



# Drumbeat

with *Flintlock & Powderhorn*

News of the Sons of the Revolution

Volume 30 Number 2

Summer 2012



2012 Triennial Speaker  
Janet Uhlar  
—Photo by Dina Deluca

## General Nathanael Green: The Unknown & Under-estimated

*Author, lecturer, and screenplay writer Janet Uhlar has accepted an invitation to speak at the 2012 Triennial Meeting in Savannah, Georgia.*

*Janet is a trustee of the Nathanael Greene Homestead in Coventry, Rhode*

*Island, and last year published the acclaimed biographical fiction, *Freedom's Cost: The Story of General Nathanael Greene*. She addressed the Georgia Society of the Sons of the Revolution at its annual meeting in February. In June, she gave an interview*

*to the Drumbeat, looking forward to her presentation at the Triennial in October.*

**Q. What was your principal source of inspiration in writing *Freedom's Cost*?**

**A.** When researching and writing my first book, *Liberty's Martyr*, I came across bits of information about Nathanael Greene. Certainly, the dichotomy of him being a 'Quaker General' was enough to pull my attention. The more I discovered about him, the more intrigued I became. The more I discovered about him, the more frustrated I became in the fact that his role has been so underestimated.

—Continued on page 4

## Historic Bullet Hole Distinguishes Portrait

During his recent visit to the California Society (see *Drumbeat*, Vol. 30, No. 1) General President Terry Davenport noted the oil painting of political leader, Army officer, and great explorer John Charles Fremont (1813 – 1890), which hangs in the Society's American Heritage Library and Museum.

Aside from its value as an original piece of art and its beauty in the gold-leaf frame, the painting is notable for a bullet hole most likely suffered 150 years ago.

About eight years ago the painting was sent out for cleaning and conservation and that the conservator worked on it for nearly one year. "When it was returned to us, [the conservator] told me a microscopic examination had revealed that the canvas around the edge of the hole had been melted. The conclusion is that something hot and round, most likely a bullet, must have penetrated it," says Rick Breithaupt, California Society President Emeritus.

The portrait was commissioned and painted live in 1856, the year Fremont became the Republican Party nominee for President of the United States on an anti-slavery platform. Convention delegates that year chose William L. Daney over Abraham Lincoln for his running mate.

The bullet hole reportedly occurred when Fremont loaned out the painting to a New York City hotel in 1863 for public display. In mid-July of that year, which was just after the Union victory at the

—Continued on page 2



*Painted in a live sitting by Thomas Buchanan Read, a political supporter of Fremont's.—Photo source: <http://sr-california.com>*



—continued from page 1

Battle of Gettysburg, the Civil War draft riots broke out in Manhattan. Rioters were mainly working-class immigrants who feared for their jobs with the thought of the Union winning the Civil War and the slaves becoming emancipated. They rejected the idea of being conscripted for a cause which they felt ran counter to their own interests.

It could have been that the painting was shot at intentionally. The rioters attacked blacks as well as the whites who supported them, and by 1863 it was well known that Fremont was anti-slavery and concerned for the welfare of all: Not only had he ran for President on an anti-slavery platform, but in 1861 from St. Louis he organized the Western Sanitary Commission (WSC).

The privately-funded WSC modeled itself after the United States Sanitary Commission, a federally endorsed organization that unified efforts of benevolent societies to provide assistance to the poor, orphaned, and destitute throughout the Mississippi River Valley.

On the other hand, the shot could have been by accident, too, since Fremont would have been just as concerned for the welfare of immigrant laborers. Whichever was the case, the painting was recovered from that NY hotel. Years later, it made its way to the West Coast and hung in the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles for some thirty years, the property of a New York socialite.

In 1962, the painting was acquired by Hugh Hinton Evans, Sr., who later became Chairman of Western Federal Savings and Loan Association. Subsequently it hung at the Evans Manor for a time, and for another ten years was displayed at the Savings Association's regional office in the Beverly

Wilshire Hotel.

Mr. Breithaupt says that in 1974 the portrait was gifted to the California Society of the Sons of the Revolution. Mr. Evans donated it to the Society at the suggestion of then-General Vice President and Society Secretary Richard E. Coe as a way to honor his late wife, Gladys Crail Evans. She had passed away in 1972.

The couple's son, Hugh Evans, Jr., who was at the time Chairman of the Board and President of Western Federal, was present during a Society ceremony recognizing the generous gift. Today, Fremont's gold-framed portrait occupies a place of prominence in the Society's library.

In California, Fremont is known for much more than just running for President. He had married Jesse Benton, the daughter of Missouri Senator

Thomas Hart Benton. Thanks to his father-in-law's influence, Fremont became a leader in the Manifest Destiny movement.

Sen. Benton, 'Old Bullion,' pushed appropriations through Congress for national surveys of the Oregon Trail (1842), the Oregon Territory (1844), the Great Basin, and Sierra Mountains to California (1845). His son-in-law was named expedition leader on each of those journeys, during which time Fremont became known as "The Great Pathfinder."

The major general had much to do with the establishment of California as a state: In 1845-46, his third expedition culminated in his leadership of the Bear Flag Revolt. Later, it was Fremont who signed the Treaty of Cahuenga with Mexi-

can General Andreas Pico which ceded California, Arizona, and Nevada to the United States. Two years later, Californians elected him as one of their first two U.S. Senators.

During the Civil War he was first given the command of all western territories, yet a conflict with Lincoln's policies led to his reassignment and ultimate loss of political import. After the Civil War, he served one term as the Fifth Territorial Governor of Arizona (1878-1881). In 1890, he died penniless, of peritonitis, in New York City. ■—Editor

*NOTE: Thanks to Rick Breithaupt for his valuable assistance with this story.*



L-R: Richard H. Breithaupt, Jr., and his father, Richard H. Breithaupt, Sr., stand in front of the Fremont portrait in the American Heritage Library and Museum.  
—Photo courtesy of Terry Davenport.



## President's Message

All eyes are on Savannah, Georgia as final preparations are being made for the upcoming 41st Triennial Meeting set for October 4-7. Georgia Society President Christopher Frame and his team have worked diligently to assure a fantastic gathering for all SR members and families. Savannah has a rich Revolutionary War history and I am certain that everyone will find something to enjoy about that beautiful southern city. I strongly encourage all members to consider attending this important meeting. Please see pp. 4-7 in this issue for information and the registration form. You may also visit the GSSR website, [www.sr1776.org](http://www.sr1776.org), and the Georgia Society website, <http://sr-ga.org>, for further details.

Triennials are special for many reasons, but the most important reason is that a new administration of General Society officers is elected and installed. Our great Sons of the Revolution is blessed with many strong and dynamic leaders who are committed to Keeping Alive the Memory of George Washington, our Founding Fathers, and our Ancestors who fought for Independence. These members have taken leadership roles in patriotic celebrations in their respective home states and have diligently labored to enlist new members. I have met many of these outstanding leaders during my travels over the course of these last three years, and I believe our Society will remain strong and vibrant for many years into the future.

As this administration draws to a close, I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their



*L-R: General President Terry Davenport, D.A.R. President General Merry Ann T. Wright, and John Devane Chapter (Ga.) President Bobby Towns exchange greetings at the 121st D.A.R. Continental Congress held this summer in Washington D.C.—Photo courtesy Bobby Towns.*

hard work in building our great society. I especially extend a hearty note of appreciation to our office staff in Independence, Missouri, the Drumbeat staff, the Executive Committee members, all of the GSSR officers, and the GSSR Board of Managers. Our General Society will remain strong as long as our states remain strong, and I thank all state officers and board members for the hard work they have done and continue to do.

I have met so many wonderful people since becoming a member of the Sons of the Revolution in 1999, and I would be greatly remiss if I did not thank each and every member of the Colonel Robert McFarland Chapter in Morristown, Tenn. These men first elected me chapter president and then

they taught me how to be president. Chapter presidents succeed when they do what they are told. The late Richard Carroll was one of the men in our chapter. He was a mentor and friend not only to me, but to many members in Tennessee. He always challenged me to do more and to find a way to make things happen. When things were a little uncertain and there was a great deal of doubt, he would say, "Keep the Faith!"

As I close, I want to encourage everyone to Keep the Faith! Great things will happen, and our great Sons of the Revolution will continue to grow and fulfill our great mission!

Keep the Faith!■

Terry L. Davenport  
General President

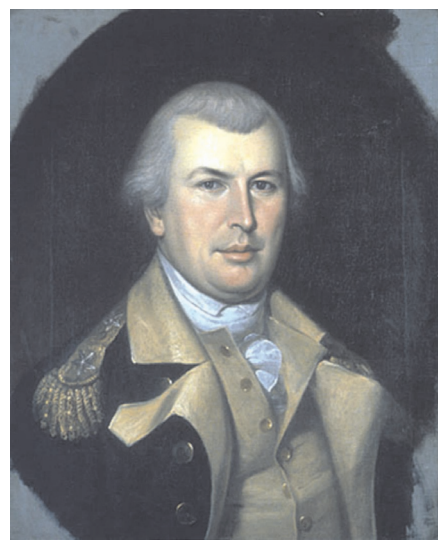


*The above photo was taken at the Annapolis Cup Award presentation held at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD., in late May. L-R: Capt. John W. Nicholson, USN, Associate Chair, Weapons and Systems Engineering Department; Professor Kiriakos Kiriakidis, Chair, Weapons and Systems Engineering Department; General President Terry Davenport; 2012 Annapolis Cup Recipient MIDN 1/C Louis E. Henry of Boston; General President Emeritus M. Hall Worthington, and PSSR Lancaster Chapter Regent Joseph Howard Frantz.—Photo courtesy Terry Davenport.*

*Unknown & Under-estimated—Continued from page 1*

**Q. What have you found to be the most under-appreciated aspect of General Nathanael Greene's life and career?**

A. Among the mainstream public, nothing is known of him other than the name—and often not even that. Among those with an interest in the American Revolution, very few fully recognize his pivotal role. Were it not for General Nathanael Greene, in all likelihood, the Continental Army would have been forced to disband at Valley Forge. Were it not for General Nathanael Greene, in all likelihood, the South would have succumbed to the British. Were it not for Greene, the Battle of Yorktown would not have been fought.



