



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



NOV 2014

website: □

Fort Lauderdale Chapter chartered December 8, 1966

Volume 47 Number 7

President's Message

Compatriots:

It is time to come together again to accept nominations for Chapter Officers for 2015. We have a slate of Candidates that are willing to serve as officers for next year. We need **your vote** to confirm their nomination.

At our November 15th luncheon the special guest will be Ray Wess. He is the President of the Palm Beach Chapter, the Regional VP for the SE Region, and the Recording Secretary for the FLSSAR. Ray will be speaking for 5-10 minutes on the affairs of the FLSSAR and the NSSAR. His wife, Nomi, will also be attending.

Our guest speaker this month will be Compatriot Charlie Crowell. His topic will be "The Mysterious Old Leather Man".

We have lined up a series of Programs to kick-off next year. Our **January 17th** meeting will feature a speaker from the JROTC at Hollywood Hills High School Military Academy.

Let's support our young people. On **February 21st** we are fortunate to have Bill and Cara Elder. They are historians—First person interpreters of George and Martha Washington. As re-enactors they will be in period costumes. Their presentation is entitled "Washington Lives". This coincides with Washington's Birthday and could not be timelier. Also, lined up for next year is the Ft. Lauderdale Historical Society. There will be two presentations—early Ft. Lauderdale and Henry Flagler.

Please mark your calendars to join us for a great year of speakers. We look forward to your participation. Remember wives are always welcome.

Fraternally,
William W. Zimmer
954-783-0887 email: wwz2620@gmail.com

Compatriots:

The following is the slate of candidates for Chapter Office. We will vote at the November Meeting. Installation of 2015 Officers will take place at the January 2015 meeting.

President—William W. Zimmer
Vice President—Charles S. Crowell
Registrar/Genealogist-- David H. Kramer
Secretary—James W. Lohmeyer
Treasurer/Sgt. at Arms/Editor—Joseph M. Motes
Chancellor—Edward Sullivan Esq.
Chaplain—David H. Kramer
Historian—George Dennis

Fraternally,
William W. Zimmer



NEXT MEETING - NOVEMBER 15, 2014

Primavera Restaurant
830 E. Oakland Park Boulevard
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33334
954-564-6363

Future Dates:

Saturday, 12/20/14
Saturday, 01/17/15
Saturday, 02/21/15

Time: 11:30AM social gathering; Lunch at noon
Luncheon - \$30.00

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

This Month's Guest Speakers

Our speaker at our Nov. meeting will be Charlie Crowell.

The topic? "The Mysterious Old Leather Man".

The Leather Man arrived on the scene in the 1850s. He roamed a circular route through two states until his death in 1889. He never spoke and never revealed anything about himself. All efforts to learn even his name failed. Because of his appearance (dresses in leather scraps from head to toe), his punctual 365 mile semi-circular route and the mystery surrounding him, he became an enduring legend that has mystified people for the last 150 years.

Even today the story continues to unfold as his remains were recently exhumed in the hopes that DNA testing would answer some questions.

It all makes for a fascinating tale and offers some interesting insight into life in during the second half of the 19th century. Charlie, a Ft. Lauderdale Chapter member and past president, has researched, written and has spoken on numerous historic topics. His articles have been published in a wide variety of newspapers and magazines.



2015 Dues Notice.

Greetings Compatriot !

Your SAR dues notice and membership card for 2015 are now due. Please mail your check no later than December 14th. This timing is required to meet the new deadlines established by the state and national organizations. If circumstances may delay your payment, call or e-mail the Treasurer (954-441-8735 or joemotes@aol.com)

NOTE: Anyone who has not been heard from by 12/14/14 must be reported as dropped from membership.

Reinstatement can be made at a later date but this will require processing a special application and the payment of \$5 in addition to the regular dues. These delays also may cause some issues of the newsletter and magazine to be missed. – Of course, it is hoped that everyone will renew but it also is very important that your response be timely.

CHAPTER TRUST FUND

The Fort Lauderdale Chapter SAR Trust Fund was established in 1991 and has grown to its current balance of approx \$16,297.45. The stated purpose of this fund is to assist in the operation of the Chapter, including its projects and expenses. Only the earnings of the Trust may be utilized, never the principal. Including extra dollars in your check for the trust fund will be very helpful and appreciated.

Thank you and have a happy holiday season.....

Battles of the American Revolution The Battle of Yorktown

The **Siege of Yorktown** or **Battle of Yorktown** on October 09, 1781 was a decisive victory by combined assault of American forces led by General George Washington and French forces led by General Comte de Rochambeau over a British Army commanded by General Lord Cornwallis. It proved to be the last major land battle of the American Revolutionary War, as the surrender of Cornwallis's army prompted the British government eventually to negotiate an end to the conflict.

