



The Florida Society of the Sons of the American Revolution

Fort Lauderdale Chapter Newsletter



website: www.sarfl.weebly.com

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"I die hard; but I am not afraid to go."

George Washington's Final Battle

Posted on December 14, 2018 by Mark Maloy

George Washington died on December 14, 1799. On December 12, 1799, the celebrated Revolutionary War general and former president rode around his beloved Virginia plantation, Mount Vernon. Despite the fact it was snowing and sleeting, Washington spent five hours in the winter weather. Washington had survived much worse winters before, and gave little thought to this particular storm, even as he sat for dinner that evening with snow still clinging to his hair. Later that night however, he began to show signs of a sore throat. The next day, he went out again in the miserable weather to mark some trees that needed to be cut down. On the night of December 13, the sore throat had gotten worse. He stayed up that night reading the newspaper with his wife, Martha, and his personal secretary, Tobias Lear. As he headed to bed, Lear suggested he take some medicine for his cold. Washington declined, saying he would "let it go as it came."^[1]

Around 3 or 4 in the morning, Washington awoke with a fever and his throat even more tender. Martha was worried and wanted to go alert Tobias Lear, but Washington was afraid the cold air would harm Martha and decided to wait until the enslaved handmaid Caroline came into the room to start a fire at 7 in the morning. At that time, Lear was alerted and he immediately called for doctors to come to Mount Vernon.

Three doctors would attend to the General in his final illness: Dr. Gustavus Brown, Dr. Elisha Cullen Dick, and Washington's personal physician and good friend: Dr. James Craik. The three physicians, using the medical knowledge they had at the time, did everything they could to try and heal Washington, but nothing seemed to work. They tried to administer a mixture of molasses, butter and vinegar which he couldn't swallow. He was given an enema which resulted in an evacuation of his bowels. Throughout the day, the doctors (with the consent of Washington) performed four blood lettings. At the time, it was thought that sicknesses were caused from an imbalance of four different 'humors' in the body (phlegm, blood, black bile, and yellow bile), and by bleeding a patient, they would be healed. Of course, instead of healing Washington, this only weakened him. Over ten hours, the physicians took out about five pints of blood (nearly half of the blood in his body). The room reeked of "blood and stench and sweat."^[2]



The Fort Lauderdale Chapter held it's November meeting and Installation of our 2022 Officers, there were two married couples in attendance.

NEXT MEETING - January 15, 2022

**Davie Outback Steak House
2725 South University Dr. Davie, Florida 33328**

Future Dates:
December Wreaths Across America

Saturday, 02/19/2022
Saturday, 03/19/2022
Saturday, 04/16/2022
Saturday, 05/21/2022

Time: 11:30 AM social gathering; Lunch at noon

FOR RESERVATIONS CALL: **954-559-3202**
or e-mail **Joe Motes at: joemotes@aol.com**

December 2021
Compatriots,

As 2021 ends, we take note of our many accomplishments made this year in spite of restrictions or limitations imposed by adherence to COVID protocols.

First, our chapter membership continues to be made up of over fifty compatriots who mostly reside in Broward County. During 2021 we inducted three new members: Peter Stevenson, his son, Michael Stevenson, and Dennis Grubbs. We accepted a transfer in, Martin Hollick, and a dual member, Mark Snider. We assisted several prospective members in lineage research over the course of the year, with four applicants currently pending national approval: Steven DePaul, Herbert Gardner, James Harn and Seth MacCutcheon.

Second, in spite of the pandemic, we continued membership meetings through Zoom. In July, we were all pleased to resume in person lunch meetings which were also held in September, October and November 2021. Most notable is that average member attendance at the lunch meetings approximates ten with typically another 3 guests joining us as a friend, spouse, or new prospective applicant.

Third, while adherence to COVID protocols still affects our annual award programs recognizing Eagle Scouts, JROTC, Sea Cadets, and law and fire personnel, some certificates or awards have been issued but mostly distributed by mail. We are hopeful that in person award ceremonies can resume sometime next year. Our support of the Swamp Fox Chapter of the Children of the American Revolution (CAR) has continued throughout the year with both financial and advisory assistance. We acknowledge and thank Joe Motes for all of his efforts in administering these external programs, and in representing the chapter with these various outside groups and organizations.

Looking ahead to 2022, new officers were elected as follows: Chuck Adams, President and Local Registrar/Genealogist; Allen Manning, Vice President; Joe Motes, Treasurer/Historian; Peter Stevenson, Secretary/Chancellor; Jim Lohmeyer, Chaplin. These compatriots along with immediate Past President, Tom Shepherd and appointed member-at-large, Mark Snider will serve as the Executive Committee overseeing next year's operations for the Fort Lauderdale Chapter.