*Major-General Nathanael Greene, painted from life, 1783 by Charles Wilson Peale.*

**Q. Why hasn't he received his due?**

A. General Greene died three years after the close of the War, and, therefore, did not play a role in the formation of our government and Constitution. This certainly is part of the reason he has not received his due, but there is more. Though having served his positions of Major General and Quartermaster General with all his ability and skill, he had often butted heads with Congress. Even as Congress wanted to extend his term as Quartermaster General beyond the initially agreed-upon year, he refused.

As Commander of the Southern Department, Greene had conflicts with various individuals in prominent state positions as well, such as Governor Thomas Jefferson. Also, his expectation of bringing successful, unified action against the enemy, with the help of the militia, sometimes stirred resentment among militia officers. Of course, Southern Loyalists resented him. Then, at the close of the War, when the states of North Carolina, South Carolina, and

Georgia thanked him with land holdings, jealousies [among other commanders] arose, bringing slanderous charges against his command, service, and character.

The collective outrages against him were so great... that even when his first official biography was published in 1822, (written by William Johnson, Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court and native of South Carolina), there were still those who questioned his character. One thing is certain, however. Those that knew him well—that worked closely with him—defended his character to the end: George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, Henry Knox, Lafayette, Anthony Wayne, 'Light Horse' Harry Lee, Otho Williams, Jeremiah Wadsworth, Charles Pettit, John Cox, etc...

**Q. How was it that he pulled the Continental Army from the throes of death at Valley Forge?**

A. When the Continental Army went into Valley Forge on December 19, 1777, the situation was desperate. Acting Quartermaster General Thomas Mifflin had virtually abandoned his post, and the army was not being supplied. Nathanael Greene was pressed upon by both Congress and George

Washington ('day and night,' he stated) to take on the responsibility and position of Quartermaster General. He did not want the position; he 'loathed' it. But he yielded to the situation's need.

On March 2, 1778, he was officially appointed. Within a short time, substantial supplies were coming into camp. The Baron Von Steuben arrived at Valley Forge about a week before Greene took command of the Quartermaster's Department. By the time Von Steuben recorded his earliest written orders of drill, he had

troops that were properly fed, clothed, and supplied. He now had an army to train.

**Q. Nathanael Greene was promoted overnight from private to general. Was that level of promotion common in that day?**

A. No, such a promotion was not common. Ex-



*Nathanael Greene Homestead, a registered historic location, Coventry, Rhode Island. He lived there from 1770 to 1776.—Photo source: <http://www.nathanaelgreenehomestead.org>*



actly why it was given, we have no documentation. It was a militia commission granted by the Colony of Rhode Island. He jokingly wrote about his commission, “Since the Episcopalian and the Congregationalist won’t [accept it], I suppose the Quaker must.”

Greene was knowledgeable in the art of war (book knowledge) to the point of impressing the members of the General Assembly in Rhode Island to grant him the commission of brigadier general. He was committed, willing, and courageous to take the command—and to take it seriously. He was a man of high character to be considered for this position.

General Washington had no part in Greene’s promotion. The militia commission was given to Nathanael Greene *before* George Washington took command, and before the Continental Army was officially formed. Washington accepted Greene’s military status, for it was honored by the Continental Congress in the formation of the Continental Army. Greene would become the ‘favorite’ among Washington’s generals and his second in command.

**Q. How long did it take you to complete the manuscript? What was the easiest part, as well as the most difficult part, in the writing?**

**A.** From research to final manuscript, in truth, it took about seventeen years. When I began my research of Nathanael Greene, I had five children at home, the youngest was four-years-old. Therefore, in a sense, every bit of it was difficult yet every bit of it was easy, as I love the research and writing. What was most difficult for me was finding time to sit and clear my head or write. Also difficult was getting to historical sites, and when there, to be able to fully experience what I was viewing, for often I had my children at my side. ■—*Editor*

## *Triennial 2012: A Memorable Event in the Works*

Planning has jelled for the 41st Triennial Meeting of the Sons of the Revolution, to be held this October 4-7 in Savannah, Georgia. The three-day weekend conference of business sessions and sponsored tours will feature grand festivities at Old Fort Jackson on Friday evening.

By special arrangement, the fort’s cannons overlooking the Savannah River will also be fired, shaking earth and water, and evoking images of an earlier time. The night will include savory helpings of “Low Country Boil,” along with live heritage music and a tour of the on-site museum. Low Country Boil is a popular gumbo-like dish from coastal Georgia that combines shrimp, sausage, corn, and potatoes cooked in a stew pot. Crab, onion, and butter are common additions.

Fort Jackson is a National Historic Landmark and is listed on the National Register of Historic Sites. Built in 1808 and named in honor of Georgia Governor and Revolutionary War soldier James Jackson, the fort is the oldest standing brick fortification in the state. It is one of only eight Second System fortifications (a series of forts built prior to the War of 1812) still standing and served as headquarters for the Confederate Savannah River defenses during the American Civil War.

The weekend will also feature a ladies’ tour of Savannah’s historic district on Friday afternoon led by the Georgia Society’s own Billy McIntosh and General Society Historian Gordon B. Smith. Other highlights will be a paddlewheel riverboat luncheon/excursion on Saturday afternoon and a cocktail party



L-R: Mercer-Williams House; Forsyth Park; and Savannah skyline.—Photos source: AOL Travel, <http://travel.aol.com>

in the Telfair Museum of Art on Saturday evening before the banquet. The cocktail party will be held in the Telfair Academy's Sculpture Gallery, and the banquet will follow in the Academy's three-story, dark-wood Rotunda.

For those who arrive early, a reception party is planned for Thursday evening at the Savannah Yacht Club with heavy hors d'oeuvres and the flow of Chatham Artillery Punch. The business meetings on Friday morning, Friday afternoon and Saturday morning will take place at the Coastal Georgia Center.

It all comes to a close on Sunday, starting with early morning service at Wesley Monumental United Methodist Church and concluding after the service with the traditional farewell sherry (of Madeira). George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and John Hancock are all said to have appreciated Madeira. The drink even played a role in the

Revolution.

For those members planning extended stays, be sure not to miss the natural beauties of Forsyth Park, sightseeing on River Street, the antiques at Factor's Walk, and the cheerful music at City Market. Other must-sees include Battlefield Park (site of the 1779 Battle of Savannah), the Georgia Railroad Museum, Colonial Park Cemetery, Pulaski Square, Oglethorpe Square, Chippewa Square, and Madison Square.

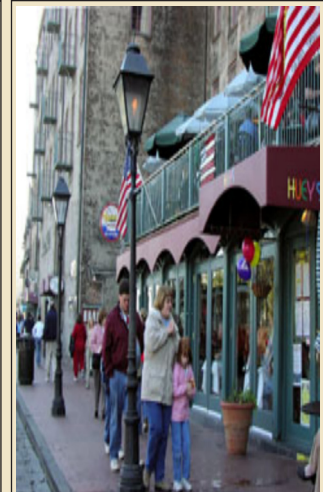
The early registration fee (thru Aug. 3) is \$395 per person. From Aug. 4 – Sept. 4, the rate increases to \$415 per person. Hotel and tax are additional. Please use the meeting registration form on page 7 of this newsletter. ■—Editor



Originally the home of Isaiah Davenport, today the Davenport House Museum displays hundreds of items of historic interest.—Photo source: [www.davenportmuseum.org](http://www.davenportmuseum.org)



Bird's eye view of Battlefield Park and Roundhouse Railroad Museum.—Photo source: <http://sr-ga.org>



River Street: The most popular tourism site in Savannah.—Photo source: <http://savannahvisit.com>



A most-hallowed ground.—Photo source: <http://sr-ga.org>



Historic Savannah Carriage Tours.—Photo source: <http://sr-ga.org>





**General Society  
of the Sons of the Revolution  
41st Triennial  
Savannah, Georgia  
October 4 to 7, 2012**



Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ State Society \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Highest Past/Current Office Held \_\_\_\_\_

Or State Delegate Representative \_\_\_\_\_

Name (or Nickname) for Badge \_\_\_\_\_

Wife or Guest Name for Badge \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Persons Registration Early Discount – Before August 4\* (\$395 each) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Persons Registration – August 4 through September 4\* (\$415 each) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Persons – Optional Friday (includes lunch) Historic Tour (\$ 35 each) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*Date received at GSSR headquarters. **Total** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to “Georgia Society Sons of the Revolution”

Send to: Sons of the Revolution, State of Georgia

P.O. Box 2802

Savannah, GA 31402

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of Children attending functions. (We need names and ages for billing purposes.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Persons participating in the Saturday River Boat luncheon excursions.