In 1780, 5,500 French soldiers landed in Rhode Island to try to help their American allies in assaulting British-occupied New York City. The two armies met North of New York City in 1781. The French Commander, the Comte de Rochambeau, convinced the American Commander, George Washington, that an attack on New York City would be hard pressed to succeed and it would be easier for the French Fleet under the command of the Comte de Grasse to assist in the attack further south, because he was to bring the French Fleet into the Caribbean in October. Thus, they agreed to attack Lord Cornwallis and his smaller army of 9,000 men which was stationed in the port town of Yorktown, Virginia. In the beginning of September, de Grasse defeated a British Fleet

that had come to relieve Cornwallis at the Battle of the Chesapeake. As a result of this victory, de Grasse blocked any escape by sea for Cornwallis. Washington had dispatched the French general Marquis de Lafayette to contain Cornwallis in Yorktown until he arrived, and Lafayette did so. By late September the army and naval forces had surrounded Cornwallis by land and by sea.

After initial preparations, the Americans and French built their first parallel and began the bombardment. With the British defense weakened, Washington, on October 14, 1781, sent two columns to attack the last major remaining British outer defenses; redoubts #9 and #10. A French column took #9 and an American column #10. With these defenses gone, the allies were able to finish their 2nd parallel. With the Americans' artillery closer and more intense than ever, the British situation began to deteriorate rapidly and Cornwallis asked for capitulation terms on the 17th. After two days of negotiation, the surrender ceremony took place on the 19th, with Cornwallis being absent since he claimed to be ill. With the capture of over 8,000 British soldiers, negotiations between the United States and Great Britain began, resulting in the Treaty of Paris in 1783.

March to Virginia

The march to Yorktown led by General George Washington and the Comte de Rochambeau began on August 19, and has become known as the celebrated march, 4,000 French and 3,000 American soldiers began the march in Newport, Rhode Island, while the rest remained behind to protect the Hudson Valley. Washington wanted to keep absolute secrecy as to where they were headed. Washington sent out fake dispatches that reached Clinton, and convinced him that the Franco-American army was going to launch an attack on New York, and that Cornwallis was not in any danger.

The French and American armies paraded through Philadelphia from September 2 to 4, where the soldiers proclaimed that they would not leave Maryland until they received one month's pay, and the Continental Congress complied, giving them the money. On September 5, Washington learned of the arrival of de Grasse's fleet off the Virginia Capes. His French troops departed and joined Lafayette, and de Grasse sent his empty transports to pick up the American troops. Washington made a visit to his home, Mount Vernon, on his way to Yorktown.

In August, Clinton sent a fleet from New York to attack de Grasse's fleet. Clinton did not realize how large the French fleet was, and neither did Cornwallis. The British fleet, under command of Thomas Graves, was defeated by de Grasse's fleet in the Battle of the Chesapeake, and forced to fall back to New York. On September 14, Washington arrived in Williamsburg, Virginia.

The Siege

Initial Movements

On September 26, transports with artillery, siege tools, and some French infantry and shock troops from the Head of Elk, the northern end of the Chesapeake Bay, arrived, giving Washington command of an army of 7,800 Frenchmen, 3,100 Militia, and 8,000 Continentals. Early on September 28, Washington led the army out of Williamsburg to surround

Yorktown. The French took the positions on the left while the Americans took the position of honor on the right. Cornwallis had a chain of seven redoubts and batteries linked by earthworks along with batteries that covered the narrows of the York River at Gloucester Point. That day, Washington reconnoitered the British defenses and decided that they could be bombarded into submission. The Americans and the French spent the night of the 28th sleeping out in the open, while working parties built bridges over the marsh. Some of the American soldiers hunted down wild hogs to eat.

On September 29, Washington moved the army closer to Yorktown and British gunners opened up on the infantry. Throughout the day several British cannon fired on the Americans but there were few casualties. Fire from American riflemen and the Hessian Jaegers was exchanged.

Cornwallis pulled back from all of his outer defenses, except for the Fusilier's redoubt on the west side of the town and redoubts 9 and 10 in the east. Cornwallis had his forces occupy the earthworks immediately surrounding the town because he had received a letter from Clinton which promised relief force of 5,000 men within a week and he wished to tighten his lines. The Americans and the French occupied the abandoned defenses and began to establish their own batteries there. With the British outer defenses in their hands, allied engineers began to lay out positions for the artillery. The men improved their works and deepened their trenches. The British also worked on improving their defenses.

