<i>VA</i>	<i>\$2,000</i>
<i>Lanny R. Patten</i>	<i>PA</i>	<i>\$2,000</i>
<i>Allen James</i>	<i>NC</i>	<i>\$1,500</i>
<i>Peter J. Gulden, III, Esq</i>	<i>FL</i>	<i>\$1,150</i>
<i>Charles J. Scammell</i>	<i>NJ</i>	<i>\$1,100</i>
<i>T. Jeffery Clarke</i>	<i>NJ</i>	<i>\$1,020</i>
<i>Mitchell Bush</i>	<i>GA</i>	<i>\$1,000</i>
<i>Roger Coursey</i>	<i>GA</i>	<i>\$1,000</i>
<i>David Dickey, Esq</i>	<i>GA</i>	<i>\$1,000</i>
<i>James F. Foster</i>	<i>MN</i>	<i>\$1,000</i>
<i>Mark Jacobowski</i>	<i>VA</i>	<i>\$1,000</i>
<i>Larry Leslie, Sr, MD</i>	<i>KY</i>	<i>\$1,000</i>
<i>J. Robert Lunney</i>	<i>NY</i>	<i>\$1,000</i>
<i>Bev Mauck</i>	<i>VA</i>	<i>\$1,000</i>
<i>William D. Parmalee</i>	<i>FL</i>	<i>\$1,000</i>
<i>Laurence S. Simpson, DDS</i>	<i>NY</i>	<i>\$1,000</i>
<i>Jimmy Smith</i>	<i>GA</i>	<i>\$1,000</i>
<i>Total Gifts Since Inception (as of 8-20-2020)</i>		<i>\$51,770.00</i>



The Wit & Humor of Early America (1607-1800)

By Carl Holliday

The following text is taken from a 1912 book on early American humor entitled, The Wit & Humor of Colonial Days (1607-1800). The author, Carl Holliday, was a professor of English at Vanderbilt University in the early twentieth century. He was equally gifted as an editor, a poet, a writer of prose, and a literature instructor. The Atlanta Journal newspaper (1883-1950) called him a "master of words."

Who cracked the first joke in America? The early records do not state. We are not even quite sure as to the first American who tried to be funny on paper. Of course, some of the very earliest colonists in both Virginia and New England wrote humorous and sarcastic accounts back home, and the ludicrous situations portrayed in these are not lost upon us of a later date.

One might call to mind John Pory of the Jamestown settlement, whose letters to the "home folks" were quaintly witty; Francis Higginson, sturdy old New Englander, in his "True Eelation" (1629) and his "New England Plantations" (1629) sometimes came dangerously near joking.

Some students of American literature would say that William Wood of Massachusetts, by his sprightly "New England's Prospect" (1634), deserves the place as first of the numerous fathers of American humor. But the first man to do it with malice aforethought and with the intention of publishing also, seems to have been the New England preacher Nathaniel Ward (1578-1652)...

The first efforts of the Virginia colony were so full of disaster and sorrow, and the founders of the New England provinces were so impressed with the seriousness of life, that the gay and ridiculous phases of existence received but little public recognition.



Mather Byles, Sr.

Mather Byles, Sr.

.....There were once in eighteenth century Boston-town two witty rhymesters who caused more merriment in that staid city than all the other townsmen together. They were named Mather Byles and Joseph Green. Both were brilliant speakers, profound scholars, and stern-faced Christians—on Sunday. During the remainder of the week, they were such chronic jokers that of [Byles] it was written:

‘There’s punning Byles provokes our smiles,
A man of stately parts,
He visits folks to crack his jokes,
Which never mend their hearts.
With strutting gait and wig so great,
He walks along the streets;
And throws out wit, or what is like it,
To every one he meets.’

Byles was born in at Boston in 1706. Educated at Harvard, he became the pastor of Hollis Street Church in his native city in 1733, and there entered into a career which became a part of the very woof and fibre of Boston. For forty-three years he preached sermons..., and for forty-three years he cracked jokes calculated to upset the gravity of the most long-faced Puritan.

Then at length came a blow that would have crushed a less stalwart spirit. The American Revolution was at hand;

Byles declared in favor of Great Britain; and he poured salt on Yankee wounds by praying in public for the health and prosperity of His Majesty King George III! But a day of retribution was coming.

In 1777, he was tried in a Boston court for praying, thus demonstrating his support for the other side. He was sentenced to imprisonment in a guard-ship and to be deported (exiled) to England. Later his sentence was reduced to imprisonment within his own premises.

One day, having sent his guard on an errand, he amused a great crowd of Bostonians by gravely marching, [with] gun in hand, back and forward before his own door, keeping guard over himself! Later the watch man was removed, but within a short time was replaced, and then again removed. The doctor smilingly remarked that he had been “guarded, re-guarded, and dis-reguarded.”

Following the Revolution, Mathers was released of his imprisonment but never resumed his pastorate. Still, his humor never let up. He called the sentry stationed outside his house the “Observe-a-Tory.” He is also known for having asked, “Which is better—to be ruled by one tyrant three thousand miles away, or by three thousand tyrants one mile away?”

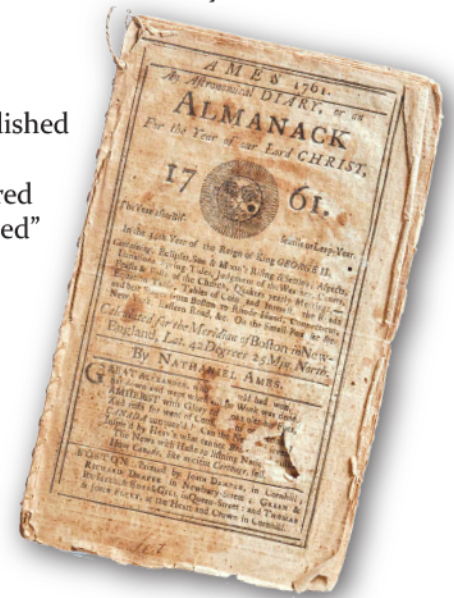
Nathaniel Ames

Numerous writers have said that Ben Franklin was the first man ever to have published an almanac in America filled with information, wit, and philosophy; but eight years before the publication of Poor Richard’s Almanack, Nathaniel Ames had well prepared readers for Franklin’s gift. Before the public received “A Penny Saved is a Penny Earned” and other morsels of Franklin’s wisdom, Ames’s *Astronomical Diary and Almanack* (1725-1775) had prepared the way with the following quips:

- “He that lives by fraud is in danger of dying a knave.”
- “This cold, uncomfortable weather makes Jack and Gill lie close together.”
- “If you fall into misfortunes, creep through those bushes which have the least briars.”
- “The lawyers tongues they never freeze, if warmed with honest clients fees.”

Ames’ almanac was immensely popular throughout all New England. It contained the shrewd and tactful wisdom of a man of the world. Current events received full justice in the spare spaces between his astronomical calculations; homely advice to fops, broilers, flirts, and scamps was presented liberally; while absurd prophecies sprinkled here and there, made the rafters of many an ancient farmhouse echo laughter.

Nathaniel was only seventeen and still living at home at the time the almanac was first published. He published it for the next forty years, dying in 1764 at age fifty-five. His son took over its publication at that point. At its height, circulation of the almanac reached a reported 60,000.



Benjamin Franklin

Benjamin Franklin

One of the earliest of these American [humorist] was that genial... philosopher, scientist, statesman, editor, and common-sense man, Benjamin Franklin. The jokes and shrewd sayings attributed to this prince of good fellows would fill a bulky volume. Gradually there has gathered about him a host of tales until in truth he has become at length the central figure in a lengthy myth or comic epic.

He had a witty saying ready for every occasion. We all remember how neatly and yet how significantly he answered the member of the Colonial Congress who declared they would all have to hang together. “Yes,” rejoined Franklin, “or verily we shall hang separately!”

Thomas Jefferson, in his biographical sketches, tells how Franklin, in noticing [the former’s] sensitiveness over the mutilation of the Declaration of Independence, tried to comfort him by a little story:

“When I was a journeyman printer, one of my companions, an apprentice hatter, having served out his time, was about to open shop for himself. His first concern was to have a handsome sign-board, with a proper inscription. He composed it in these words, ‘John Thompson, Hatter, makes and sells hats for ready money,’ with a figure of a hat subjoined. He thought he would submit it to his friends for their amendments.