The registration fee includes the following: Oct 4 – Open Bar Reception, Heavy Hors d’oeuvres, Savannah Yacht Club, sponsored by the PSSR and its Color Guard; Oct 5 – Continental Breakfast, Committee Meetings, Business Meeting and Hospitality Room, Ft. Jackson Tour and Low Country Boil/Bar B-Q, Open Bar; Oct. 6 – Continental Breakfast, Business Meeting, Luncheon and Savannah River Tour aboard the Savannah River Queen Paddle Boat; Open Bar Reception, Banquet, White Tie Optional (Limited Availability); Oct 7 – Continental Breakfast, Wesley Monumental United Methodist Church, Farewell Sherry (of Madeira).

**PLEASE RESERVE YOUR HOTEL ROOM NOW**

Special rates for this event are available at two Marriott locations in the historical district of Savannah. Transportation provided to meeting venues and sponsored events. The special single and double room rates for SR members are available upon request from Oct. 1 – Oct. 10.

**Courtyard Savannah Downtown/Historic District**

Starting at: \$119.00 (USD)

**Residence Inn Savannah Downtown/Historic District**

Starting at: \$169.00 (USD)

To make reservations by phone, call **912-790-8287** or **800-321-2211** in the US and Canada. You may also reserve online at the special rate by visiting the Georgia Society’s home page, <http://sr-ga.org/>. Scroll to the bottom and click on the Marriott link provided. When making reservations, please indicate which hotel, how many rooms, and how many nights.

## Oldest Living SR Member: Thomas Stryker Skillman

Born in a farmhouse in 1911, Thomas Stryker Skillman of Somerset County, New Jersey, is probably the oldest living member of the General Society, Sons of the Revolution. The retired farmer and former quality control inspector for GM surpassed the century mark last year. In 2012, he celebrates 101 years of longevity.

All his life, Mr. Skillman has lived in or near an unincorporated area of Montgomery Township named after his family. The area earned the Skillman name after the railroads arrived in the 1870s and the new train station was named in honor of Thomas' great-grandfather, Joseph A. Skillman, a teamster. When the Reading Railroad got underway with construction in the area, contractors found soft ground in the spot where the station was to be built. Rails could not be laid there without sub-support being installed first. Enter Joseph Skillman, whose "wild Missouri mules" were hired out to haul in logs for a corduroy road on which the rails were laid. In appreciation to the teamster, the Reading Railroad named its new station after Skillman.

According to the *Newark Star-Ledger*, a post office opened in the train station and soon afterward a small village grew up around it, with a hay press, feed store and hardware store. The village took the Skillman name, too.

The Skillmans were originally Dutch, but they came to Brooklyn from England in 1664, according to family records. In 1729, one Thomas Skillman ventured westward into the Garden State, buying some five-hundred acres of farmland on the Millstone River, near the village of Rocky Hill, in a region called the Sourlands. That purchase was the Skillman family's entry into the area.

Just as the railroad looms large in the town's

history, it also looms large in Thomas' childhood memories. He told a reporter for the *Newark Star-Ledger* that when he was a boy he watched the huge engines and heard the train whistles at night. By the time he was in high school, he rode the train each day. His father, Fred, was the assistant ticket

agent at the train station. When winters got too cold for the family to remain in their farmhouse, they moved into temporary quarters at the station.

Mr. Skillman recalls when homes did not have indoor plumbing. He remembers when radio was new, when a horse and carriage was the chief means of transportation, when schoolchildren used inkwells, and when his wages of fifty cents per week for pumping the church organ was considered good money.

He most values his membership in the

Sons for the friendships he has built, and he advises younger generations to always remember the Pledge of Allegiance. ■—Editor.

NOTE: Special thanks to Frederick Gilman of Montgomery Township.



Thomas Stryker Skillman in 2007; by Matt Rainey, NJ.com ©

**Call to Action:** Beginning with the Fall 2012 issue, the *Drumbeat* will publish the names of those persons who are at least 90 years old and have been GSSR members for at least 65 years. If you belong in this special category of people, please submit your name, date of birth and GSSR membership number to [drumbeat1776@sbcglobal.net](mailto:drumbeat1776@sbcglobal.net).—Thank you, Editor





## CALIFORNIA

### The Whipple Gavel: A California Society Tradition

Last January, when the California Society elected and installed new officers, certain pieces of Society regalia were exchanged between the outgoing and incoming Presidents, as is often done in many State Societies.

One of the items exchanged was the Whipple Gavel, which the President uses to conduct official business. The gavel is named after one of the Society's most distinguished past members.

It was given to the Society by, and named in honor of, Brigadier-General Charles Henry Whipple, circa 1925. Gen. Whipple was a member of three State Societies in the SR, including California, Minnesota, and New York. He served on the Board of Directors of the California Society for nearly nine years and was its president during 1924.

The gavel is made from one of the original floor joists of Independence Hall, Philadelphia. Its material had been obtained decades earlier by the General's father, Bishop Henry Benjamin Whipple, during the Centennial restoration of Independence Hall.

For more information on the Whipples, visit <http://www.srcalifornia.com>



*Los Angeles Times, Nov. 7, 1932*

### GEN. WHIPPLE DIES OF PNEUMONIA

Bringing to a close a life that was crammed with activity with the United States Army when the West was young, death yesterday took Brig. Gen. Charles H. Whipple, who succumbed at St. Vincent's Hospital to an attack of pneumonia.

The Army officer, 83 years old, was born in Adams, N.Y., in 1849 the son of Bishop Henry B. Whipple, known as the Apostle to the Indians.

At the age of 23, the future famous general was given a position as cashier at the Citizens' National Bank of Faribault, Minn., a job he held for

ten years when the lure of army life overtook him and he won appointment as major paymaster.

It was during this period that an accident that won him national attention occurred. While carrying the payroll of \$30,000 to an army encampment in Montana, bandits held up the stage. The guard was killed, the stage driver was wounded, but Whipple took to the underbrush with the money and escaped.

He won his rank as lieutenant colonel and deputy paymaster general in 1901, three years later being raised to colonel and assistant paymaster general. In 1908 he was appointed brigadier general and paymaster general. He retired February 15, 1912, after seeing active service in the Philippines, Cuba, and Puerto Rico.

Two sons, Henry Benjamin Whipple of Brooklyn and Charles Henry Whipple Jr., Los Angeles, survive.



*Brig. Gen. Charles H. Whipple*  
—Photo source: SR-CA Centennial Register, 1883-1983



—These photos courtesy of Richard H. Breithaupt, Jr.

## CONNECTICUT



*Various groups gather annually to honor Gen. David Wooster, who died five days after being wounded in the Battle of Ridgefield. He is buried in Wooster Cemetery in nearby Danbury, CT.—Photo courtesy of Chris Nichols*

On Friday, April 27, 2012, representatives from the Connecticut Society, Sons of the Revolution, in addition to other distinguished lineage societies gathered to honor the 235th anniversary of the date when Major General David Wooster received his mortal wound at the Battle of Ridgefield (Connecticut).

Included among the others groups were members of the Society of the Cincinnati, Sons of the American Revolution, Connecticut Societies of: Sons of the American Revolution, Daughters of the American Revolution, and the Children of the American Revolution. Society President Chris Nichols is devoting significant time toward cultivating strong connections in his state between the SR and the CAR. After the ceremony, all who participated met at Le Chateau Restaurant in South Salem, N.Y., for a wonderful meal and fellowship.

Gen. Wooster has been called “a largely forgotten hero of the Revolution,” which may be true outside his home state.

Having served first in the British colonial militia from 1739 to 1745 and in the British Army from 1745 to 1761, Wooster was in his mid-sixties when the War for Independence began. Joining the Patriot cause at the first opportunity, Wooster was first given command as a major general of Connecticut militia companies sent to defend New York City against possible British troop landings.

When the Continental Army was established, he was commissioned as the third ranking of eight brigadier generals and was sent to be part of the

December 1775 assault on Quebec under second-ranking Brig. Gen. Richard Montgomery and Major General Philip John Schuyler.

Later, after resigning his Continental Army commission, he accepted the appointment of Major-General and Commander-in-Chief in the mobilized militia of Connecticut. In April 1777, he called upon his militia when British General (and former provincial governor of New York) William Tryon raided a Continental Army supply depot at Danbury, Connecticut. Wooster's first counter-attack caught Tryon by surprise, but later the Redcoats unlimbered six artillery pieces and opened fire, mortally wounding the elderly Wooster as he was rallying his militia.

## MARYLAND

In June the Maryland Society held its annual Mint Julep Party, the Society's major social gathering during the summer. General Society President Terry Davenport and his wife, Shannon, were special guests. Other officers attending were Region 2 GVP Dick Patterson and his wife, Gini, as well as General President Emeritus M. Hall Worthington and his wife, Mary. The weather was beautiful, and, as expected, the food and juleps were terrific.