On September 30, the French attacked the British Fusiliers redoubt. The skirmish lasted two hours, in which the French were repulsed suffering several casualties. On October 1, the allies learned from British deserters that, in order to preserve their food, the British had had hundreds of horses slaughtered and thrown on the beach. In the American camp, thousands of trees were cut down so that the wood could be used for their earthworks. Preparations for the parallel also began.

As the allies began to put their artillery into place, the British kept up a steady fire to disrupt them. British fire increased on the 2nd and the allies suffered moderate casualties. General Washington continued to make visits to the front, despite concern shown by several of his officers over the increasing enemy fire. On the night of October 2, the British opened a storm of fire to cover up the movement of the British cavalry to Gloucester where they were to escort infantrymen on a foraging party. On the 3rd, the foraging party, led by Banastre Tarleton, went out but collided with Lauzun's Legion, and John Mercer's Virginia militia, led by the Marquis de Choisy. The British cavalry quickly retreated back behind their defensive lines, losing 50 men.

By October 5, Washington was almost ready to open the first parallel. That night the sappers and miners worked, putting strips of pine on the wet sand to mark the path of the trenches.

Bombardment

After nightfall on October 6, troops moved out in stormy weather to dig the first parallel: the heavily overcast sky

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Sons of the American Revolution
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negated the waning full moon and shielded the massive digging operation from the eyes of British sentries. Washington ceremoniously struck several blows with his pick axe to begin the trench. The trench was to be 2,000 yards (1,800 m) long, running from the head of Yorktown to the York River.

Half of the trench was to be commanded by the French, the other half by the Americans. On the northernmost end of the French line, a support trench was dug so that they could bombard the British ships in the river. The French were ordered to distract the British with a false attack, but the British were told of the plan by a French deserter and the British artillery fire turned on the French from the Fusiliers redoubt.

On October 7, the British saw the new allied trench just out of musket-range. Over the next two days the allies completed the gun placements and dragged the artillery into line. The British fire began to weaken when they saw the amount of guns the allies had.

By October 9, all of the French and American guns were in place. Among the American guns there were three twenty-four pounders, three eighteen pounders, two eight-inch (203 mm) howitzers and six mortars.

Continued next column

At 3:00 pm, the French guns opened the barrage and drove the British frigate, HMS Guadeloupe across the York River, where she was scuttled to prevent capture. At 5:00 pm the Americans opened fire. Washington fired the first gun and legend has it that it smashed into a table where British officers were eating. The allied guns began to tear apart the British defenses. Washington ordered that the guns fire all night so that the British could not make repairs. All of the British guns on the left were soon silenced. The British soldiers began to pitch their tents in their trenches and soldiers began to desert in large numbers. British ships in the harbor were also damaged because some of the cannon balls flew across the town into the harbor.

On October 10, the Americans spotted a large house in Yorktown. Believing that Cornwallis might be stationed there, they aimed at it and quickly destroyed it. Cornwallis sank more than a dozen of his ships in the harbor. The French began to fire at the British ships and scored a hit on the British HMS Charon which caught on fire and in turn set two or three other ships on fire. Cornwallis received word from Clinton that the British fleet was to depart on October 12, however Cornwallis responded by saying that he would not be able to hold out for long.

On the night of October 11, Washington ordered that the Americans dig a second parallel. It was 400 yards (370 m) closer to the British lines, but could not be extended to the river because there were two British redoubts in the way; redoubts #9 and #10. During the night, the British fire continued to land in the old line; Cornwallis did not suspect that a new parallel was being dug. By morning of the 12th, the allied troops were in position on the new line.

By October 14, the trenches were within 150 yards (140 m) of redoubts #9 and #10. Washington ordered that all guns within range begin blasting the redoubts in order to weaken them for an assault that evening. Washington would use the cover of a moonless night to lend the element of surprise to the enterprise. To reinforce the darkness, he added silence, ordering that no soldier should load his musket until reaching the fortifications- the advance would be made with only "cold steel." Redoubt 10 was near the river and held only 70 men, while redoubt 9 was a quarter of a mile inland, and was held by 120 British and Germans.

Both redoubts were heavily fortified with rows of abatis surrounding them along with muddy ditches which surrounded the redoubts at a distance of about 25 yards. Washington devised a plan in which the French would launch a diversionary attack on the Fusiliers redoubt, and then a half an hour later, the French would assault redoubt 9 and the Americans redoubt 10. Redoubt 9 would be assaulted by 400 French Regular soldiers under the command of the German Lieutenant Colonel Wilhelm von Zweibrücken and redoubt 10 would be assaulted by 400 light infantry troops under the command of Alexander Hamilton.



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