“The first he showed it to thought the word ‘Hatter’ tautologous because [it was] followed by the words ‘makes hats,’ which showed he was a hatter. Therefore, ‘Hatter’ was struck out.

“The next friend observed that the word ‘makes’ might as well be omitted, because his customers would not care who made the hats. If good, to their minds, they would buy them by whomsoever made them. Thus, he struck it out.

“A third thought the words, ‘for ready money,’ were useless, as it was not the custom of the place to sell on credit. So, in like fashion, they were parted with.

“The inscription now stood at, ‘John Thompson sells hats.’

“‘Sells hats!’ says his next friend. ‘Why, nobody will expect you to give them away; what then is the use of that word?’ It was stricken out.

“The inscription was reduced ultimately to, ‘John Thompson,’ with the figure of a hat subjoined.”

Jefferson’s heated temper was cooled considerably by the narrative. [Franklin] saw life clearly and did not attempt to evade its plain teachings. His advice, while often eccentric in appearance, was always sane.

During Revolutionary War

In times of war we may, of course, expect scornful sarcasm and biting satire; and, therefore, as we approach the prolonged struggle of the American Revolution, we find the American sense of the ludicrous becoming more and more alert. The colonist becomes eager to discern the weakness of his enemy, to discover all of that enemy’s predicaments, and to set them with taunting laughter before the world. Many were the satirical “take-offs” of the day.

Franklin himself found the time to scribe three cunningly phrased and bitterly satirical sketches which demonstrate the injustice of the British position facing the colonies. These were his *Rules for Reducing a Great Empire to a Small one* (1773), *An Edict by the King of Prussia* (1773), and a *Letter of Instructions from the Count de Schaumbergh to the Baron Hohendorf* commanding the Hessian troops in America (1777).

Alas, Franklin was not alone. In 1740, for instance, three Georgia patriots of Scotch-Irish blood, Patrick Tailfer, Hugh Anderson, and David Douglas, issued against Gov. Oglethorpe a bitter tirade entitled, *A True and Historical Narrative of Georgia*. In it was sarcasm enough for any man, even for the greedy Oglethorpe himself.

Under the first flush of war, satires appeared in practically every newspaper in the colonies. A widely circulated ballad was published soon after the Battle of Lexington/Concord. It was supposedly written by a Yankee-Irishman, entitled, *An Address to the Troops in Boston*:

“By me faith, but I think ye re all makers of bulls,
Wid your brains in your breeches, your guts in your skulls!
Get home wid your muskets, and put up your swords,
And look in your books for the meaning of words:
Ye see now, me honeys, how much ye’re mistaken,
For Concord by discord can never be baten!

“How brave ye wint out wid your muskets all bright,
And thought to befrighten the folks wid the sight ;
But whin ye got there, how they powder’d your pums,
And all the way home how they pepper’d your ____.

“And is it not, honeys, a comical crack,
To be proud in the face, and be shot in the back?
And what have ye got now, wid all your designin ,
But a town without victuals to sit down and dine in.”



Drum and Fife



Jonathan Odell

The Tory Viewpoint

The champions of satire for the patriots were undoubtedly Francis Hopkinson, Philip Freneau, and John Trumbull, the latter being a popular member of the "Hartford Wits." Lest patriot sympathizers assume otherwise, there were plenty of Loyalist pamphlets circulating in the likes of Boston, Philadelphia, and New York. On the Tory side, the leaders in the merry battle were undoubtedly Jonathan Odell and Joseph Stansbury.

Whether the following verse came from Odell, Stansbury or some of Loyalist bent, it seems fitting to end this treatise on Revolutionary-era humor with a look at what some thought of our Congress. It seems applicable enough to both long ago and just last week:

The Congress (written in 1776)

"These hardy knaves and stupid fools,
Some apish and pragmatic mules,
Some servile acquiescing tools,
These, these compose the Congress!

"When Jove resolved to send a curse,
And all the woes of life rehearse,
Not plague, not famine, but much worse
He cursed us with a Congress.

"Good Lord! disperse this venal tribe;
Their doctrine let no fools imbibe
Let Balaam no more asses ride,
Nor burdens bear to Congress.

"Old Catline, and Cromwell, too,
Jack Cade, and his seditious crew,
Hail brother-rebel at first view,
And hope to meet the Congress."



State Reports

FLORIDA

Washington's Birthday Celebration

The Palm Beach Chapter of the Sons of the Revolution in the State of Florida gathered with friends and guests to celebrate Washington's Birthday on Saturday evening, February 22nd. This year the celebration included an essay contest for the students of Oxbridge Academy in West Palm Beach. The essay was on "The Unknown General Washington," and we received 107 essays, with many being very good. Our chosen winner, Garbriella Ramsey, wrote an outstanding essay entitled, "Vaccinating an Army - General Washington's Last Shot to Save His Troops from Smallpox." She received her award at the celebration, right, from Chapter President Joseph McChristian, Jr.—*submitted by Chapter 1st Vice President Bill Richards*





Remembering Button Gwinnett

On July 4th this year, members of the Sons of the Revolution in the State of Georgia joined representatives of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution in laying wreaths before the Button Gwinnett monument in Colonial Park Cemetery, Savannah. Three local chapters of the DAR (Bonaventure, Lachlan McIntosh and the Savannah) take turns in organizing the annual event.

This year, the Edward Telfair Chapter of the SAR also participated. The colors were presented by Post 7 of the Scottish American Military Society. Music was provided by the 13th Colony Barbershop Quartet.

In Georgia, the Fourth of July recalls the state's signers of the Declaration of Independence. They were: Lyman Hall, George Walton, and Button Gwinnett. The latter, Mr. Gwinnett, became a leader in the colony's early politics. He served in Georgia's colonial legislature, in the Second Continental Congress, and as president of Georgia's Revolutionary Council of Safety. He developed an intense rivalry with



PATCH.COM

Button Gwinnett monument in Colonial Park Cemetery, Savannah

Lachlan McIntosh, another political leader and commander of the Georgia militia. On May 16, 1777, Gwinnett and McIntosh held a duel outside of Savannah. Both men were injured, but Gwinnett died of his wounds three days later at the age of 42.

McIntosh survived his wounds and lived until 1806, serving his state in many significant ways. He became a Major-General in the Continental Army, was welcomed into the Society of the Cincinnati, and later elected to Congress. Each man has a county in Georgia named for him.—*photo and text submitted by Brig. Gen. Steven Westgate*



L to R: Jimmy Smith, Brig. Gen. Steve Westgate, Frank Hardeman, and Paul Lester



Board Meeting & Officer Elections

The Michigan Society of Sons of the Revolution, like many others, has felt the burden of the pandemic this year. Several scheduled events for 2020 have been postponed, including a statewide patriotic society barbecue proposed by Society President Geoff Hickok. The board of managers met on July 25th and heard brief officer reports and approved a slate of new Society officers for 2020-21. The approved slate includes:

President: Geoffrey Alan Hickok
Vice President: LTC (Ret.) Max Rieske
Secretary: James B. Pahl, Esq.
Treasurer: Keith Harrison
Registrar: Steven Martin
Chaplain: Ronald G. Shull
Historian: Geoffrey Alan Hickok
CAR Rep.: Richard Rieske
GSSR Rep.: LTC (Ret.) Max Rieske
Captain of the Color Guard – vacant

Board of Managers:

Jack Haines
Gary Thomas
Gary Gibson
Ronald G. Shull
Hon. Donald Johnston III, Esq.
David Miller
James B. Pahl, Esq.

*Text compiled from
MISR Skirmisher newsletter, Vol. 2, No. 4*



Casual Potluck in St. Louis

Members of the Missouri Society convened at MOSR President Sumner Hunnewell's home on August 15th and "got their German on," as the St. Louis area is heavily influenced by German culture. Sumner and his wife, Sylvia, invited members and their guests into their home to share an evening of fellowship, German fare, and good beer. The evening's purpose was to break out of the pandemic doldrums and to swear in two new members, Arthur Charles Hiemenz and James Jefferson Long.

President Hunnewell presented Messrs. Hiemenz and Long with their membership certificates. He also presented MOSR Past President Rick Strelinger with a Past President's Star, which was gratefully received.