— from  
*The SR Intelligencer,*  
*Spring / Summer*  
*2012*





## NEW YORK



*On Sunday, May 20, 2012, the Sons of the Revolution in the State of New York hosted a colonial-style concert at the Fraunces Tavern Museum. Allen Whear and Julianna Baird of Salon/Sanctuary Concerts performed the musical delights of Benjamin Franklin. An aficionado of concerts and opera, Franklin promoted emerging American musicians and, in 1761, invented the glass armonica, which became immediately popular in Europe.—Photo source: Fraunces Tavern Museum newsletter, June 2012*

### Family Night Stated Meeting

The Society celebrated its annual Family Night Stated Meeting on Monday, April 23, 2012. The purpose was to commemorate the 237th anniversary of the Battles of Lexington and Concord. The evening began with a reception in the Flag Gallery in Fraunces Tavern Museum at 6:30 p.m., followed by dinner in the Fraunces Tavern Restaurant at 7:30 p.m.

During the dinner, the 2012 Fraunces Tavern Museum Book Award was announced and given to *Liberty's Exiles: American Loyalists in the Revolutionary World* (Knopf Publishing). The book, written by Harvard history professor Maya Jasanoff, had already been awarded this year's George Washington Book Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award.

Also during the dinner, members who were celebrating their fortieth and fiftieth membership anniversaries were duly recognized. The evening's guest speaker was Edward P. Abbot, Esq., mayor of Essex Fells, N.J., who gave a well-received talk on the many historic sites of the Revolution throughout New Jersey—*Editor*

### Clinton Day Bicentennial Celebration

In late April the SRNY held a highly dignified ceremony honoring the bicentennial anniversary of the death of George Clinton, first Governor of New York and Revolutionary War veteran. As one of our nation's Founding Fathers, Clinton also served as Vice President for Thomas Jefferson and James Madison.

To memorialize the occasion, which took place at the Old Dutch Reform Churchyard in Kingston, N.Y., SRNY Color Guard Captain Jonathan Ridgeway developed an extensive plan which began by contacting both the West Point Color Guard as well as former President Bill Clinton. The ceremony included the United States Merchant Marine Academy Band, which was led by the SRNY Color Guard and accompanied by three local Regents of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Five descendants of Governor Clinton's were present, including DAR Regent Barbara Brinkley. Other dignitaries on hand included Congressman Maurice Hinchey, Assemblyman Kevin Cahill, Kingston Mayor Shane Gallo, Ulster County Executive Michael Hein, and Ulster County Clerk Nina Postupack, among others.

The ceremony featured a salute to the Stars & Stripes, the singing of the National Anthem, and the presentation of wreaths, including one of buff-colored roses and blue delphiniums from the New York Society. A 19-gun salute was also given, as is tradition for Vice Presidents. Following the firearm salute, the echoes of Taps rose from a lone trumpeter's horn and the colors were formally retired. —*from the SRNY Patriot, Vol. 6 No. 4*



*SNRY Color Guard pauses in Church yard. In front, members display recently donated flags.  
—Photo by Lynne Ridgeway.*



*The monument for George Clinton dominates the cemetery of the Old Dutch Church, Kingston, N.Y.  
—Source: www.olddutchchurch.org*

# Father of the Empire State

*The following biographical sketch is based on SR member John K. Lee's book, George Clinton: Master Builder of the Empire State, 2010, © Syracuse University Press. Mr. Lee is a member of the New Jersey Society. The bicentennial anniversary of Clinton's death was in April of this year (see above 'Clinton Day Bicentennial Celebration,' page 11).*

By John K. Lee

Throughout his political life, anti-royalist and anti-federalist George Clinton would cast his share of significant votes. The consequences of those votes would long be remembered; he himself, however, would be largely forgotten outside his home state.

Clinton was born in 1739 in New Windsor, New York. His first military service was during the French & Indian War in the 1760 campaign when Montreal was captured from the French. Although Clinton was elected to the Vice Presidency twice and is still the only Vice President to have served two different Presidents—Thomas Jefferson and James Madison—our national history was written without prominent accord given to his name.

And yet, this nearly forgotten man had a strong voice among our nation's Founding Fathers, was a major proponent of the Bill of Rights Amendments in 1789, and was considered to be a potential candidate for President more than once in his lifetime.

During and after the Revolutionary War, George Clinton served as New York's first governor and held the governorship for an astonishing twenty-one years—more than anyone since then. He was elected for six successive terms, then served a seventh later on. His first political position, however, was as Ulster County Clerk, an office he kept for fifty-three years.

As Vice President during the second Jefferson administration (1804-1808), Clinton's name and presence in the executive branch kept intact the key New York-Virginia alliance in presidential politics. The alliance proved key to the ongoing succession of Virginia Presidents.

## A Powerful Friend

While serving in the Second Continental Congress as one of New York's "radical" Assembly delegates, George Clinton met George Washington.

The two men were immediately drawn together by shared interests and launched what became a life-long friendship.

Not long afterward, Washington recommended to Congress that George Clinton be given full-time military service in New York and that he be named a brigadier general in the Continental Line. Washington also recommended to the New York Provincial Congress that Clinton be named brigadier general of the Ulster-Orange County militia.

During the war, Clinton was heavily involved in the defense of the Hudson River, just as Washington was, and frequently they consulted with one another. Washington's prediction of a British move to invade New York City came true on July 11, 1776, when General William Howe's brother, Admiral Sir Richard Howe, landed a flotilla of twenty-thousand troops on Staten Island.

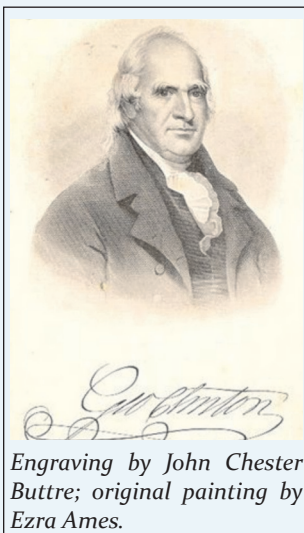
Clinton was suddenly in the thick of war, becoming immediately involved in preparations for laying a chain across the Hudson and in constructing other obstacles to impede

the passage of enemy ships. While this work occurred, New York's Provincial Congress added two other militias to Clinton's brigade, making a total of five regiments under his command. Nearly at the same time, Washington appointed Clinton to have overall command of the security of the lower Hudson.

Hardly had these and other orders been effected than news was received of the disastrous defeat of Patriot forces in the Battle of Brooklyn, a.k.a. the Battle of Long Island. His military duties subsided as the Redcoats advanced southward and the war in the north began to stalemate.

## Relations with Hamilton

During the war, Clinton and Washington's aide-de-camp, Alexander Hamilton, both advocated a



Engraving by John Chester Buttre; original painting by Ezra Ames.



strong Congress to deal with all matters concerning the war. Yet even before the war's conclusion, Clinton realized that he and Hamilton held vastly opposing views about what the federal government ought to be.

One week after George Washington had been elected President, on February 11, 1789, Hamilton initiated a campaign to have Clinton defeated in New York's upcoming gubernatorial election. Despite his desperate tirade to smear and tarnish Clinton's name, the incumbent won.

When Congress accepted a motion from the Massachusetts delegation that called for a Federal Convention, both Clinton and Hamilton were sent as part of the New York delegation. Clinton had wanted three Anti-Federalist delegates to attend; however, only two Anti-Federalists were selected. The third was himself the embodiment of Federalism.

Although a new Constitution was being drawn, Clinton was against it because it did not contain protection for individuals and limitation on the scope of federal government. Like Thomas Jefferson, he felt that a strong centralized government represented the antithesis of what the Patriots had fought for in the Revolution.

### New York Star-Power

The end of the Revolutionary War brought a short period of prosperity to New York State, especially New York City, which corresponded to the height of George Clinton's political career. At the time, New York City served as a double-capital, home to state government and the new national government. Washington had been sworn in as President at Federal Hall on Wall Street, and the city had hosted the Continental Congress several times. Simultaneously, the New York Assembly convened there until it moved to Albany in 1801.

As such, the growing debate between the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists centered to a large extent in New York City and upon New York politicians. During the first half of the 1780s, George Clinton rode New York's star-power to the zenith of his political life.

Throughout the economic hardship following the Revolutionary War, New York fared better than many other states because of fiscal measures that had been instituted early in Clinton's administration. Revenues from a tariff on imports helped keep

taxes low and contributed toward the construction of more roads, which facilitated greater commerce. Tax revenues were also used to subsidize public education, which reduced the financial burdens on families trying to finance their children's learning.

### Relations with Jefferson

By the time Jefferson was elected President, Clinton was serving his last term as Governor. For Jefferson's second administration, Clinton was asked to run for the office of Vice President. If the governor accepted, it would serve Jefferson's immediate interests to neutralize Clinton's relative popularity as a potential Presidential candidate himself.

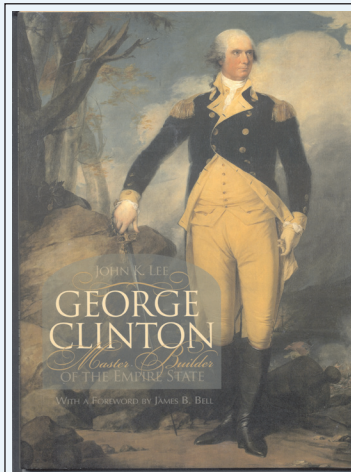
Once the pair was elected, Jefferson did his best to completely undermine the Vice President. He purposefully channeled the political limelight away from Mr. Clinton at every opportunity, as he was wary of the New Yorker's political power and his potential to upset Jefferson's Democratic-Republican coalition.

