



The Florida Society of the Sons of the American Revolution

Fort Lauderdale Chapter Newsletter



website: <http://www.learnwebskills.com/sar/index.html>

JANUARY 2017

Fort Lauderdale Chapter chartered December 8, 1966

Volume 50 Number 1

President's Message

Fellow Compatriots,

Greetings and Happy New Year!

May 2017 be a year of health and happiness for all of you and your families.

It is my honor to serve as your Chapter President this year. My goal for 2017 is to increase membership and to continue having interesting guest speakers attend our meetings.

I want to thank you for all your support you have given me.

This months guest speaker is TBA. Hope to see you all there.

Fraternally,

Allen Manning

"Liberty cannot be preserved without general knowledge among the people." - John Adams

November Minutes

The meeting of the Sons of the American Revolution, Broward Chapter, called to order by President Allan Manning.

Patriot Ted Duay delivered the invocation and lead in the Pledge to Flag of the United States of American and Pledge to SAR was recited by all.

Guest speaker and award winner of Law Enforcement Medal is Captain Edward Sileo. You can see in the October newsletter many accomplishments of Capt. Sileo. There are similar links between M/Sgt Marco Boleda talk last month and Capt. Sileo this month, mainly the covert actions we have taken in South America. This proves how we as a nation are looking into protecting our nation.

Again we want to thank Captain Sileo and M/Sgt. Boleda for their help in keeping America safe.

Certificate and Medal was awarded to Captain Sileo by President Allen Manning.

Present officers have consented to serve next year. Nominations from the floor will also be accepted at our January 21, 2017 meeting.

Jim Lohmeyer moved we contribute the same number and cost as last year for Wreaths Across America, Ted Duay, 2nd, approved.

Next meeting being held at Nat'l Cemetery, Lake Worth, Fl. See Joe Motes for details and directions.

No other business motion to adjourn approved by all reciting Recessional and Ted Duay giving benediction.



President Allen Manning presented the Law Enforcement Medal and Certificate to Captain Edward Sileo during our November meeting.



NEXT MEETING - JANUARY 21, 2017

Colony West Golf Club

6800 NW 88th Ave , Tamarac, FL 33321

Future Dates:

Saturday , 02/18/17

Saturday , 03/18/17

Saturday , 04/15/17

Saturday , 05/20/17

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

FOR RESERVATIONS CALL: **954-559-3202**

or e-mail **Joe Motes at: joemotes@aol.com**



On July 15, 1775, less than two weeks after he arrived in Cambridge, Massachusetts, to take command of the Continental Army, Gen. George Washington penned this entry in his expense notebook:

To 333 1/3 Dollars give to ——— to enduce him to go into the Town of Boston; to establish a secret correspondence for the purpose of conveying intelligence of the Enemy's movements & designs*

The asterisk led to a note that said, "The names of Persons who are employed within the Enemy's lines, or who may fall within their power cannot be inserted." That £100 expenditure was the second largest that the general made in 1775. The only bigger outlay was the £239 he paid for five horses when he started out from Philadelphia.^[1] Espionage was thus a very big investment for the commander-in-chief.

Who was the man who agreed "to go into the Town of Boston" and "establish a secret correspondence with Washington? The answer lies in a July 28 letter that Joseph Reed, the general's military secretary, sent to Lt. Col. Loammi Baldwin, who was commanding American troops along the north side of Boston harbor. Reed gave Baldwin an unusual assignment:

In full Confidence of your prudence & Secrecy as a Soldier, a Man of Honour & a Friend to your Country, the General has directed me to communicate to you a Scheme he is about to put in Execution to obtain constant & authentick Intelligence from Boston. The Plan is this. The inclosed Letter will be delivered by you to one Dewksbury who lives about 4 Miles from you towards Shirly Point—He will deliver it to a Waterman whom he can depend on who will convey it to one John Carnes a Grocer in the South Part of Boston. The Answers & such Intelligence as he can procure will be forwarded to you thro the same Channell: which you are to transmit to his Excellency by Express immedy—As the Success of the Project & the life of the Man in Boston may depend upon your Conduct let it not escape you to the nearest Friend on Earth & for fear of Accident destroy this Letter as soon as you are sufficiently Master of its Contents—When you see Dewksbury give him the above Caution in the strongest Terms: And so to pass from him to the other—Your good Conduct & Discretion in this Matter will not fail to be duly noticed.^[2]