Happy Holidays
Chuck Adams
President and Local Registrar/Genealogist

**Meeting Minutes
Fort Lauderdale Chapter SAR
November 20, 2021
Outback Steakhouse
2725 S. University Dr., Davie, FL**

Attendance:

Members: Thomas Shepherd, President; Chuck Adams, Vice President and Local Registrar/Genealogist; Joe Motes, Treasurer/Historian; Peter Stevenson, Secretary; Jim Lohmeyer, Chaplin; John Brown; Dennis Grubbs Allen Manning; John Sauerwald; Mark Snider; **Guests:** Steven DePaul; Herb Gardner; Ronna Adams, Michele Manning.

Call to Order: Thomas Shepherd gavelled the meeting to order at about 12:05 p.m. **Introductions:** The members and participants introduced themselves.

Opening Ceremonies: Jim Lohmeyer gave the **Invocation.** Thomas Shepherd led the participants in reciting the **Pledge of Allegiance** and the **SAR Pledge.** **Approval of Minutes:** Thomas Shepherd asked for approval of the previous meeting's minutes. Motion by Pete Stevenson and seconded by Chuck Adams to approve the meeting minutes of 9/18/2021. Unanimously approved.

Other Officer's and Committee Reports:

Vice President & Local Registrar/Genealogist:: Chuck Adams reported approval was still pending for three applications submitted to national in September: Steven DePaul, Herb Gardner & Jim Harn. He expects NSSAR approval by the end of November. An application for Seth MacCutcheon is being signed and should be submitted shortly. He is a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Marines, stationed in Hawaii.

Treasurer/Historian and Program Committee Chairman: Joe Motes reported the chapter's finances did not change significantly from last month – when he reported the checking account balance of \$4,487.07, and the certificate of deposit balance of \$19,729. Joe stated that the Wreath Across America event will be observed on December 18th at the

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Lakewood Cemetery, and he'll send out further information. Joe will present a check for \$350 to the Boca Raton CAR (Children of the American Revolution) chapter on November 28th. Joe plans to recognize Pembroke Pines law enforcement by presenting them with a SAR medal, and he encourages future chapter recognition of other local law enforcement and fire departments.

Annual Election of Officers:

- 1) Tom Shepherd reviewed the Executive Committee nominations for next year's 2022 officers : Chuck Adams, President and Local Registrar/Genealogist; Allen Manning, Vice President; Joe Motes, Treasurer/Historian; Peter Stevenson, Secretary/Chancellor; Jim Lohmeyer, Chaplin. Tom asked for any additional nominations from the membership present. There being none, the slate was unanimously approved by the membership. Tom then conducted the induction ceremony for the new officers.
- 2) Chuck Adams asked Mark Snider to join the Executive Committee as an at-large member. Mark agreed.
- 3) Chuck stated that he will organize a zoom meeting for the new Executive Committee within the new few weeks to discuss programs for 2022. He also wants to discuss his thoughts on updating the bylaws.

Old Business/New Business:

- 1) The next meeting will be a South Florida regional meeting (including Miami and Palm Beach chapter members) to be held on January 15, 2022, at the Outback Steakhouse on University Drive, starting at 11:30 a.m.
- 2) Jim Lohmeyer suggested future meetings could feature short presentations by members on historical figures from the revolution or our own individual patriot ancestors.

Closing Ceremonies: Jim Lohmeyer gave the **Benediction**, and Chuck Adams led the participants in reciting the **SAR Recessional**.

Adjournment: Chuck Adams adjourned the meeting at about 1:19 p.m.



Our Chapter donated \$100 to the Senior Patrol Leader Life Scout who is working on his Eagle Scout project, which is to support our U.S. Troops overseas and homeless veterans.



Fort Lauderdale Chapter member Joe Motes presented an Eagle Scout certificate to an Eagle Scout in Troop 224.



The Fort Lauderdale Chapter members Tom Shepherd, Chuck Adams and Joe Motes attended the C.A.R. Swamp Fox Society May zoom meeting.





The Fort Lauderdale Chapter S.A.R. held our first post COVID meeting with the installation of our newest member, on July 17, 2021.

The Fort Lauderdale Chapter S.A.R. held our second post COVID meeting on September 18, 2021. Chuck Adams was award the Liberty Medal by the State of Florida.



Joe Motes attended Wreaths Across America last December at Forest Lawn Memorial Gardens in Pompano Beach along with members of Children of The American Revolution Swamp Fox Society.



The Fort Lauderdale Chapter attended the Fall C.A.R. Swamp Fox meeting and presented them a check for \$350, Joe Motes was presented with some Veterans cards by their members.



Joe Motes presented two SAR Good Citizenship Medals to two Sea Cadets at their annual May awards ceremony, this was the only awards ceremonies that we able to present in person, hopefully next year we will be back to normal.



Our Chapter donated \$100 to the Senior Patrol Leader Life Scout who is working on his Eagle Scout project, which is to support our U.S. Troops overseas and homeless veterans.