Despite the President's wish, he could not keep old-man Clinton down. By 1809, Clinton had serious misgivings about the United States being drawn into another war with Britain. The VP came to publicly disagree with Jefferson over his response to the British and French assaults on American shipping prior to the outbreak of the War of 1812. Clinton's own state of New York was particularly vulnerable to those assaults.

Furthermore, he feared that Jefferson's proposed solution of an embargo on foreign trade would have a devastating impact on his state's economy. Additionally, since New York's limited coastal defenses would prove painfully inadequate, Clinton began to lobby Congress for funds to bolster the Navy and America's strategic defenses.

Jefferson's aim was to remain neutral so as not to incite a possible British attack. Yet, for reasons stated above, Clinton was especially concerned that his own remaining silence could be seen as his condoning the current policy, which he increasingly saw as a disaster for the United States.

What would have surely evolved into the next showdown in Presidential politics was abruptly cut short. In the early spring of 1812, Clinton was stricken with pneumonia and died on April 20. Less than two months later, the United States declared war on Great Britain. ■



'George Clinton, Master Builder of the Empire State, 2010, Syracuse University Press.—Cover design, SUP; Cover photo, Glenn Castellano©

## NORTH CAROLINA

### 232nd Anniversary of Buford's Defeat

Members from both the North Carolina and South Carolina Societies were present to honor the 232nd anniversary of Buford's Defeat on Saturday, May 26, 2012, at the Buford Massacre Battlefield near Lancaster, S.C. Members of the SR, SAR, DAR, as well as the CAR placed wreathes at the mass grave in a formal ceremony that started at 10:30 a.m. Renactors were on hand and fired a black-powder salute to the fallen. Additionally, rangers from the South Carolina State Park Service answered questions from the public and provided information about the battle and its aftermath.

At 9 a.m. the same morning, the Friends of the Buford Massacre Battlefield met for a separate ceremony to dedicate a newly installed flag pole at the battleground. The Friends had a reproduction of the flag from Colonel Abraham Buford's Virginia Continentals, which they wanted to properly display. Now it will fly proudly over the battlefield. (The original flag was captured by the enemy at the battle.) The Friends of the Buford Massacre Battlefield is a newly formed group launched by members of the Sun City Carolina Lakes Motorcycle Club.

### Joint NC Meeting a Resounding Success

The Sons of the Revolution in the State of North Carolina held its annual meeting on June 9, 2012, at the Pinehurst Club in Raleigh, N.C. The featured speaker was Noah D. Clark, the Society's 2012 Scholarship Winner. Noah's presentation was on the Conway Cabal and its impact on the relationship between George Washington and the Marquis de La Fayette (Lafayette).

Society President Jeff Lambert said, "Noah gave a great 'behind-the-scenes' look at the politics and human drama that was the story of Conway, Gates, Lafayette, and Washington. It was a bit of a sordid tale and will become part of our website collection on [www.nc-sor.org](http://www.nc-sor.org), which is being rebuilt as we speak."

Other highlights of the meeting included the induction of three new members, John McPhaul, Dan Pate, and Lee Harford, as well as further formalization of the new chapter based in Charlotte. The Chapter adopted the name, "The General William Lee Davidson Chapter."

The annual meeting was held jointly with the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) and was a resounding success. Region 3 General Vice President Mitchell Bush was scheduled to attend but

unfortunately had to cancel his appearance. President Lambert verified that the Society's next meeting, the Yorktown Banquet to be held in late October, will also be a joint meeting with the SAR.

—submitted by Jeff Lambert



Scholarship winner Noah D. Clark addresses the North Carolina Society's annual meeting on June 9 in Raleigh, N.C.—photo courtesy of Jeff Lambert

## PENNSYLVANIA

On April 19, 2012, James B. Burke became President of the Pennsylvania Society. He succeeds Benjamin C. Frick, Esq. who had served for the last three years. The Annual Meeting was held at the Philadelphia Racquet Club, with over 120 members attending. Five Vice-Presidents were elected, including: W. Murray Gordon, Stephen W. Holt, David M. Humphrey, MD, Ben R. Wolf, and Leif A. Zetterburg. A buffet reception followed the business meeting. See the full listing of officers below.

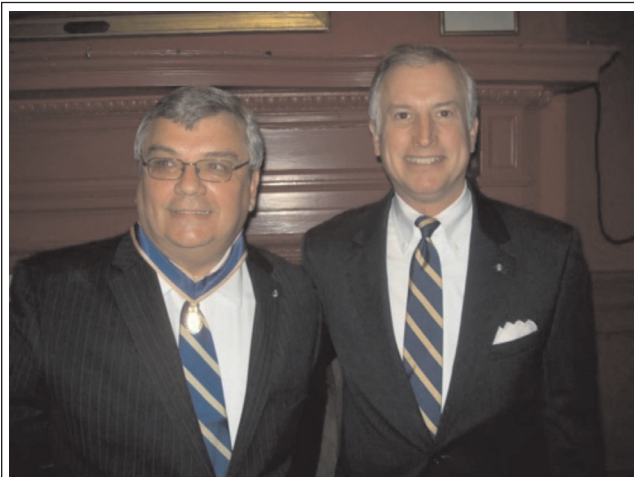
On Law Day, May 1, the Society participated in a very special naturalization ceremony for eighty-one new citizens at the Federal Courthouse. John



Annual Church Service organizers, from left to right: Color Guard Captain Rob van Gulik, President Jim Burke, Vice President Murray Gordon, Peter Adams, and Chaplain Clayton Ames.— Photo courtesy of Lanny Patten



Blickensderfer is the PSSR co-chair of the committee for naturalization ceremonies. The Society participates in these events twice per year and sponsors a reception for the new citizens, as it has done since 1957. The May 1 ceremony had significant meaning, since Law Day is a time when Americans stop to appreciate our liberties and affirm our loyalty to the United States and when we rededicate ourselves to the ideals of equality and justice under the law.



*L-R: Incoming Society President James B. Burke with Outgoing Society President Benjamin C. Frick.—Photo courtesy of Lanny Patten*

The next event on the Society's calendar was the Annual Valley Forge Commemoration and Church Service, held at St. Paul's Church in Exton, Pennsylvania. The Color Guard paraded for the processional and recessional. Chaplain Clayton Ames led the service, including the Necrology for members who have died in the past year. A buffet social followed the event at a nearby Sheraton Hotel.

Finally, on May 19, younger members hosted a day-long tailgate party for family and friends at the Radnor Races, a spring tradition of steeple chasing. Six exciting races featured horses galloping over hurdles and timber fences for purses totaling \$180,000. Since 1980, all proceeds from the Radnor Hunt Races benefit the land and water preservation programs of the Brandywine Conservancy in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania. The PSSR Color Guard helped sponsor the event.

The complete listing of new officers is as follows:

James Bradley Burke	President
William Murray Gordon	Vice President
Stephen Worley Holt	Vice President
David McClure Humphrey, M.D.	Vice President
Ben Ramsay Wolf	Vice President
Leif Andrew Zetterberg	Vice President
Andrew Richard Sullivan	Secretary
John McClean Blickensderfer	Assistant Secretary

Robert Jacob McNelly, Esq.	Treasurer
Mark Crosby Ward	Assistant Treasurer
Jefferson Monroe Moak, II	Registrar
Eugene Andrew Bolt, Jr.	Assistant Registrar
Theodore Edward Wiederseim, 3rd	Historian
Richard Leopold Walkup, Jr.	Assistant Historian
Reverend George Clayton Ames, III	Chaplain
Wayne Ralph Schusbaugh, Esq.	Counselor

—submitted by Lanny Patten

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—submitted by Jeff Lambert



*The stark entrance to the Buford Massacre Battlefield.  
—Source: The Carolina Rider newsletter, <http://www.thecarolinarider.com>*

### SR Recognition for Eagle Scouts

The South Carolina Society is in its second year of a program that honors each new Eagle Scout of the York Council with an SR Certificate of Merit. This year, the Society has given out fourteen certifi-



cates to boys from the York Council.

Initiated last year by Society President Chuck Swoope, the program is the kind of community outreach that exemplifies and awards the ignoble spirit which embodied our forefathers. Eagle Scout is the highest rank bestowed on young men in the organization. To obtain the rank, one must earn at least twenty-one merit badges; demonstrate Scouting spirit through service and leadership; and successfully complete an approved Eagle Scout project. This year's SR-SC certificates were awarded to:

<u>Troop #</u>	<u>Scout Name</u>
31	Robert Herang
132	Brian Hurst
133	Lane Chamberlan
154	Jaquavius (Trey) Barber
277	Zachary Faulkenberry
277	Kris Richtberg
109	Michael Parsons
154	Tyrell J. Neely
250	Michael Wagner
250	Sam C. Foster
250	Andrew Dunton
277	Alex Helms
277	Brady Ostendorf
277	Sam Swoope

—taken from *Summer 2012 Crescent Moon*

## TENNESSEE

### Annual Massing of the Colors

The Tennessee Society of the Sons of the Revolution participated in the Eighteenth Annual Massing of the Colors Ceremony held in late April at the Second Presbyterian Church of Knoxville. The ceremony assembles color guards representing military, veteran, patriotic, Scouting and civic organizations—all of which combine to provide a colorful tribute to the heritage of our country and to those who died helping to preserve our freedom.