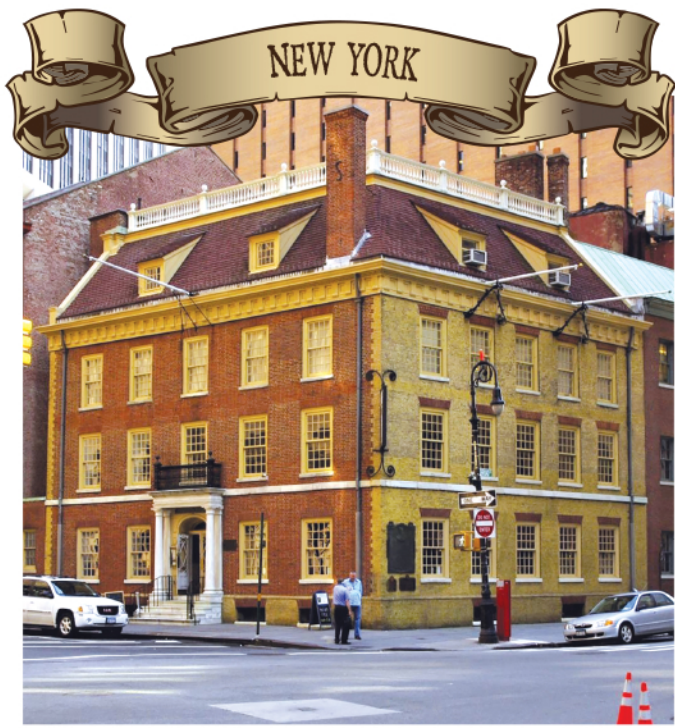
Mr. Strelinger and his wife, Peggy, stopped by for a short visit early on.

Rick resigned his position earlier in the year due to ongoing health concerns, and his son, Richard, Jr., also tendered his resignation as Treasurer. The MOSR thanks both Rick and Richard for their leadership and untiring dedication. Vice President Hunnewell became President and appointed David W. Swafford as Vice President and James Osbourn as Treasurer. Both men had served in those positions previously.

In later developments, the Society began publishing a new newsletter, *The Circular*, which is available to any SR member on request. Nominations are underway for the Missouri Society's Historic Preservation Award, which will be presented later in the year.—text and photo submitted by President Sumner Hunnewell.



L-R: New members Arthur Charles Hiemenz and James Jefferson Long.



Fraunces Tavern® Restaurant Reopens

On Saturday, August 1, 2020, Fraunces Tavern® Restaurant reopened to the public for the first time since March 2020, with outdoor dining along Pearl Street under our historic facade. The restaurant is operated by a tenant of Sons of the Revolution in the State of New York, Inc., which owns the five historic buildings comprising the Fraunces Tavern® Museum Complex.

Fraunces Tavern Restaurant has advised that it will be following strict CDC guidelines (including mandatory face coverings for staff), regularly and thoroughly disinfecting surfaces, and implementing social distancing measures. Your patronage of our tenant, Fraunces Tavern Restaurant, helps support the Sons of the Revolution in the State of New York and the Fraunces Tavern Museum. Although we cannot yet reopen our Museum to the public, we



Portrait of Samuel Fraunces (circa 1770-85).

hope you will consider a visit to Fraunces Tavern Restaurant if you find yourself in the area or are looking for an enjoyable socially distanced outing. Visit <https://frauncestavern.com/>

Fraunces Tavern® Museum Online

Fraunces Tavern® Museum has been busy creating new digital content to help keep you informed and entertained while at home. You can read about George Washington and the Continental Army's brush with smallpox, or explore a timeline of New York City in the summer of 1776 on our blog. Listen to the new Fraunces Tavern Museum podcast "Tavern Talks," or check out the archives of our Evening Lecture series, among other things. We are also hosting virtual lectures which you may join from wherever you are around the globe. Follow Fraunces Tavern on social media or sign up for our newsletter to receive updates. Visit <https://www.frauncestavernmuseum.org/>



Flag Day Parade & Celebration

While we were unable to host a Flag Day Parade and Celebration this year due to the pandemic, the SRNY released a statement and a short video to commemorate the occasion. You may view both on our website, www.sonsoftherevolution.org/2020/06/09/flag-day-2020/. You can read the statement from the SRNY as well as a message from Mayor Bill DeBlasio, and view photos of Flag Days past while anticipating next year's celebration.

Knox Trophy and Gustavus Conyngham Awards

Although the USMA and USMMA graduation ceremonies at which we normally present these awards looked a little different this year, we would like to announce and give our congratulations to the recipients of the 2020 Knox Trophy and 2020 Gustavus Conyngham Award. This year's Knox Trophy was awarded to 2nd Lt. Daine A. Van De Wall, who was the First Captain and Brigade Commander for the Corp of Cadets 2019-2020, and a Rhodes Scholar. The Knox Trophy is the oldest military award given at West Point, and honors the highest-rated cadet in the Military Program.

Since 1999, the Society has given out the Gustavus Conyngham Award at the Kings Point Merchant Marine Academy to the graduating midshipman with the highest rating in seamanship who is continuing to sail after graduation. This year's award went to William Rayl Scott, who graduated Magna Cum Laude as a Logistics and Intermodal Transportation Major.



WESTPOINT.EDU

Knox Trophy Winner, 2nd Lt. Van de Wall.

Fraunces Tavern® Museum

Fraunces Tavern® has persevered through New York City's many challenging events, from the British occupation during the American Revolutionary War to Hurricane Sandy. Our prolonged closure due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, however, threatens the future of both Fraunces Tavern® Museum and Fraunces Tavern® Restaurant.

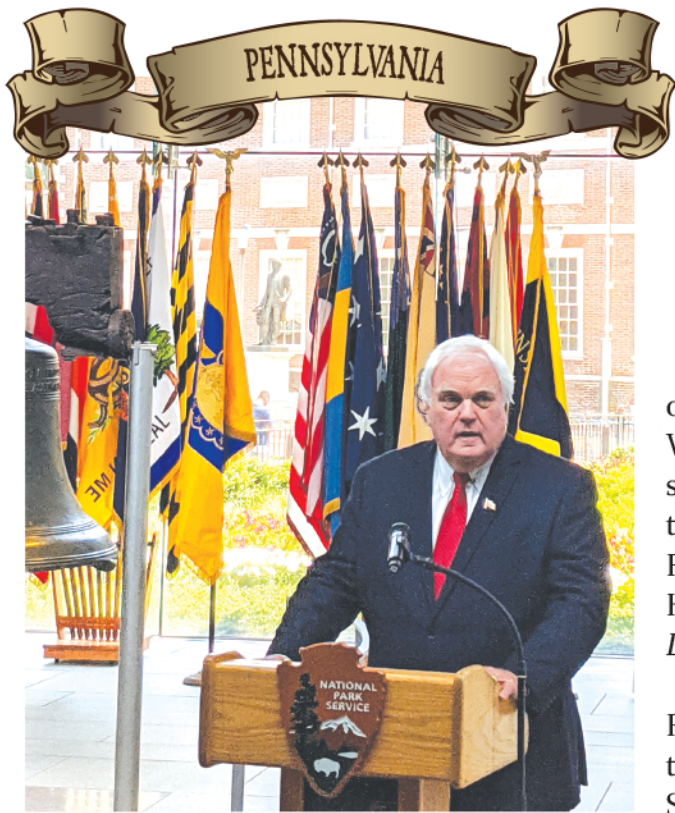
While the Restaurant is again open, the Museum has been closed since March 16th. The financial impact has been immediate and catastrophic.

Most cultural institutions around New York City are grappling with this new reality, and we are working alongside them to save our institutions. Our collective institutional body acknowledges and appreciates the impossible position the coronavirus has put the entire city in, and the sacrifices that people have had and will continue to make in the future. The dedicated professionals who maintain the Museum and the Restaurant, as well as the Board of Managers of Sons of the Revolution in the State of New York, Inc., have been working with elected city, state and Federal public officials to identify, assess, and attain any and all public and private sources of funds to support our continued operations.

Please continue to advocate on our behalf to your elected officials for funding for museums and the restaurant industry in response to COVID-19. Realistically, however, the loans and grants available to us are unlikely to provide more than very modest assistance. Furthermore, because the Museum and Restaurant are in a unique coordinated business relationship, many of the proposed legislative measures to provide financial relief unfortunately do not easily apply to a joint museum-and-restaurant operation. We are seeking a replacement for lost income as a result of the government-ordered emergency closings. If you can provide additional funds or resources to us, or suggest ways we can be of continued service to you during this difficult time, we would be most grateful. —text submitted by Colyn Hunt, SRNY Events & Membership Manager. Photos courtesy SRNY, unless noted otherwise.