Fort Lauderdale Chapter member Joe Motes presented an Eagle Scout certificate to an Eagle Scout in Troop 224.



On May 16th, the Fort Lauderdale Chapter held its Zoom Meeting with 13 members in attendance.



The Fort Lauderdale Chapter held our March 28, 2021 meeting with members from the Swamp Fox Society Children of The American Revolution. We had a successful meeting with 17 in attendance. It was my pleasure on behalf of our chapter to present the Swamp Fox Chapter with a check for \$350.

**Fort Lauderdale Chapter
Sons of the American Revolution
2133 NW 208 Terrace
Pembroke Pines FL 33029-2320**

Over the years different modern doctors have tried and diagnose the illness that had stricken Washington. It is likely he was suffering from acute epiglottitis caused by virulent bacteria. Epiglottitis is when the “epiglottis — a small cartilage “lid” that covers your windpipe — swells, blocking the flow of air into your lungs.”[3] In effect, Washington was slowly suffocating to death.

As the day turned to night, Washington realized he was going and began to prepare for his death. He had his wife bring him two wills from his desk and ordered one of them to be burned. He asked Tobias Lear to ensure all his papers be organized and secured through the extreme agony he was in.

During this difficult ordeal, he noticed his enslaved servant Christopher Sheels had been standing in the room all day and Washington directed him to sit down. Throughout the night, in the room with Washington was his wife Martha at the foot of the bed, Tobias Lear, Christopher Sheels, the three doctors, the house keeper Eleanor Forbes and three enslaved women (Molly, Caroline, and Charlotte). As the night wore on, Washington begged the doctors to “let me go off quietly.” Washington looked at his friend Dr. Craik and said “Doctor, I die hard; but I am not afraid to go.”[1] Dr. Dick suggested to the other doctors that they attempt a new procedure, a tracheotomy (cutting a hole in his throat so he could breathe). The others viewed this as too dangerous and rejected the proposal.

As Washington felt himself going he made one last request to Tobias Lear. He asked that they wait three days after his death before they bury him. Washington was fearful of being accidentally buried alive. After Lear acknowledged this request, Washington uttered his last words: “‘Tis Well.”

2022 CHAPTER OFFICERS

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Around 10 o'clock that evening Washington checked his pulse on his wrist. Shortly thereafter his hand fell to his side and “he expired without a struggle or sigh.” Martha, after asking if he was gone, said “Tis well, All is now over, I shall soon follow him! I have no more trials to pass through!”[1] Martha, who had survived the deaths of her parents, all four of her children, and now her second husband, would never sleep in the room again. She died a little more than two years later in 1802.

It was a profoundly distressing and sad time, not only for Washington's close friends and family who mourned his passing, but for the young nation, who had lost the great unifier of its time. Though gone, the legacy he left was one of courage, honor and virtue. He would be eulogized by his fellow Virginian Light Horse Harry Lee two weeks later as “First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen.”[4]

The bed on which Washington had died would eventually end up at Arlington House, the home of Martha Washington's grandson, George Washington Parke Custis. His grandson (and Robert E. Lee's son) George Washington Custis Lee donated the bed to the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association in 1908. Today, you can see the bed he died on in the very room where he died at Mount Vernon.

In 1999, to mark the 200th anniversary of Washington's death a full reenactment of his funeral was staged at Mount Vernon, which I attended.

In 2015, Mount Vernon did an incredible and very moving living history program centered around the story of Washington's death with evening candlelight tours of the mansion led by costumed interpreters who portrayed many of the people who were there that night. It concluded with a replica of Washington's coffin laid out in the New Room and a grieving Martha Washington. This was followed by a walk to the Old Tomb where he was initially buried and ended at Washington's New Tomb where a wreath was laid by his sarcophagus. Though this is a subject very sad and morose (especially during the holiday season), it is an extremely important one. This event was one of the most important and well recorded events that occurred at Mount Vernon, and it summed up the character of the man. This was the final battle General Washington engaged in, and he showed the world that he died as he lived: courageous to the bitter end.

Outside of the sources cited here, I highly recommend to get a minute by minute look at Washington's death as well as a more comprehensive view of how Washington viewed death and the interestingly lack of religious ceremony, I suggest you check out the following two books by Dr. Peter R. Henriques:

Henriques, Peter R. *He Died as He Lived: The Death of George Washington*. Mount Vernon, VA: Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, 2000.

Henriques, Peter R. *Realistic Visionary: A Portrait of George Washington*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2006.

[1] Lear, Tobias. Account of Washington's Death, Diary Entry, December 14, 1799.

<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/06-04-02-0406-0002>

[2] Smith, Richard Norton. *Patriarch: George Washington and the New American Nation*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1993. pg. 353.

[3] Mayo Clinic, <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/epiglottitis/symptoms-causes/syc-20372227>

[4]://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/georgewashington/education/materials/Transcript-Funeral.pdf