A memorial service followed the gallant parading of colors. The event was sponsored by the Knoxville Chapter of the Military Order of the World of Wars (MOWW), which presented medals to award winners after the ceremony.

The Massing of the Colors is a patriotic tradition as old as our country. The ceremony is said to have originated when George Washington saw that his poorly-clothed troops did not have proper uniforms suitable for passing in front of visiting dignitaries. He came up with the idea of parading the color guards, which diverted the attention away

from the troops to the colorful flags and banners they carried.

In more modern times, the formal ceremonies originated with The Society of the Massing of the Colors, which was organized in 1922 by distinguished military officers, veterans, and civic leaders. The ceremonies are relatively short but moving; In usual instances, the colors and color guards of Active and Reserve Component military units, veterans' organizations, and civic and patriotic organizations are all included.

At the April 21 event in Knoxville, in addition to the presence of members of the Sons and other lineage organizations, including the MOWW, about two-hundred men and women from various ROTC units across Tennessee attended. Earlier that day, the Knoxville Kiwanis Club held a pancake breakfast for the general public.

—submitted by Tim Massey

### State Bell Ringing Day

In a celebration of July 4th on the Saturday before, members of the Tennessee SR, Tennessee SAR, the Tennessee Society of the Descendants of Washington's Army at Valley Forge, the Watauga Valley Fife & Drum, and the Washington County Regt. Of North Carolina Militia gathered together at Sycamore Shoals State Historic Area for the annual Tennessee State Bell Ringing ceremony. General President Terry Davenport spoke at the event, which is held to honor the original Thirteen Colonies. Other SR officers present were GVP Region 4 David L. Rutherford, Tennessee Society President Tim Massey and Society Vice President Bert Chalfant. ■—submitted by Tim Massey



'L-R: Ronnie Lail; DVF Color Guard Commander General Charles Dammann; Tennessee Society President Tim Massey; General President Terry Davenport; Region 4 GVP David Rutherford; Tennessee Society Vice President Bert Chalfant; and Dr. Joe Chambers, DVF TN Brigade Commander—Photo courtesy of David Rutherford

# Flintlock & Powderhorn

## ARTICLES OF HISTORICAL INTEREST

### *PATRIOT VIGNETTES*

#### COL. EZEKIEL POLK

The grandfather to President James K. Polk, Col. Ezekiel Polk was born in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania on December 7, 1747; died in Harde-man County, Tennessee on Aug. 31, 1824. Ezekiel Polk came to Mecklenburg County, N.C., with his parents, the youngest of eight children around 1750. There he grew into manhood, became a surveyor, and acquired considerable property.

He served as Mecklenburg County Sheriff in 1763, Justice in 1768 and Mecklenburg Clerk of the Court in 1769. By 1772, he served again as Justice.

At age twenty, and recently married, Ezekiel was named clerk of court in the new county of Tryon, across the Catawba River, where he and his bride established themselves on a hundred-acre farm, just south of King's Mountain. In 1772, however, the provincial boundary was surveyed, and Polk's property was discovered to be situated in South Carolina, which meant he no longer qualified for the Mecklenburg County government positions. Polk adapted to the loss.

He was named lieutenant colonel of the Twelfth Regiment of S. C. Militia, for the New Acquisition District, a district largely settled by the overflow from Mecklenburg Co. Later, he was elected a delegate to the South Carolina Provincial Congress held in June and was commissioned a captain in the Third South Carolina Regiment of Horse Rangers, assigned to the interior.

Capt. Dobson married Margaret Taylor Polk and they had two sons, Henry Baker Dobson and William Polk Dobson.

After the war, Ezekiel retired to Tennessee, where he helped survey the town of Bolivar. He is buried there, in Polk Cemetery. ■

—from GSSR files and published reports

#### CAPT. WILLIAM DOBSON

William 'Carlyle' Dobson was born in about 1759-61 and immigrated to America from Ireland with his parents and siblings. William was one of six children. Upon immigrating, the family settled either in York County, Pennsylvania, or in York, South Carolina, before William removed to North Carolina.

He lived for some unspecified period of time in or near Waxhaw and began acquiring land in Surry County. His name reportedly appears on Surry County books for the first time in 1774. He eventually owned more than two-thousand acres.

When the Revolution commenced, William was serving as Justice of the Peace and came to the aid of the Moravian (German Christian) community. He negotiated with the colony's government on their behalf. The Moravians opposed taking up arms against the English, followed their neutrality strictly, and didn't want to recognize any new government. Nevertheless, Dobson secured from them and administered to them an Oath of Allegiance to the State, which both satisfied the government and allowed them to remain neutral.

In 1776 Dobson was named captain of a local militia that helped protect the frontier from Cherokee attacks. He marched men hundreds of miles and confiscated much bounty from abandoned Cherokee villages.

In 1788, William and Margaret established an Inn east of the Moravian settlement in Salem, and the tavern eventually became known as "Dobson's Crossroads," which now is the center of Kernersville, N.C. A small monument in Kernersville refers to President Washington's stop at Dobson's Inn for breakfast on the way home from his North Carolina tour in 1791. ■

—from GSSR files and published reports



# The American Revolutionary Ancestors of Alamo Hero James Butler Bonham

By

Charles Edward Phebus

President General, The Society of Descendants of the Alamo

*Mr. Phebus is a lineal descendant of Sir George Calvert, first Lord Baltimore, and of his son, Leonard Calvert, first Governor of Maryland. The governor's son, William Calvert, Deputy Governor of Maryland, married Elizabeth Stone, daughter of William Stone, Governor of Maryland. He is also a fourth great-grandson of Sgt. John Shepherd, who was the oldest living veteran of the American Revolution at the time of his death (117 years old) in 1847.*

One of the greatest heroes of the Texas Revolution in early 1836 was James Butler Bonham, a soldier who fought and died at the Alamo. Captain Bonham achieved a place in history when, acting as the fearless messenger for Colonel William B. Travis, he left the old Spanish mission twice to recruit



*The Alamo at noontime*—Photo by Bob Borson ©, [www.lifeofanarchitect.com](http://www.lifeofanarchitect.com)

reinforcements and boldly returned despite tremendous odds—the second time through the lines of the surrounding Mexican army vanguard.

The Texans and other American defenders inside the Alamo numbered fewer than one-hundred and fifty men. They faced thousands of soldiers from Santa Anna's army. Under a sense of urgency that must have been and is still today unimaginable, Col. Travis dispatched Capt. Bonham on 16 February 1836 to the nearby towns of Goliad and Gonzales with a written urgent request for more men to help the undermanned garrison.

Bonham's actions demonstrated utmost courage and are exemplary of the bravery of the veteran ancestors on both sides of his family. None of them ever failed to respond to the call of duty and honor. As if rising to the occasion, Bonham lived the legacy of his ancestors' spilled blood upon the hardened battlefields of earlier times.

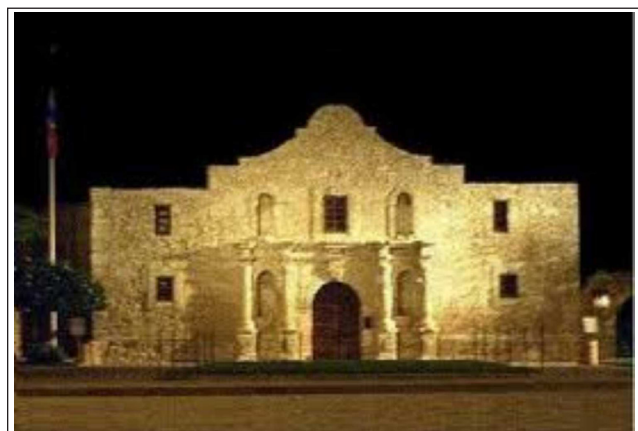
Three days after his second and last return to the Mission, the captain succumbed with gallantry and dignity: he was firing a cannon from the rear

wall of the Alamo when he was killed.

## A Fighting Tradition

In Texas history books, there appears to be no references to Bonham's ancestors that fought in the American Revolution. Yet the hereditary link to those brave souls would help explain the noble blood that compelled him to do what so few others would have done.

Secondary sources indicate Bonham's paternal grandfather, Absalom Bonham, was a Lieutenant of the Fourth Battalion, New Jersey Troops, in 1777 and served to the close of the American Revolution. Even though he was a native of Maryland, he enlisted in a New Jersey regiment and became a Major of the Line on the establishment of that State. After the war, Absalom Bonham was a founding member of the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of New Jersey.



*The Alamo at night*—Photo: by Roger Burgess ©, [www.lsjunction.com](http://www.lsjunction.com)

Bonham's father, Private James Bonham, served at Yorktown when he was only fifteen years old. His company's captain was just nineteen years old.

On the other side of the family was his mother, Sophia Smith, who was the daughter of James Smith and Sarah Butler. On the Smith side, Jacob

Smith, Jr., a Partisan Ranger in the Revolution, was Bonham's grandfather. His son married Hester Smallwood, whose father was Prior Smallwood (1680-1734). Hester's mother was Elizabeth Stone, the daughter of John Stone, son of William Stone, Governor of Maryland. The Governor's wife, Verlinda (Graves) Stone, was the daughter of Captain Thomas Graves, who arrived with the second company at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1608.