The 'Let Freedom Ring' Commemorative License Plate

By Ben Ramsay Wolf
President, Pennsylvania Society



PN State Rep. Tim F. Hennessey introduces the Semiquincentennial Registration plate during Let Freedom Ring®.

It took a year and a half in the making, but a commemorative license plate which I envisioned during our 2019 Washington Birthday Ball has come to fruition. What started as just a “what-if” pipedream has become a reality, thanks to the steadfast efforts of State Representative Tim F. Hennessey, Majority Chairman of the Pennsylvania House Transportation Committee and the father of our *Let Freedom Ring*® Committee Chair Tim B. Hennessey.

A conceptual rendering of the new tag was unveiled by Rep. Hennessey at this year’s *Let Freedom Ring*® Celebration. The plate commemorates our nation’s upcoming Semiquincentennial (250th anniversary), in 2026.

Rep. Hennessey introduced HB 1710 in the Pennsylvania General Assembly, convening in Harrisburg, and gained a bipartisan list of co-sponsors before the bill was

referred to the House Transportation Committee, which he chairs. The bill, which he wrote, authorized the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation to create the special-issue license plate.

Rep. Hennessey shepherded the bill’s passage through various committees, the House on two occasions, as well as the Senate. It encountered some delay in the Senate, but Governor Tom Wolf was able to sign the bill into law on July 1, 2020. It became Act 48 of 2020.

A concept design of the plate was unveiled at the *Let Freedom Ring*® Celebration at the Liberty Bell this July 4th. The design was well-received by those in attendance and online. The Pennsylvania

Department of Transportation, however, will finalize a design early this fall. The plate will cost \$50 above current registration fees and is expected to be available by this Thanksgiving. No proceeds from the sale will go to the PSSR; all money raised will bolster PennDOT’s virus-depleted coffers. —text and photos submitted by Ben Ramsay Wolf, Tim Hennessey, and Fred Stein



A conceptual rendering of the Let Freedom Ring Pennsylvania license plate for 2026.



RISR President Col. Roy D. Lauth, Sr. leads the public recognition of Washington's Birthday. Photos courtesy of RISR

Washington's Birthday Celebration

On Saturday, February 22nd, the Rhode Island Society of Sons of the Revolution along with the Artillery Company of Newport gathered on the grounds of Redwood Library and Athenaeum to publicly celebrate the Commander-in-Chief's 287th birthday. Approximately 100 people attended the ceremony, according to press reports.

Col. Ronald Barnes, 1st Vice President, RISR, gave a brief history of the life of George Washington, which was followed by a wreath-laying at the Houdon statue of George Washington outside the Library's entrance by RISR President Col. Roy D. Lauth, Sr., and Daniel Prentiss, president of the board of the Redwood Library and Athenaeum. President Lauth then gave a reading of Washington's Prayer for the Nation. The event was concluded with a musket salute by the Artillery Company of Newport.—*Editor*



Wreaths laid at the foot of the Houdon statue of George Washington, just outside the Redwood Library and Athenaeum.

George Washington's Prayer for his Country
Taken from his "Circular Letter Addressed to the Governors of all the States on the Disbanding of the Army, June 14, 1783"

I NOW MAKE IT MY EARNEST PRAYER that God would have you, and the State over which you preside, in his holy protection; that he would incline the hearts of the citizens to cultivate a Spirit of Subordination and obedience to government, to entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another, for their fellow-citizens of the United States at large, and particularly for brethren who have served in the field; and finally that he would most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility, and pacific temper of mind, which were the characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion, and without an humble imitation of whose example in these things, we can never hope to be a happy nation.

Geo Washington



Fort Thicketty's Historical Significance

Members of the South Carolina Society on July 25th met in the City of Gaffney to celebrate Liberation Day at Fort Thicketty. The SCSR co-sponsored the event along with the City of Gaffney, the Cherokee [County] Historical & Preservation Society (CHAPS), and the Overmountain Victory Trail Association (OVTA). As for this year's event in the midst of pandemic concerns, Region 3 General Vice President Ivan Bennett said the ceremony was purposefully kept small, short, and sweet. "It can be done!" he emphasized.

Fort Thicketty is located about halfway between Kings Mountain and Cowpens, two major battle sites of the Revolutionary War. The only remnant still standing is a large cabin or blockhouse, which the British built for protection against Indian attacks. The original square-hewn pine logs are still intact and are indicative of

the size of the trees in the area at the time of its construction. In 2014, CHAPS acquired the remains of the fort for historical preservation purposes.

In July of 1780, the structure was occupied by ninety-three Tory troops under the command of Capt. Patrick Moore and a British Sergeant-Major. As word of their actions against local women and children spread, 600 men under the command of Colonels Shelby, Clarke, and Hampton marched to the fortress and, on July 30th, forced the surrender of the garrison without a single shot being fired.

SCSR President Tom Weidner says the fort's trading hands impacted history. When Lord Cornwallis heard about the loss of the fort, he dispatched Maj. Patrick Ferguson with a large force to pursue the rebel militia westward. It led to the Patriot victory at Kings Mountain, which rallied the entire backcountry and precluded another overwhelming Patriot victory at Cowpens. These two victories forced Cornwallis to abandon South Carolina and move his army northward, ultimately ending up trapped at Yorktown, Virginia, where he was forced to surrender.

The SCSR began observing the historical importance of Fort Thicketty three years ago. The site is currently undergoing stabilization which will be followed by archaeological investigation and restoration for historic interpretation. – Editor



The remains of the blockhouse at Fort Thicketty, in Gaffney, S.C. Efforts are underway to restore the site for preservation purposes.

VIRTUALLY THERE ART & PHOTOGRAPHY



L-R: Mrs. Ann Hicks Patton with Kayla Koper, graduate of Anderson County High School.



The TSSOR has adopted social distancing and face-masking into living history events. L-R: Dennis Eggert, John Cooper, Christina Jones, Bob Jones, Harry Bumgardner, Steve Portwood, and Jerry Cox.

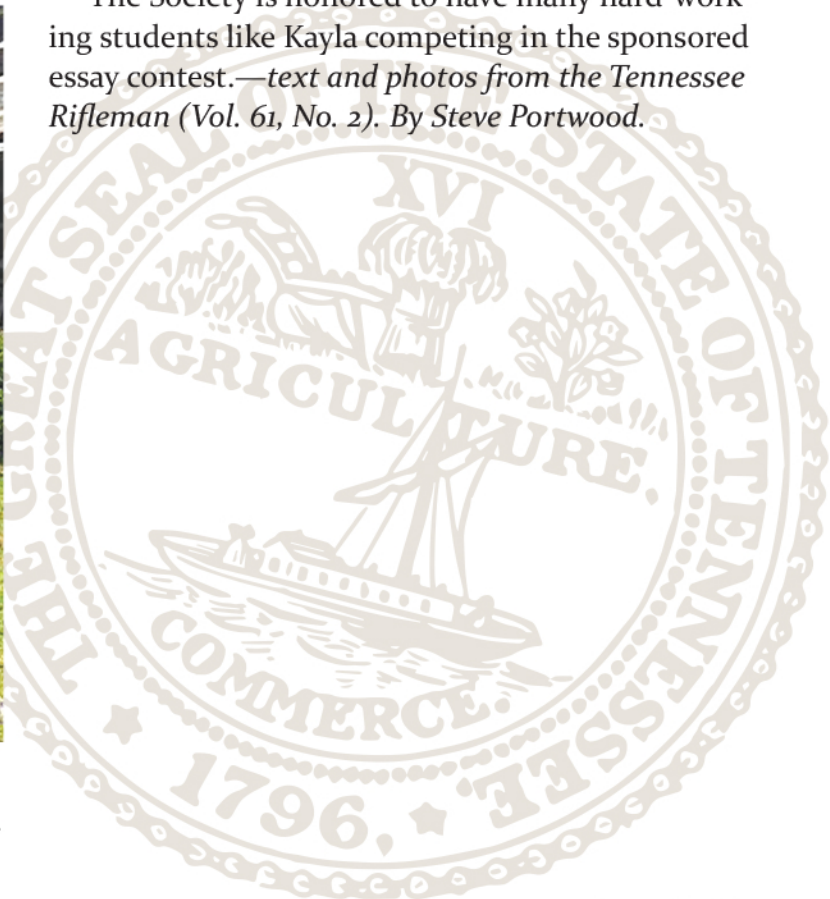
TSSOR Awards Scholarship

Earlier in the year, high school senior Kalya Koper of Anderson County High School was awarded the 2020 Harry Patton Memorial Scholarship by the Tennessee Society. The fund was established in the memory of long-time TSSOR member Harry Patton, of Clinton, Tennessee, who passed away in April 2018.

