



The Florida Society of the Sons of the American Revolution Fort Lauderdale Chapter Newsletter



Fort Lauderdale Chapter Organized November 26, 1966

MAR 2005

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Minutes of Ft. Lauderdale Chapter SAR
22 Jan 2005

The Ft. Lauderdale Chapter SAR was called to order at the Flaming Pit. Past President George Dennis presided over this meeting with 20 members and guests present.

Old Business:

Compatriot, William Spencer stated that the chapter's \$100.00 contribution to the Swamp Fox Society CAR was issued and received by the Swamp Fox CAR's Senior President, Opal Spencer.

New Business:

Compatriot, Jim Perdue was inducted into the chapter by Compatriot, Oscar Kraehenbuehl. After which Compatriot Oscar Kraehenbuehl announced that he has sold his home and was moving to Palm Beach Gardens.

Current Program:

There being no other business before the Chapter, Compatriot James Cox introduced our guest speaker, Alice Schmidlin. Ms. Schmidlin gave a brief history of lighthouses, starting with the Lighthouse at Alexandria, which was classified as one of the seven wonders of the world until it succumbed to the ravages of an of several earth quakes in 956 AD, 1303 and the final 1323 toppling the structure into the sea.

Ida Lewis was the most famous female lighthouse keeper. During her 39 years as the lighthouse keeper at Lime Rock Lighthouse in New Port, Rode Island, she was credited with saving 18 people earning the Gold Life Saving Medal. For this act, the lighthouse was renamed the Ida Lewis Rock Lighthouse.

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Our Guest Speaker for March

Rod Hedrick returns for the second part of this presentation, has lived in Broward for over 15 years since coming here to work for the Sheriff's Office as a Deputy Sheriff. He has had an avid interest in American History since he was a child growing up near Tampa. Florida having been a retirement state provided a great opportunity for me to listen to Veterans and hear their stories. Sadly, many friends have passed on who had some interesting, Albeit frightening experiences. Rod has collections on a number of topics such as USAAF, US Army, WW2 & Korea, Manhattan Project, US Army Berlin Brigade Occupation, & foreign items the German, Japanese & Russian. Rod also conducted taped interviews on some veterans who have unique historical interest.

Rod is currently working on 2 book projects. One is on 2 of my wives Great Uncles who died in Korea on the Same day, one as a POW, the other is on the USAAF's earliest cruise missile, an advanced copy of the German V1, called the Ford JB2-Loon. We had an aircraft carrier full of these preparing to hit Japan when the war ended. He will be speaking at the first meeting of one of the brothers' WW2 experiences as a POW, then in the second meeting to be scheduled for our March meeting, the other brother of the 2 in Korea and their untimely deaths.

NEXT MEETING - MARCH 26th

"Flaming Pit"

*1150 N. Federal Hwy., Pompano Beach
(11 blocks north of Atlantic Blvd.)*

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

Buffet luncheon - \$11.00

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On march 29, Congress having acceded to Wadsworth's request, New Jersey Congressman Abraham Clark wrote a brief note to Wadsworth stating, "Mr. Wadsworth is desired to peruse the enclosed regulations, and signifie [sic] his pleasure whether he is willing to Accept the appointment of Comsy. genll. ---and whether he find any defect in the System of Consequence Sufficient to require a reconsideration . . ." This missive with its enclosure reached Wadsworth's hands the "same Day," as he docketed it, but it was not until April 9 that his commission was issued by Congress. Whether or not Wadsworth predicated his acceptance on any changes in the regulations is unreported. Nevertheless, having mulled over his decision, accept he did, to the great benefit of the army, since Wadsworth was a born businessman. Thereafter, until his resignation on January 1, 1780, he worked in considerable harmony with General Greene and fulfilled the Commander in Chief's expectations of his services in excellent degree.

Although Greene and Wadsworth were obliged to struggle under adverse conditions to resurrect the Quartermaster and Commissary Departments respectively, by the conclusion of the Valley Forge encampment on June 19, 1778 both departments were functioning to some satisfaction. True, neither of these officers had to face the weather and road conditions of the previous winter, but the near decay of their departments during that period posed excessive burdens on them. But then it was the presence of these burdens that called forth the proper men to rectify them.

Franklin's Contributions to the American Revolution as a Diplomat in France

Of all the representatives sent abroad by the Congress of the thirteen states in the early part of the Revolutionary war to secure aid of various kinds from certain friendly nations, no one has equaled Benjamin Franklin in ability, tact, common sense, diplomacy, and reputation that was national as well as world wide. Any government to which he was assigned received an unusual personality.

He began as a printer, became a publisher, founded papers, served as editor and reporter, and also printed an almanac known as "Poor Richard's Almanac" which is indeed historical. His wise sayings and maxims show an unusual common sense philosophy.

He established in Philadelphia better plans of transportation and also aided throughout Pennsylvania and improved communication. He helped save property from destruction and aided insurance plans against fire.