Bonham's grandmother, Hester Smallwood, had a brother named Bayne Smallwood, who was a merchant and large planter in Virginia. In addition, he was the presiding officer of the Court of Common Pleas and a member of the House of Burgesses. His son, General William Smallwood of the Continental Line in the American Revolution, was born in Kent County, Maryland in 1732. At a young age, William was sent to England for his education and finished his studies at Eton College.

In April, 1775, back in America with the rank of Colonel, William was in command of 1,444 men, whom he led to Long Island to fight in the initial phase of the Revolutionary War. Four-hundred of his Maryland Line made six bayonet charges against Lord Cornwallis' brigade, which outnumbered Smallwood's men ten to one. With the sixth charge, the British line was scattered.

Later, in the Battle of Long Island, with a Hessian force in front and a British brigade at the rear, the Maryland Line was credited with saving the Continental Army by breaking through the British ranks. This resulted in a loss of 256 enemy officers and men. Two days later, Smallwood's men covered the withdrawal of General Washington's troops at Fort Putnam, New York. Although they did not fully stand their ground, they attacked and drove the British from their positions.

The Maryland Line under Smallwood's command appears to have been at most of the major battles of the Northern Campaign. They fought at Princeton and Trenton, New Jersey; Staten Island, New York; Brandywine and Germantown, Pennsylvania; Fort Mifflin, New York; Wilmington, Delaware; as well as at Elizabethtown, Monmouth, Scotch Plains and Camden, New Jersey. For that distinguished service Colonel Smallwood received

the recognition of Congress and later was promoted to Major General, the highest rank at that time. In 1785 General Smallwood was elected to Congress and subsequently served three terms as Governor of Maryland.

In addition to the Bonham, Smith and Smallwood traditions, the captain's maternal grandmother's maiden name—Butler—is in its own right distinguished in South Carolinian history.

### The Butlers

One Captain James Butler, a great uncle to Bonham, was killed in the American Revolution's infamous Cloud Creek Massacre, which occurred in Saluda County, S.C., in November 1781. The captain's son, young James Butler, also counted among the numerous Patriots' slaughtered dead.

The Patriots in that situation had been promised a dignified surrender, but the surrender was made to a force of Tories led by the notorious "Bloody Bill" Cunningham, who so "hacked the prisoners to pieces by broadswords that it was difficult to recognize them," reads one account.

Before his death, Captain Butler had also served with General Richardson in the Snow Campaign and on the Florida Expedition. Later, as a Captain, he led a company under Colonel Williamson against the Cherokee Indians. He was captured in

the fall of Charleston and was imprisoned at Ninety-Six, where he was held aboard a prison ship in Charleston Harbor. After his release, he served in Captain Sterling Turner's militia company.

William Butler, the eldest son of Captain James Butler, had served under General Benjamin Lincoln at the Battle of Stono and later served under Count Casimir Pulaski. His military service also included a tour of duty under General Andrew Pickens at Augusta, Georgia, and in South Carolina at the Old Ninety-Six and at Dean Swamp, where on May 24, 1782, he led a force of patriots in a sword charge against a superior force of Loyalists commanded by Maj. William Cunningham, which resulted in a Patriot victory.

In 1781 William attained the rank of Captain of the Mounted Rangers. Ten years later he was elected Sheriff of the Old Ninety-Six, where he received



*Bonham's nephew bore a resemblance*  
—Photo courtesy of Bonham Elementary School, Midland (TX) ISD



General George Washington. Nine years after having met George Washington, William Butler was elected to Congress. He served in that body for ten years, retiring in 1810, in favor of John C. Calhoun. During the War of 1812 he acted as Major General of all state forces in South Carolina. His sons also had sterling careers in the War of 1812 and in the Mexican War.

Given the proud traditions in both families, it should come as no surprise that James Butler Bonham became involved early on in the fighting for this country's freedoms.

### An Early Start

As a lawyer from South Carolina, Bonham served as an aide to Governor James Hamilton, Jr., during the nullification crisis in 1832, a position that brought him the rank of lieutenant colonel. At the same time he was also Captain of a Charleston artillery company, which he had trained. This artillery background explains why he was firing cannon from the rear wall of the Alamo when he was killed.

Bonham's trait to take a stand against wrongs began to show as early as 1830, when he was 23 years old. In that year he horsewhipped a fellow lawyer who had insulted a lady client of his. When a judge cited him for contempt, and Bonham threatened the judge, he was then sentenced to ninety days in jail. Upon his release, he determined that he had had enough of his home state of South Carolina.

By October 1834, he was practicing law in Montgomery, Alabama, where his childhood friend and cousin, William B. Travis, had also practiced law. But by this time Travis had already moved on to Texas, where he was an attorney and officer in the Texas Army. He wrote to Bonham with the promise of great opportunities to be had in Texas: Bonham accepted the invitation and sealed his fate.

The following year, on 17 October 1835, Bonham led a rally of support for the Texan cause at the Shakespeare Theater in Mobile, Alabama. Three days later he was elected by citizens of Mobile to carry their resolutions of support to Sam Houston. In another two weeks, he organized a volunteer company, the Mobile Grays, for service in Texas.

Before leaving for Texas, Bonham rode by horseback to South Carolina where he saw his mother. With the help of his brother, Milledge Luke Bonham, he outfitted himself for the trip to Texas and acquired the beautiful buckskin mare that later was so well remembered for having spirited her rider past the ranks of the Mexican army at the Alamo.

After arriving in Texas, the Mobile Grays were stationed at the Alamo for a short time before the majority of these men were transferred on to Goliad, where they served under Col. Fannin at El Presidio La Bahía. Just days before Bonham's death, he again saw these men when he delivered Travis' plea to Fannin.

Knowing of the connection between Bonham and the Mobile Grays may help to explain why some of those men were so willing and insistent to fight at

the Alamo, but were overruled. This is the first time to this writer's knowledge that the affinity between Bonham and the Grays stationed at Goliad has been documented.

One reason the connection did not come out much sooner is that none of those Mobile Grays survived to

tell the story. A few short weeks following the thirteen-day siege at the Alamo, on Palm Sunday, 27 March 1836, Fannin and nearly three-hundred and fifty men under his command were massacred by the Mexican army in Goliad.

On that Sunday morning, the three hundred and fifty men were marched out of the presidio in three separate detachments and then shot, stabbed, and clubbed. Only twenty-seven escaped into the brush. For effective purposes, that was the end of the Mobile Grays, the New Orleans Grays, the Alabama Red Rovers, the Kentucky Mustangs and all others who had offered themselves to aid in the Texas fight for liberty.

### Grave Urgency

At Goliad, Bonham delivered the plea on 25 February 1836 to Colonel James Walker Fannin stationed at El Presidio La Bahía. After three days of indecision, Fannin ordered three-hundred and twenty men, four cannon and several supply wagons to march toward the Alamo some ninety miles



Childhood home of James Bonham Butler, named Flat Grove, Saluda County, South Carolina.—Photo source: indigobluesc.com

away. But the group, which included Mobile Grays and New Orleans Grays, was ordered to turn back not long after starting out, due to various issues.

Fannin blamed the retreat on his officers; the officers and enlisted men accused Fannin of aborting the mission. Despite his name being enshrined in several places throughout the Lone Star State, including on a busy avenue in downtown Houston, history has come down hard on him and has not completely forgiven him for suspected cowardice.

Meanwhile, in Gonzales, Bonham caught up with Robert M. Williamson, commander of the Texas Ranger Battalion, who enthusiastically supported the cause. However, circumstances prevented him from mustering immediate support.

Bonham returned to the Alamo through the Mexican lines on March 3, bearing a letter to Travis from Williamson: "For God's sake hold out until we can assist you!" At the time he penned his reply, Williamson (and, for that matter, Bonham) was unaware that Fannin had already called off the reinforcements from Goliad. When Bonham reported back to Travis, he was under the impression that reinforcements would soon arrive, yet he must also have sensed that certain death awaited them all.

James Michener, who wrote the epic historical novel *Texas*, said of the men of the Alamo: "I could have been a Jim Bowie if I'd had the stature and the reflexes. I could have been certainly a Travis. But Bonham I could not have been. When I got out of the Alamo the second time, I'd have said, 'to hell with this thing.' I probably would have come back the first time, not the second time. I stand in awe of that man. I

would say he's probably my favorite Texan."

The battles that raged in Texas were inspired by revenge. Because independence-minded Texans initially ousted Mexican forces with an offensive at Gonzales, Santa Anna then charged his army up to the Alamo to seek vengeance. Following the slaughters at the Alamo and at Goliad, Texans responded with tempered retribution, and all forces

were coalesced under the leadership of Sam Houston, who led them eastward to the vicinity where a great city would one day rise and bear his name.

The next time the two forces met, it was during a sleepy afternoon on a grassy stretch near Buffalo Bayou and the San Jacinto River. After General Houston ordered

the burning of the only bridge providing access into the area, the Texans hid amongst trees until ready to take their adversaries by complete surprise. They charged across the meadow, yelling out, "Remember the Alamo, Remember Goliad!"