The gift included a plaque and a \$500 check in recognition of her essay, “Why Should the National Motto ‘IN GOD WE TRUST’ be Supported Nationwide?” Kayla plans to begin her education at Roane State Community College and will then transfer to the University of Tennessee to major in Social Robotics. Her goal is to help physically disabled individuals use technology to assist them in their daily routines.

After being awarded the scholarship, Kayla wrote a thank-you note to Mrs. Ann Hicks Patton, Harry’s wife of 63 years. “Thank you for awarding me this scholarship. I am most grateful for your generous funds [that] will enable me to better reach academic success. I want to let you know that I will make the most of this opportunity, and hopefully someday carry on such a kindness by providing a similar opportunity to a hardworking student...”

The Society is honored to have many hard-working students like Kayla competing in the sponsored essay contest.—text and photos from the *Tennessee Rifleman* (Vol. 61, No. 2). By Steve Portwood.



Patriot Chronicles

Patriot Men of Color in the Revolution

By Marion T. Lane, Ed.D.

As the daughter of this year's Let Freedom Ring® honorary bell-tapper Lt. John Edward James, Jr. (see page 4), the author is one of few African-American members of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the National Gavel Society, and the National Society of Colonial Daughters of the 17th Century. Furthermore, Dr. Lane served as the National President of the Society of Descendants of Washington's Army at Valley Forge (2010-2014).

Additionally, the retired educator was a Board member of the Friends Alliance of Valley Forge National Historical Park for ten years (2007-2017) and currently serves on the Board of the Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia. She was asked to write this article for the

Drumbeat about her family's patriot ancestors, who fought for the same ideals as did all American patriots.—Ed.

Unfortunately, traditional history books do not reflect the significant contributions of people of color during the American Revolution. Children do not learn about the service rendered by men of color in General Washington's forces. For the most part, they learn that people of color joined with the British Army seeking to obtain their freedom. However, this does not provide an accurate picture of the conflict.

Men of color (African-Americans and Native-Americans) joined General Washington's forces in droves. Some of them joined as free enslaved but were freed to enlist. Still other enslaved men served as substitutes for their masters in the ranks. Of the slaves that served, some were then freed afterwards while others, shamefully, were not.

In what capacity did they render service? They served in the infantry; they served as cavaliers; as sailors; as privateers; as fifiers; as drummers; and as waggoneers. Approximately, ten to fifteen percent of General Washington's forces were composed of

men of color, and they made a difference. In *Forgotten Patriots* (2008), published by the National Society DAR, the authors identified by name 6,600 black and indigenous Patriot soldiers that served in the war.

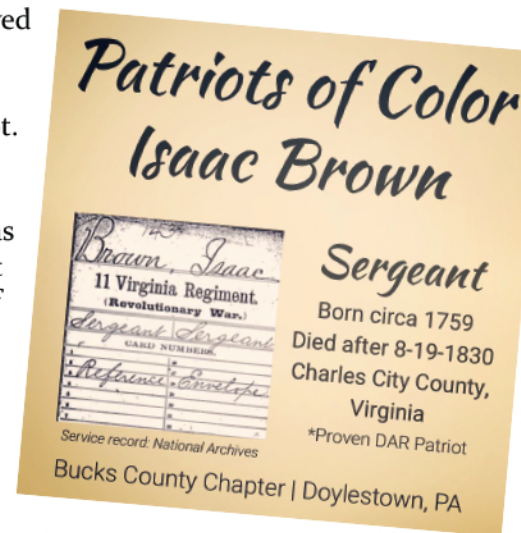
Because of their unique circumstances, the black men who served generally enlisted for the duration. The average length of service for a man of color was over four times longer than their Caucasian brethren. The normal length of service for most white patriots was between six months to one year. Then they returned to their farms and/or businesses. Perchance, they would serve again at a future date.

Yet those of African descent would purposefully serve as long as possible. It is understandable why the enslaved would do so, but even freemen like Sgt. Brown chose to serve for the duration. Free blacks lived very restricted lives. Although they were called "free," they certainly were not as free as any white person or considered equal to any white

Front cover art: top image, 'Liberty First,' by Bobb Vann; right image, 'Sixth Connecticut Regiment,' by Don Troiani; bottom image, Haitian Revolutionary War Hero Monument, Savannah, GA (image source: tripadvisor.com).

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person. They were forbidden to learn to read and write. They could not worship as they pleased. They were constantly harassed for their freedom papers, too.

In Virginia, if they married an enslaved woman, they could not free their wives or their children, unless they were prepared to leave the Commonwealth. Therefore, even freemen looked to serve the length of the war.

Men of color who fought for the Patriot cause served for layered reasons. In the first place, in many instances their families had been in the Colonies for generations, just as Caucasian families had, and this land felt like home. They had as much emotional investment in it as did the colonists of European descent. Furthermore, they believed in the promise and principles of the Declaration of Independence: that “all men are created equal.”

Whether black or white, the patriotic-minded served with a common belief and hope in the idealism of the age and in the potential of this great land. However, men of color fought not just for national independence, but for personal freedoms, too. They hoped their sacrifices would justify their equality before the law. In Virginia, Sgt. Brown and others like him hoped the Declaration’s language would serve for the removal of the “Acts Concerning Servants and Slaves of 1705.” This was the Commonwealth’s slave codes, which regulated interactions between the enslaved and the citizenry at large.

LT. JAMES’ PATRIOT

The black patriot-ancestor of PSSR member Lt. John Edward James, Jr., was his third great-grandfather, Sgt. Isaac Brown. Brown was born a freeman in Charles City County, Virginia, and served in the Virginia Line during the Revolutionary War. He was a fourth-generation resident of the Commonwealth, with his forbearers having been indentured servants.

Although the war started on April 19, 1775, men of color were not permitted to enlist in the ranks until January 1, 1777. On that very same New Year’s Day, Isaac enlisted in the Continental Line. Brown assisted in establishing American independence by serving in the 7th, 11th, and 15th Virginia Regiments.

Brown was with Washington at Valley Forge and saw action in the battles of Guilford Courthouse, the Siege of Fort Ninety-Six, and Eutaw Springs. Muster rolls prove Isaac served for the duration of the war, and he did receive the balance of his pay for service on April 5, 1783.

While he received pay, obtaining his pension was a different matter. When he applied for his pension, many years after his service, he was denied two times. On May 19, 1829, Sgt. Brown appeared in Superior Court of the State of Virginia to make a formal declaration under the Acts of Congress of March 18, 1818 and May 1, 1820—regarding pensions.

At the time, he was 69 years of age and had made several informal inquiries into the provisions of the Acts. His age was greatly felt, and as such he could no longer support himself farming. Nevertheless, the Court adjourned and found deficiencies in his declaration.

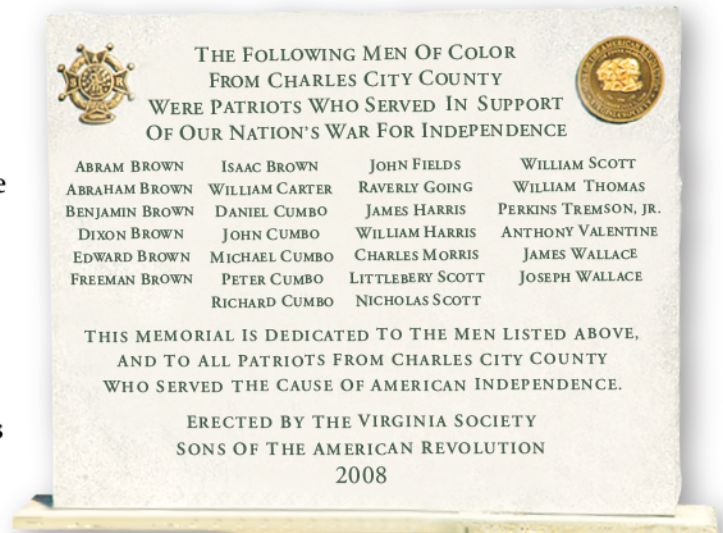
On July 16, 1829, he once again appeared in Court to make a declaration to correct the errors and deficiencies of the previous declaration, but it was to no avail. His pension was not approved until Senator John



Lt. John Edward James and his Revolutionary War patriot-ancestor Sgt. Isaac Brown both endured systemic discrimination during and after serving their country. Photo by Dr. Marion T. Lane.