As an inventor, his accomplishments were unusual. He also aided in changing our standards of life by the invention of the Franklin Stove and started the pioneer work to harness electricity to be an agent for the benefit of mankind. In Philadelphia, he also founded one of the great universities of the world. In government, he made contributions in developing unity and democracy in our colonies, and he also served for many years as official colonial agent in London for Pennsylvania. He pointed out for a long time to the British Government that taxation without representation was a principle upon which America stood firmly.

When Franklin went to France in the early part of the Revolution as the official diplomat and ambassador of the thirteen colonies, he came as a man of maturity, brilliance, ability, and as a world statesman. Upon his arrival in Paris, there was no other statesman or philosopher who could equal him in his ability and accomplishments. His presence in Paris annoyed the British minister and staff. Franklin enjoyed the situation. The years he remained in Paris were unusually fruitful ones for America and helping to work out the future destiny of the United States of America. In the early 1950's the United States published ten volumes of the United States Foreign Affairs during the Revolution, and the major part of the ten volumes covers the work of Franklin.

The colonies indeed needed help of every description--men, money, equipment, ships, and all things to fight a successful war. The long years of enmity between France and Britain opened the way for the leadership of Franklin. And he was not only the man to exploit it, but also the reason for the acceptance of thirteen states as a recognized nation in the world of nations.

During his long career of service, we shall never know how many men sought commissions in the Revolution. But this much we do know--that Franklin was never deceived, as he never held out any hope for a commission unless the applicant had the ability in his chosen field. One of the men aided very early was John Paul Jones; and as an Admiral in the little American Navy composed of two ships under his command, he took those two ships and sailed into English waters for a fight. In a terrific battle, two proud English ships surrendered; and they were brought into French waters as American prizes.

When the United States flag, the red, white, and blue, became the official flag of the country in June, 1777, the French Navy saluted it as the first of all nations.

Another important selection was Baron Von Steuben who came to be an important leader at Valley Forge during the tragic winter of 1777-1778 in the reorganization of the Continental Army. Franklin wrote Washington a long personal letter about Steuben. When his services were accepted by Congress, he showed that he was thoroughly dependable; and his military ability and leadership were likewise shown in the reorganization of the Army in the days ahead. His devotion to Washington and earnestness to his new country constitute fine commendation of Franklin's aid.

In the final stages of the war, after long weeks of hard campaigning, Cornwallis was bottled up in Yorktown, Virginia. Lafayette, who had done so much for the American cause out of his own private fortune and by his persistence to his own government for men, equipment, and ships, always backed up the entire procedure of Franklin.

As the conditions became ripe and favorable, then Washington and his Continentals came down from the North and by rapid marches joined the French soldiers under Rochambeau; and the last great battle of the war entered its final phase. DeGrasse, Commander of the French fleet, kept reinforcements away; and the armies, under the supreme command of Washington, in a series of successful attacks upon the British forces led to the final conclusion and surrender of Cornwallis in October, 1782.

There were times during the long residence of Franklin in Paris when events were pleasant and joyful instead of war planning and persuading the French officials to be more generous in their gifts to America. There were meetings of scholars, writers, and scientists in which Franklin was invariably the center of attraction. The plainness of his dress, the simplicity of his personality, and his tact, agreeableness, and responsiveness were always appreciated; and there was nothing haughty about him. Under all conditions, he was a friend of man, a world benefactor, and the representative of a cause which appealed to people all over the world--a living exponent of American democracy. He had a wonderful story to tell of the conquest of a continent by a people through thrift, endurance, sacrifice and grit. He was always a welcomed guest at the Royal receptions, and the king and queen appreciated his ready wit.

When the war was over, the great problem remained to conclude the peace. The French politicians determined to make the American alliance turn in every way to their own advantage. When the news of the glorious alliance was made in early Spring, May 1778, which brought so much cheer and new faith to the officers and men alike, just as the new life of Spring was bringing green grass and bursting buds to the naked trees of Valley Forge, which was symbolical of the improved conditions of the American soldiers as they had suffered on the bleak hills of Valley Forge during the tragic winter.

Now the war was over and there were those in power who thought they could use Franklin, the American alliance and the United States to their own advantage. The French politicians were opposed to a separate peace treaty for the United States, but they proposed to have a treaty in which American independence and sovereignty would be tied directly to the French treaty. And then they could hold the United States under their own direction.

Continued with next month issue

In 1716, the Boston Harbor was America's first lighthouse was built with the lighthouse keeper being paid \$50.00 per month and earning additional income by being the Harbor Pilot at the same time.

In 1775, patriots attempted to destroy the lighthouse in an attempt to disrupt British shipping, thereby preventing them from delivering soldiers. The British thwarted this action and rebuilt the damaged lighthouse. But this did not last long when the lighthouse was re-attacked and burnt. In 1780, George Washington identified lighthouses as a necessity to American shipping that a program was developed to build them throughout the nation. It was not until 1783 when John Hancock persuaded the French to finance the rebuilding of the Boston Lighthouse that it once again became operational.

Today, states with the most lighthouses are; Michigan, 104; New York, 68; Maine, 64; Massachusetts, 52 Washington, 36; California, 34 and Florida 33.



Compatriot Jim Perdue receives his SAR membership certificate from Past President George Dennis.



Guest Speaker Alice Schmidlin with her book on lighthouses with Past President George Dennis.

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