In writing this letter, Reed made many mistakes that a more seasoned spy manager would have avoided. To start with, there is no indication that Reed or Washington had met with Baldwin to assess his ability to manage intelligence agents. Then Reed chose to put his instructions in writing instead of delivering them orally. Most significantly, he included much more sensitive information than was necessary. All Baldwin needed to know was to pass the enclosed letter to "one Dewksbury" and

await a response from him. Baldwin did not need to know how Dewksbury would send the letter across the water, nor the name of the Continental agent inside Boston.

Furthermore, despite Reed's instruction to "destroy this Letter as soon as you are sufficiently Master of its Contents," Baldwin saved that document (which is fortunate for us, because it identifies Gen. Washington's first spy).

The man Reed called "John Carnes a grocer" was born in Boston on July 11, 1723. His father was a pewterer who had improved his social position through business and militia service. John entered Harvard College, his father paying the tuition by supplying pewter tableware. Young Carnes became interested in a ministerial career, especially after hearing the Rev. George Whitefield preach in Cambridge in 1740.^[3] He graduated from Harvard in 1742, earned a master's degree, and in December 1746 was ordained as the new minister of Stoneham, Massachusetts, north of Boston. In the following July, he married Mary Lewis of Lynn, three years his senior and from a comfortably wealthy family.

However, Carnes's ministerial position did not work out: in July 1757, he resigned from the Stoneham pulpit, complaining about how little and late the town had paid him.^[4] After preaching in various towns, in April 1759 Carnes accepted a post as minister in Rehoboth's Seekonk parish, near the Rhode Island border. Almost immediately some congregants started to complain about him. In 1763 a council of men from eight other churches and then a committee of the Massachusetts legislature tried to arbitrate the dispute. The legislators concluded that Carnes had done nothing wrong, but found "an unhappy alienation of affection in his people to him, and incurable."^[5]

In December 1764, at Carnes's request, the Seekonk congregation dismissed him from their pulpit. He was forty-one years old, had a wife and a still growing family to maintain, and had failed twice at the only profession he was trained for. Carnes returned to Boston. After delivering a few more sermons, he gave up on preaching. Instead, he opened a shop on Orange Street in the town's South End, selling a variety of goods, including liquor.^[6]

As a businessman Carnes remained low key, not advertising his shop. Two incidents forced him to put notices in the newspapers, offering clues to his business and political attitudes. In March 1769 he announced a ten-dollar reward for apprehending the thief who had broken into his store and stolen a miscellany of goods, including stockings, handkerchiefs, thread, linen and other fabrics, needles, shoes, combs, soap, and knives.^[7]

In January 1770, an angry neighboring shopkeeper described Carnes this way: "a quondam [former] Parson, and twice separated from this People, for Reasons best known to himself, and from a Preacher of the Gospel now follows the laudable Calling of retailing Rum to the Soldiers at the South Part of the Town."^[8] Four days later Carnes responded with a long letter in the *Boston Gazette* denying his neighbor's accusations. Among other things, he wrote: "In respect to my being in the *laudable Business of Retailing*, it is the Fruit of Necessity, and very usual with all persons who are in the grocery-way in the south part of the town where I live." This confirms that Carnes identified himself as "a Grocer." It also confirms that he leaned toward the local Whigs, though he was far from the forefront of the movement.

There is no clue about what motivated Carnes to take the great

Another of Carnes's possible advantages as a spy is that he might have come across as ineffectual. Though most New England ministers commanded respect in their communities, his congregants had rebelled against him *twice*. On his death the Rev. William Bentley of Salem wrote: "His talents were small & his manners displeasing but his simplicity had no vice in it . . . We used often to laugh at Carnes."^[9] Carnes's seeming simplicity could have been valuable in secret intelligence work.