Tyler, Jr., of Virginia (the future President) appealed on Brown’s behalf. Isaac was able to secure the Senator’s assistance because they were neighbors. His land abutted Greenway, the historical property of the Tyler family. John Tyler, Sr., most likely knew of the Brown family’s connection to their armorial ancestor John Browne (1312-1377) of Toletorpe Manor, England.

On July 24, 1829, Sen. Tyler submitted a letter (to a now-unidentified party) indicating that all the deficiencies which had been detailed in a previous government response concerning Isaac Brown’s application had been corrected.



Erected in 2009 at Old Elam Baptist Church, Ruthville, VA.

He asked to be informed of the revised decision as soon as possible. The Senator's intervention resulted in the issuance of the pension. When it was finally issued, July 27, 1829, someone had notated on it, "Send a copy to John Tyler."

Yet even though Isaac Brown received his pension, the compensation awarded him was only \$8 dollars per month, or \$96 per year. It was not the amount normally awarded a noncommissioned officer. Also, it only gave him credit for having served eighteen months, not the full sixty-three months he was in uniform on behalf of the United States. This was because, in all likelihood, someone had removed his declaration that he had been a Sergeant. His approved pension application made no mention of his rank.

Nevertheless, his muster roll and pay roll sheets obtained from the National Archives indicate that, indeed, he had been a Sergeant. Isaac did receive a Land Bounty Warrant. It was for 100 acres in Ohio. Written on the document was, "Claims to have been a Sergeant." Isaac remained in Virginia and never went to claim his land in Ohio.

SHIFTING ATTITUDES

Sadly, these difficulties reflect that by the time Revolutionary War veterans were being awarded their pensions, the mood of the country had changed towards the men of color who had served. Many of those men did not receive any pension at all.

In conclusion, history has shown, from the time of the Revolutionary War, men of color who have served have had to fight for their rights while in the service of the United States. Genealogy has also shown that history tends to repeat itself. In the family of Lt. John Edward James, Jr, both of these tenets are supported. In Lt. James' own case, he completed Officers Candidate School (OCS) in Fort Benning, Georgia, during World War II, but was denied his commission as Second Lieutenant following the Victory March.

He was assigned to the 242nd Quartermaster Battalion. Had he received his commission, he would have been in charge of white officers—something which at the time was not allowed. As a result, he was not allowed to serve as a Second Lieutenant, but he nonetheless went on to serve on the front lines of five campaigns (North Africa, Sicily, and all of Italy) as a Tech 5-clerk typist. After finding his OCS graduation picture many years after the war, my father filed to have his records corrected. Just as in his ancestor's case, it took two appeals and the assistance of others to correct the record. That assistance came from US Senator Robert Casey, Jr. (PA) and from General President Emeritus Curtis P. Cheyney, III, Esq. On June 29, 2018, John Edward James, Jr received his Second Lieutenant bars at 98 years of age. Pay records and morning reports found at the National Archives verified he had been in Officer Candidate School Class # 129.

This family history confirms that although injustice has occurred over the many years, we do live in a nation where injustice can be rectified.

At least fourteen additional members of our extended family assisted in the American Revolution. The other members include:

Abram Brown – believed to have been an uncle enlisted in the 3rd Virginia Regiment: deserted after 21 days. He was too old.

Benjamin Brown – drafted but later deserted

Edward Brown – served in the state militia

Freeman Brown – served in the state militia

William Brown – served on the Continental Line

Abraham Brown- twice donated beef to the Continental Line

Dixon Brown - donated one pair of stillards, shackles, for Col. Nicholas to Militia for the Continental Line

Daniel Cumbo – served in the 1st Virginia

John Cumbo – enlisted, record cannot be found

Michael Cumbo – served in the 6th Virginia

Peter Cumbo – served in the 3rd and 7th Virginia

Richard Cumbo – served in the 2nd and 6th Virginia

James Harris – served in the 1st Virginia

William Harris – served in the 6th Virginia



THE BATTLE OF YORKTOWN

In many instances, Army and Militia units were racially integrated, as not enough men of color were present to form separate companies. Integrated units with a large number of African-Americans included the 6th Connecticut, Humphrey's Company of the 3rd Connecticut, as well as the 2nd New Jersey.

However, there were three all-black units fighting against the British: the 1st Rhode Island Regiment, the Second Company of the 4th Connecticut, and the Bucks of America. The latter unit, the Bucks of America, were from Massachusetts and were under the command of Colonel George Middleton, the only black commissioned officer in the Continental Army. Massachusetts Governor John Hancock presented the unit with a silk flag toward the end of the war, which today is in the collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

A fourth all-black unit (from historical Sainte Domingue, modern Haiti) fought with Patriot allies at the Battle of Savannah in 1779. Over 500 men of color, *Les Chasseurs Volontaires*, provided cover during the retreat of Patriot forces and their allies, saving many lives by deterring a fierce counter attack by British troops.

Meanwhile, the 1st Rhode Island had been raised to shore up the colony's recruitment efforts. With great veracity in the Battle of Rhode Island (August 1778), volunteer freemen and the formerly enslaved repelled advancing Hessians on three occasions to effectively shield the retreating Continental Army led by Major General John Sullivan. Prior to the Battle of Yorktown, the 1st Rhode Island, meanwhile, was combined with the 2nd Rhode Island to become, simply, the Rhode Island Regiment or Rhode Island Continentals. Nevertheless, the men of color were still known as the 1st Rhode Island.

At Yorktown, these African-Americans showed the same veracity that they had shown earlier. A substantial number of men of color were among the 4,300 soldiers that dug the first parallel of trenches on October 6, 1781, 500 yards from the enemy. They were in the trenches again on October 15, 1781, when Lord Cornwallis manned his serious Redoubts #9 and #10—fortifications against the French and Americans.

In the victorious battle that followed, the French took Redoubt #9, and the 1st Rhode Island took Redoubt #10. The latter redoubt turned out to be the last major Patriot offensive of the war before the British surrender came. Baron Clostermann, a German officer in the French Royal Deux-Ponts Regiment, estimated that men of color comprised about one-quarter of the Continental Army fighting at Yorktown. Many of the African-Americans that valiantly served in the final battle of the Revolution faced three types of hardship there: 1) the battle itself, 2) an unbelievably high occurrence of smallpox, and 3) an eventual return to servitude.

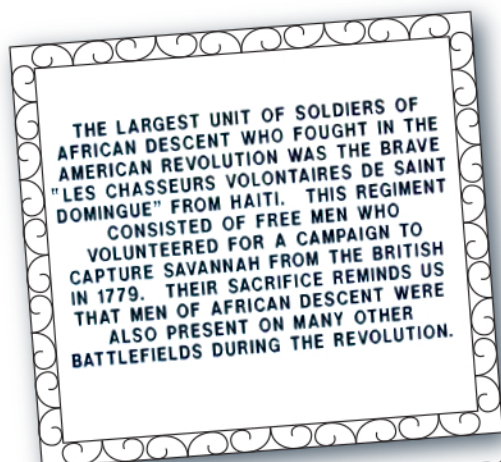


Monument to the 1st Rhode Island, Patriots Park, Portsmouth, RI.

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BATTLES *at a Glance* Battle of Red Bank

Date of Battle: Oct. 22, 1777

Location: Fort Mercer, a Patriot earthwork some ten miles below Philadelphia, on the east bank of the Delaware River at the Whitall plantation.

Patriot Commander(s): Col. Christopher Greene (1st Rhode Island Regiment); Col. Israel Angell (2nd Rhode Island Regiment).

Hessian Commander(s): Col. Carl von Donop

Objective: After the British occupation of Philadelphia on Sept. 26, 1777, Gen. Sir William Howe devised a plan to gain control of the Delaware River. He chose to attack Fort Mercer, a newly constructed Patriot earthwork intended to block the British navy from resupplying forces in Philadelphia. Howe sent 2,000 Hessian soldiers to storm the fort. The Patriot garrison was estimated at 400-500, many of them of African heritage.



Outcome: Patriot victory

Casualties: Approximately 375 to 400+ Hessian soldiers; vs. approximately 35-40 Patriots (14 killed and 23 wounded, according to Friends of the Red Bank).