The Battle of San Jacinto ended nearly as quickly

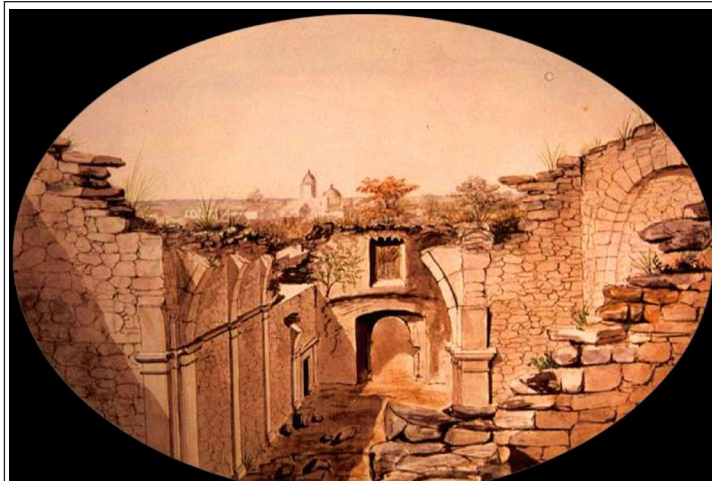
as it began: it was a complete rout, with most of the Mexican forces being killed or deserting. The monument that stands tall on the battlefield contains an inscription, part of which reads:

"Measured by its results, San Jacinto was one of the decisive battles of the world. The freedom of Texas from Mexico

won here led to annexation and to the Mexican-American War, resulting in the acquisition by the United States of the states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, California, Utah and parts of Colorado, Wyoming, Kansas and Oklahoma. Almost one-third of the present area of the American Nation, nearly a million square miles of territory, changed sovereignty."■



*Ruins of the Alamo, watercolor, 1847, by Edward Everett—Source: Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, <http://www.cartermuseum.org>*



*Ruins of the Alamo (from inside), watercolor, 1847, by Edward Everett—Source: Texas A&M University, <http://www.tamu.edu>*



# Tarleton's Raid on Pound Ridge, New York

July 2, 1779

by Jay Harris

*The following is the first of a two-part article on Banastre Tarleton's raid of Pound Ridge, New York, in 1779, excerpted from God's Country: A History of Pound Ridge, New York by Jay Harris (Hess), Pequot Press, 1971, renewed 1999. The author is a writer and journalist as well as this publication's Assistant Editor for Life. Her late husband, Richard Farmer Hess, was editor of the separate Drumbeat newsletter and Flintlock & Powderhorn magazine from 1985 to 2000. The story is printed here with the permission of the Pound Ridge Historical Society, which now owns the copyright to the book.*

Why should Pound Ridge, a town [in Westchester County] of no strategic importance, be attacked by a crack detachment of British troops in 1779? There were several reasons.

Ordered to make the rebels feel the severity of the war, Clinton and naval counterpart Sir George Collier [were obliged] to plan a series of wide-ranging, hit-and-run raids in the summer of that year in hopes of luring Gen. George Washington and his forces out from the Hudson River Valley. Pound Ridge and Bedford in New York, and Norwalk, New Haven and Fairfield in nearby Connecticut, were attacked within a two-week period.

In his report to Lord George Germain at the British War Office, Sir Henry Clinton, commander in chief of the British cavalry in North America, said he had hoped to surprise a regiment of American cavalry at Pound Ridge. That regiment, commanded by Col. Elisha Sheldon, had engaged in frequent skirmishes with the British and was charged with the protection of the northern frontier from incursions by Tories and British soldiers from below the lines at North Castle.

Another reason [for choosing Pound Ridge] was to capture Maj. Ebenezer Lockwood, for whom the British were offering a reward of forty guineas (enough to buy ten acres of good farm land). In addition to serving as a Major in the 2d Regiment of Westchester County Militia, he was also a town supervisor, a Justice of the Peace, a member of the Committee of Safety, a delegate to the New York Provincial Congress, and a member of the committee for the first state constitution. Furthermore, Maj. Lockwood's home was serving as Col. Sheldon's Pound Ridge headquarters.

To lead the raid on Pound Ridge, Clinton chose 24-year-old Banastre Tarleton, who had distinguished himself during the campaigns in New Jersey and had been made a Lieutenant Colonel in 1778. For this expedition, his first independent command, Tarleton had the best troops of his "British

Legion," which was formed from various regiments of light dragoons and infantry, mainly Loyalists. In all there were about two-hundred men, including some Hessian Yagers mounted on the best of the horses that survived the trip from England and Ireland and some that had been captured during previous skirmishes with the Americans.

The attack on Pound Ridge did give the British an unexpected windfall: among captured documents were papers which revealed secrets of the American spy ring operating behind British lines. Overall, however, the raid was a disappointment to the British: They had not surprised the Patriot cavalry, because the Americans had been forewarned of their coming; they may have terrified the inhabitants of the town, but not for long; furthermore, they failed to capture Maj. Lockwood, although they took his son-in-law as prisoner. [Neither were they successful in coaxing George Washington, et al, eastward, where the Army would have been more vulnerable and easier to engage.]

## Expecting Engagement

Three days prior to the raid, Washington had ordered Col. Stephen Moylan and his 4th Regiment of Light Horse to proceed to the "neighborhood of Bedford where Sheldon's Horse and a few light infantry are stationed" and take them under his command in order to protect the country and inhabitants, give confidence to the militia, and provide as much intelligence about the enemy's plans as possible.

Sheldon arrived in Pound Ridge on July 1 to take command of his regiment and await Moylan's arrival. Luther Kinnicutt, an American spy under orders of the Committee of Safety, had forewarned Sheldon the night before of an impending British attack but was unable to determine when it would be made.

Comprising the American forces in Pound Ridge were: ninety of Sheldon's 2nd Regiment of

Light Horse, commanded by Maj. Benjamin Tallmadge and stationed in the hamlet, the town's center; about one-hundred Continental foot soldiers of the 6th Connecticut Regiment, under command of Maj. Eli Leavenworth, stationed along the southern road to Bedford, about a mile from the hamlet; and about another hundred local militia, commanded by Maj. Lockwood—fewer than three-hundred men in all, and most of them new to soldiering.

Kinnicutt's warning had personal as well as military significance for Maj. Lockwood. With his wife seven months pregnant with their eighth child, he was determined to move his family to safety in Ridgefield, Connecticut. A heavy rain fell into the night. Sheldon dissuaded the Lockwoods from leaving, saying that it was unlikely that the British would attack in such bad weather. With their personal belongings packed, the Lockwood family sat up all night fully dressed, ready to depart early the next morning.

Sheldon, too, took precautions against the expected attack. His men were billeted in barns and outbuildings on the Lockwood farm and were kept under arms, ready for the first alarm. Their horses were saddled and bridled and tied to a picket line in back of the Presbyterian meeting house. Mounted sentinels were posted on both the north and south roads between Bedford and Pound Ridge. Local militias were told to be prepared on short notice to come to the hamlet to support the cavalry. Pound Ridge was ready and waiting.

Eager to make a name for himself and to reach Pound Ridge before Moylan's cavalry arrived, Tarleton left his camp on the Bronx River near Yonkers at 11:30 p.m. on July 1, in spite of the "remarkably bad" rainstorm in progress. Tarleton reached North Castle Church at the Bedford border shortly before 4 a.m. on July 2 and stopped to check out intelligence reports on the Pound Ridge forces and the whereabouts of Moylan's regiment.

## The Encounter

Instead of taking the more direct southern road from Bedford to Pound Ridge, he chose the northern route. As dawn was breaking, directions to

Sheldon's headquarters were asked of a man named Crawford, who was standing in the doorway of his house on the road from Bedford leading to Ridgefield and Danbury. Misunderstanding Crawford's directions, Tarleton's dragoons went north on the Bedford road for about half a mile before they realized their mistake. They retraced their steps to the fork in the road and proceeded south toward the hamlet.

A mounted American sentinel who had climbed the Stone Hills for a better view spotted men and horses coming from Bedford on the northern road.

He galloped back to Sheldon's headquarters to report what he had seen. Sheldon had just ordered his unit's horses to be unsaddled and turned out into an adjacent field prior to their being fed and groomed, but on hearing the sentinel's report he immediately countermanded his order and dispatched Maj. Tallmadge and a small group of men to determine whether the observed troops were Moylan's or the enemy's. To be ready for either eventuality, he ordered the rest of his men to mount their horses.

Tallmadge and his men galloped up the road for about half a mile to where a hill and right turn obscured the view ahead. Going a few paces farther, they found themselves face-to-face with the advancing British dragoons. The

British officer in the lead called upon Tallmadge to surrender and immediately ordered his own men to charge.

The Americans wheeled about and rode at full speed toward the hamlet with the British in hot pursuit, "standing in their stirrups and shouting and whirling their swords over their heads," according to an eyewitness.

The vanguard of the British forces engaged in hand-to-hand combat with Sheldon's men while some of the inexperienced militia withdrew to join Maj. Leavenworth on the Pound Ridge-Bedford road to the west. After a few moments, Tarleton and the main body of his troops reached the hamlet. He ordered his dragoons to charge and deployed his infantry to prevent the Americans from escaping by either of the Bedford roads.

*Part II will appear in the Fall issue of the Drumbeat.*



*Ralph Earl portrait of Benjamin Tallmadge and son William.— Credit: Collection of Litchfield Historical Society, Litchfield, CT.*



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