Carnes did send information out of Boston in the summer of 1775. On August 15, Lieutenant Colonel Baldwin sent General Washington important news from Chelsea:

I hope to be able tomorrow to forward to your Excellency a letter from the Mr. J— C— the Grocer I heard from him yesterday Informing that he Expected to git further Information by tomorrow if it comes to hand Shall forward it with all Convenient Speed^[10]

The next day, Baldwin wrote: "I have received a Letter which I suppose came from Mr. J. C. by the Hand of the Gentleman Expected . . ."^[11]

Carnes's letters do not survive in Washington's files, but the news they brought did not remain secret. In fact, that information spread with Carnes's name still attached—a major security breach. On August 20, a refugee from Boston named Ezekiel Price wrote in his diary:

in the afternoon, Mr. Hill, of Providence, was here, who left Cambridge this forenoon, and says, that this morning a woman got out of Boston, who brought a letter from Parson Carnes, which mentioned that the Regulars in Boston intended to come out this night or tomorrow night,—in consequence of which, preparations were making in the several American encampments to receive them^[12]

Given how Hill and Price heard about that report sent by "Parson Carnes," other people behind the American lines probably received the same information. Which meant his name could have made it back to the royal authorities. On August 26 a Loyalist merchant in Newport wrote to Gen. Thomas Gage, the British commander:

A few days ago a Gentn. of your acquaintance, whom I shall not name, called upon me.—He said he had intelligence of much importance to you from the Rebel Camp [?]. He put it under cover to Majr. Sherriff, & I have committed it to a passenger, (a safe hand) who will wait upon your Excellency with it, & communicate verbally such other materials as were not committed to writing.^[13]

Rome was not necessarily passing on a warning about Carnes, but this letter shows how the British commander was able to receive intelligence from "the Rebel Camp."

It is not clear how long Carnes stayed in Boston, gathering information. On November 13 Ezekiel Price recorded hearing another rumor about plans from "Mr. Carnes (a son of the parson's)."^[14] On the other hand, an 1898 volume of *American Ancestry* reported a Carnes family tradition that their ancestor had "corresponded with Gen. Washington, was suspected by Gen. Gage, had his house and papers searched, and was ordered to leave, which he did."^[15] If this tradition is accurate, Carnes must have left Boston before October 11, when Gage sailed for home. Alternatively, it is possible that his successor Gen. William Howe ordered the parson out later and the family misremembered.

Carnes's name does not appear in General Gage's surviving intelligence files. After the parson fell under suspicion, the royal authorities did not lock him in jail, which suggests that they did not realize the depth of his activities.

They might have thought he was just sending out indiscreet letters to relatives, not reporting to General Washington for pay. Carnes's clerical background and unimpressive manner may have worked in his favor.

Either way, Carnes was very lucky—the espionage ring connecting him to General Washington had been infiltrated from the start. The letter that Reed asked Baldwin to send on into Boston had been penned by Dr. Benjamin Church, Jr., the Continental Army's top surgeon. Unknown to Washington, Church was also a paid agent of General Gage.^[16] He could have tipped off the British general about Carnes without even knowing the grocer's identity simply by telling the recipient of the letter to arrest whoever had delivered it as a Continental spy.

Most likely, Church did not take that opportunity to break up the American spy ring. His letters from the summer of 1775 show more concern about getting paid than about providing useful information to the British army. Carnes remained free in Boston for another few weeks, it appears, and then was expelled without punishment. But we can imagine the horror that Washington and Reed felt in early October when they discovered Church was secretly providing information to their enemy and recalled the letter they had sent into Boston for him. It is no wonder that Washington was much more careful to hide information about his spies after 1775.