Background: In 1776, the Congress seized a portion of the Whitall Plantation for the construction of an extensive riverside redoubt, and Washington ordered the fort be named in honor of Gen. Hugh Mercer, who lost his life at Princeton. On October 7th, the 1st Rhode Island under Colonel Christopher Greene, third cousin of Major General Nathaniel Greene, and the 2nd Rhode Island under Colonel Angell were ordered into Fort Mercer.

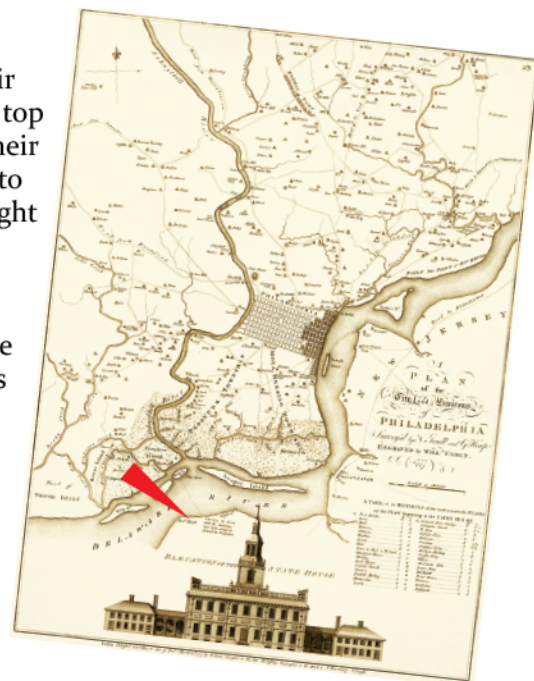
Washington had also assigned French engineer Thomas Antoine Chevalier de Mauduit du Plessis to the fort. Du Plessis immediately saw that it had been built too large for the number of men defending it, and he ordered it reduced by building an interior wall across its width. He further ordered construction of a new abatis and ditch in front of the inner wall.

In the late afternoon of October 22, 1777, four battalions of Hessians under the command of Col. Carl Von Donop arrived at Whitall Plantation, having marched there from Haddonfield, N.J. The Minnigerode, Mirbach, and Linsing battalions, supported by the Jägers, attacked the fort. The Lengerke Battalion was positioned as a reserve and to prevent a possible landing of Americans from the river.

The Hessians began the offensive by giving Fort Mercer a ferocious artillery pounding. Captain Stephen Olney of the 2nd Rhode Island later recorded, "Their first general discharge was tremendous. It made the gravel and dust fly from the top of our fort, and took off all the heads that happened to be in the way." Despite their artillery onslaught and their overwhelming numbers, the Hessians were unable to seize the defensive work. Once they advanced over the outer wall, they were caught in a killing field without a means to scale the inner wall.

In keeping with this issue's theme, a considerable number of blacks and mulattoes participated in the defense of Fort Mercer. Although this battle occurred four months prior to the reorganization of the 1st Rhode Island into the Black Regiment, even then its ranks had the highest percentage of black soldiers in Washington's army. The engagement lasted approximately forty minutes and was a decisive victory for the rebels.

Colonel James Mitchell Varnum, commander of the Rhode Island regiments, was so impressed by the performance of the large number of African-American defenders at Red Bank that he sought approval to return to Rhode Island and recruit an all-black regiment. Later, the Black Regiment performed exceedingly well at the Battle of Rhode Island and at Yorktown, storming and taking Redoubt 10 (see 'Patriot Men of Color in the Revolution, pp. 23-26).



From the Life & Correspondence of Joseph Reed

The following is the verbatim reproduction* of a letter from Gen. Nathanael Greene to Joseph Reed in early January 1781, during the latter's final year as President of Pennsylvania's Supreme Executive Council. He and Greene were well acquainted. The letter details the dire needs of the General's army in the South and what Greene was doing to shore things up after having assumed command of the Southern Campaign in 1780.

*NOTE: Additional paragraph breaks have been inserted into the text of the letter, for easier reading in this publication.- Ed.



Camp on the Pedee, January 9th, 1781.

Dear Sir,

I intended to have written you before, but I have been so employed since I left Philadelphia, that I have been obliged to deny myself the pleasure of writing to my friends, to attend to the more immediate duties of my department. On my journey I visited the Maryland and Virginia Assemblies, and laid before them the state of this army, and urged the necessity of an immediate support.

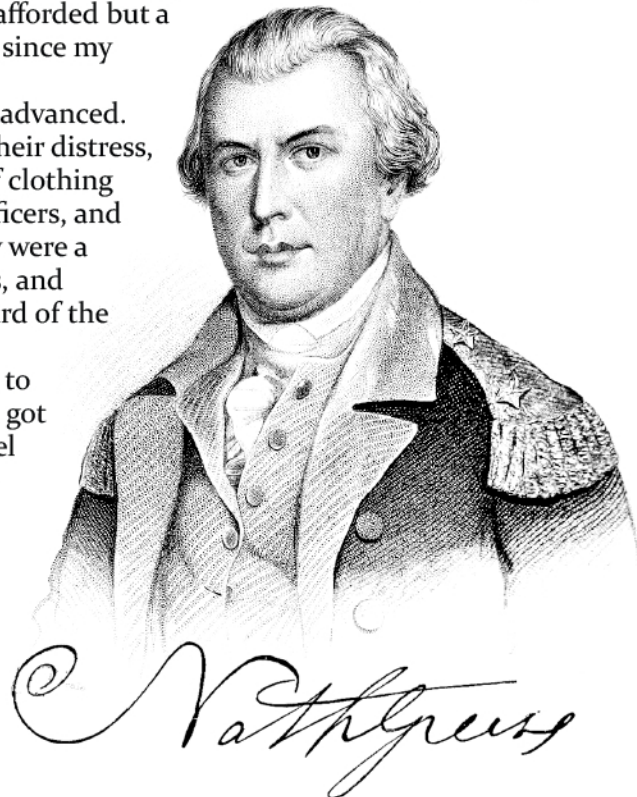
They both promised to do everything in their power, but such was their poverty, even in their Capitals, that they could not furnish forage for my horses. I have also written to the States of Delaware and North Carolina, neither of which have taken any measures yet for giving effectual aid to this army.

I left General Gist in Maryland, and Baron Steuben in Virginia, to forward the recruits and supplies. Measures are taking in Virginia which promise us some aid, though very trifling to what they ought to give, and what our state requires. All the way through the country, as I passed, I found the people engaged in matters of interest and in pursuit of pleasure, almost regardless of their danger. Public credit totally lost, and every man excusing himself from giving the least aid to Government, from an apprehension that they would get no return for any advances. This afforded but a dull prospect, nor has it mended since my arrival.

I overtook the army at Charlotte, to which place General Gates had advanced. The appearance of the troops was wretched beyond description, and their distress, on account of provisions, was little less than their suffering for want of clothing and other necessaries. General Gates had lost the confidence of the officers, and the troops all their discipline, and so addicted to plundering, that they were a terror to the inhabitants. The General and I met upon very good terms, and parted so. The old gentleman was in great distress, having but just heard of the death of his son before my arrival.

The battle of Camden is spoken of very differently here to what it is to the Northward, and as for a regular retreat, there was none; every man got off the ground in the best manner he could. This is the account Colonel Williams gives, who was one of the last on the field. Indeed, the whole business was a short fight and then a perfect flight, and the greatest loss happened after the troops broke, and attempted, to make their escape. From all I can learn, if General Crates had stopped at Charlotte, little more disgrace would have fallen to his share than is common to the unfortunate. Generals Gates and Smallwood were not upon good terms; the former suspected the latter of having an intention to supplant him.

Some think General Gates's suspicions were groundless, which had no other foundation but the General's own imagination. Others



are of opinion that they were well founded, and that my appointment was a great disappointment as well as mortification to Smallwood. How the matter was I know not.

The General (Smallwood) is gone to the Northward, having declared, for reasons, that he could not think of submitting to the command of Baron Steuben, and that if Justice was done him and the State, his commission would be dated at least two years earlier than his appointment. I expostulated with him upon the impossibility of the thing, let his private merit be ever so great, but it was all to no purpose. He was fixed in the principle, and determined upon the measure. He has many enemies in the Maryland line, but upon the whole, I think him a sensible man and a good officer.

The wants of this army are so numerous and various, that the shortest way of telling you is to inform you that we have nothing, as General Du Portail can inform you from his own observation. The great departments of the army had nobody at the head of them, fit to provide in a country like this for a sergeant's party. I have got Colonel Carrington to accept of the Quartermaster-General's department, and am in hopes of getting a good man at the head of the Commissaries, without which I foresee we must starve. I am endeavouring to bring everything into order, and perfect our arrangements as much as possible, but it is all an up-hill business.

The loss of our army in Charleston, and the defeat of General Gates has been the cause of keeping such vast shoals of militia on foot, who like the locusts of Egypt, have eaten up everything, and the expense has been so enormous, that it has ruined the currency of the State. It is my opinion there is no one thing upon the Continent that wants regulating so much, as the right which the States exercise of keeping what militia on foot they please at the Continental expense.

I am persuaded North Carolina has militia enough to swallow up all the revenues of America, especially under their imperfect arrangements, where every man draws and wastes as much as he pleases. The country is so extensive and the powers of Government so weak, that everybody does as he pleases. The inhabitants are much divided in their political sentiments, and the Whigs and Tories pursue each other with little less than savage fury. The back-country people are bold and daring in their make, but the people upon the sea-shore are sickly and but indifferent militia. The ruin of the State is inevitable if there are such large bodies of militia kept on foot.

No army can subsist in the country long if the ravages continue. Indeed, unless this army is better supported than I see any prospect of, the Country is lost beyond redemption, for it is impossible for the people to struggle much longer under their present difficulties. There appears a foolish pride in the representation of things from this quarter; the strength and resources of the Country are far overrated, and those who are engaged in this business, to indulge their pride, will sacrifice their Country.

The inhabitants are beginning to move off in great bodies, and unless a firmer barrier can be formed, this quarter will be all depopulated. We are living upon charity, and subsist by daily collections. Indian meal and beef is our common diet, and not a drop of spirits have we had with us since I came to the army. An army naked and subsisted in this manner, and not more than one-third equal to the enemy in numbers, will make but a poor fight, especially as one has been accustomed to victory and the other to flight. It is difficult to give spirits to troops that have nothing to animate them.

I have been obliged to take an entire new position with the army. General Morgan is upon Broad River with a little flying army, and Colonel Washington since his arrival there has defeated a party of Tories, the particulars of which I beg leave to refer you to the President of Congress for. This Camp I mean as a Camp of repose, for the purpose of repairing our wagons, recruiting our horses, and disciplining the troops.

Colonel Lee has just arrived, and his corps is in good order, and I am told Colonel Greene from Virginia is at hand.

General Lesly with his detachment has arrived at Camden, and we have reports that another is coming.

With affectionate regard, I am dear sir

Your Most Obed
humble Serv't
N Greene



CREDIT: DR. W. STEVEN MARK, PSSR



John Eager Howard

“Commander of the Infantry Line at the Battle of the Cowpens”

By James Rhodes, SRNY Member



The following article continues our series on the Comitia Americana medals and other closely related. These late eighteenth century Congressional medals were approved, designed and struck to honor primarily ten Revolutionary War heroes, including John Eager Howard, one of three winners from the pivotal Battle of the Cowpens and the subject of this essay. The project unfortunately languished over a period of several years, then fizzled before it was properly completed.

*As a result, today's extant copies of these medals are valuable tokens for their historical significance and rarity. The text of these articles is largely excerpted from the 2007 book *Comitia Americana and Related Medals: Underappreciated Monuments to Our Heritage* by John W. Adams and Anne E. Bentley, with permission from their publisher, George Frederick Kolbe of Crestline, California.*

His Merits

“Congress awarded no less than three medals for the battle of the Cowpens [Jan. 17, 1781], a number that emphasizes the importance of this contest. After

[Brig. Gen.] Morgan's victory, followed by his safe escape from the main body of Cornwallis' army, the momentum in the war had shifted.

“Few Americans have heard of the battle of the Cowpens. Fewer still appreciate its strategic significance and the intensity with which it was fought. At the very heart of that intensity were the infantry of the Continental Line, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel John Eager Howard.

“General Morgan deployed his forces on a piece of rising ground. Partway up the slope was a line of militia skirmishers and, behind these troops, a second line of militia. The assignment of both lines was to get off one or more volleys on the advancing British and then to fall back via the flanks of the main position, which was partially hidden by the crest of the hill. On the rear of the hill, Lieutenant Colonel William Washington's cavalry were in reserve to be deployed as needed.

“Tarleton's infantry consisted of the 71st and 7th Foot, plus light infantry and Loyalist troops. Raw militia could not be expected to stand up to a charge from units such as these. Thus, from the beginning, Morgan's chances depended on the performance of the Continentals under Howard.

“The British did indeed charge the American position and the militia, after having delivered up to five volleys, did indeed give way. Sensing that victory was theirs, the British pursued up the hill only to encounter a murderous volley from the Continentals. After that one volley, Howard's troops charged with bayonets, joined by Washington's cavalry with sabers drawn. The British held for an instant, then began to retreat, and finally fled with the Americans in hot pursuit. Howard fought in the thick of the battle, receiving seven swords from British officers who surrendered to him. Today, his generosity in victory is as much a glorious facet of our heritage as is his triumph in arms.

“The Battle of the Cowpens was not Howard's single moment of fleeting fame. He had fought with distinction in the northern campaigns and was to play ‘a spectacular role at Guilford Courthouse’ as well as the several smaller battles that followed.

“In the words of Nathanael Greene, who then commanded the American army in the South: ‘Howard, [is] as



American Revolutionary Medals in the Spotlight

good an officer as the world affords. He has great ability and the best disposition to promote the service... he deserves a statue of gold.' The medal for John Eager Howard commemorates a great patriot who fought courageously for America at a turning point in its history.

The Medal

“As the year 1789 began, Thomas Jefferson was contemplating a return from Paris to his native land. One of the tasks that he first had to accomplish was completion of the medals that had been voted by Congress. After a decade of sporadic effort by Benjamin Franklin, David Humphreys and Jefferson, only five had been delivered—those for Fleury, Gates and Greene, and the first (unsatisfactory) versions of Wayne’s and Stewart’s medals, based on the Fleury dies.

“This left seven medals remaining to be executed, not counting the award for Henry Lee, the instructions for which had been misplaced along the way. Contracts for the first three unfinished medals were awarded by Jefferson in 1789. Inextricably, all three—Washington Before Boston, William Washington, and John Eager Howard—were assigned to a single engraver, Benjamin Duvivier. Burdened by this volume of work, and with the dies for George Washington having clear priority, it is not surprising that Duvivier

gave short shrift to the remaining two.

“In the case of the Howard dies, the hero’s name is misspelled, numerous letters are hastily placed, and there are at least two injuries to the die from slips of the graver.

“**Obverse:** Lieutenant Colonel Howard on horseback with sword raised gives chase to an enemy soldier carrying a flag (presumably the standard for the 7th Foot that was captured and delivered to Congress). Victory flies above, a palm branch in her left hand and a laurel wreath in her right, held over the hero’s head. JOH EGAR [sic] HOWARD LEGIONIS PEDITUM PRAEFECTO (to John Eager Howard, commander of a regiment of infantry). In exergue: COMITIA AMERICANA (the American Congress). DUVIV for the artist can be found below the horse’s hoofs.

“**Reverse:** A laurel wreath surrounds an inscription in seven lines: QUOD IN NUTANTEM HOSTIUM ACIEM | SUBITO IRRUENS | PRAECLARUM BELICAE VIRTUTIS | SPECIMAN DEDIT | IN PUGNA AD CWPENS | XVII. JAN. MDCCLXXXI (By suddenly charging the wavering line of the enemy, he provided an example of conspicuous military bravery at Cowpen, January 17, 1781.)

Washington to Howard

New York, March 25th, 1790

Sir,

You will receive with this a Medal struck by order of the late Congress in commemoration of your much approved conduct in the battle of the Cowpens— and presented to you as a mark of the high sense which your Country entertains of your services on that occasion.

This Medal was put into my hands by Mr Jefferson; and it is with singular pleasure that I now transmit it to you. I am, with very great esteem,

*Your Excellency’s
most Obedt Servt.*

G. Washington



SUBMISSION DEADLINE DATES

Issue	Deadline Date	Issue Mailed
No. 1	April 1	April 30
No. 2	Aug 1	Aug 31
No. 3	Dec 1	Dec 31

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