However his stint as a spy ended, John Carnes was definitely outside Boston before the end of the siege; on March 1, 1776, he took the job of chaplain to a regiment in the Continental Army. He may have received a second payment from Washington because on April 1 the general recorded expending £232 in "Sundry sums . . . for secret services." The "Memmo." that Washington used to detail those expenditures does not survive.^[17]

After serving several months as an army chaplain, Carnes returned to Massachusetts and by the late 1770s settled in Lynn, his wife's home town. His fortunes had clearly improved; he no longer needed to run a shop. The Rev. William Bentley of Salem later attributed this change to "the prosperity of his children," but the funds might have come from General Washington. Carnes became a justice of the peace. He represented Lynn for eight years in the Massachusetts legislature and at the 1788 state convention that ratified the U.S. Constitution. In 1802 simple John Carnes died, keeping his secrets.^[18]

^[1] Washington's expense notebook for the beginning of the Revolutionary War can be read online at the George Washington Papers at the Library of Congress, 1741-1799, part of the American Memory project. The specific page is: <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=mgw5&fileName=gwpage022.db&recNum=2>. The text has been published in *George Washington's Accounts of Expenses While Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army 1775-1783*, John C. Fitzpatrick, editor (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1917), and page images in George Washington and Marvin Kitman. *George Washington's Expense Account* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1970).

^[2] *American Archives*, Peter Force, compiler (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Congress, 1837-53), series 4, 2:1748. The original letter is at the Massachusetts Historical Society, filed in its Miscellaneous Bound Manuscripts collection by the date July 28, 1775.

^[3] Clifford K. Shipton wrote about Carnes in *Sibley's Harvard Graduates* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society,

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1873–), 11:137-42, focusing on his well-documented ministerial career. The only thing that profile says about Carnes’s espionage activity is that his descendants’ recollection of it was “an unsubstantiated family tradition.”

[4] *Sibley’s Harvard Graduates*, 11:139. Carnes published his side of the dispute in the August 22, 1757, *Boston Gazette*.

[5] *Sibley’s Harvard Graduates*, 11:140.

[6] Boston Town Records, formally titled *Reports of the Record Commissioners of the City of Boston* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1876-1905), 20:222, 304. On May 22, 1771, the selectmen granted Carnes a new license to retail from “the House he has lately removed to the South part of Boston, lately improved [i.e., used] by Mr. Joseph Ballard”; Boston Town Records, 23:87.

[7] *Boston Gazette*, March 20 and April 13, 1769. The March 23, 1769, *Boston News-Letter* also mentioned the theft.

[8] *Boston News-Letter*, January 25, 1770.

[9] William Bentley, *The Diary of William Bentley, D.D.* (Salem, Mass.: Essex Institute, 1905-14), 2:454.

[10] *Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series*, Philander D. Chase, Dorothy Twohig, Frank E. Grizzard, Edward G. Lengel, et al., editors (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1985–), 1:311.

[11] *Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series*, 1:312-3.

[12] “Diary of Ezekiel Price, 1775-6,” *Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings*, 7 (1863-64), 204-5. That night the Continentals were “ordered to lie on their arms” to be ready for a British attack that never came; Richard Frothingham, *History of the Siege of Boston*, 4th edition (Boston: Little, Brown, 1873), 232-3.

[13] Allen French, *General Gage’s Informers: New Material Upon Lexington and Concord, Benjamin Thompson as Loyalist and the Treachery of Benjamin Church, Jr.* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1932), 188.

[14] *Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings*, 7:214.

[15] *American Ancestry*, 11:134. The same statement appears in George Harlan Lewis, *Edmund Lewis, of Lynn, Massachusetts: and Some of His Descendants* (Salem: Essex Institute, 1908), 32-3.

[16] The most complete examination of Church’s activities available is John A. Nagy, *Dr. Benjamin Church, Spy: A Case of Espionage on the Eve of the American Revolution* (Yardley, Pa.: Westholme, 2013).

[17] This page of Washington’s expense notebook can be viewed at <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=mgw5&fileName=gwpage022.db&recNum=10>.

[18] *Sibley’s Harvard Graduates*, 11:142.

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President Allen Manning presented the Oak Leave Cluster for his Liberty Medal and certificate to Ted Duay.