



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



Fort Lauderdale Chapter Organized November 26, 1966

OCTOBER 2002

Volume 35 Number 10

## Highlights of September Chapter Meeting

President George Dennis called the September 12th meeting to order and welcomed members and guests. He announced that our chapter will meet with the DAR on January 11th at 11:30 AM in lieu of our regular meeting that month. Mark your calendars now ! Details will be provided in the future.

Nominations for 2003 Chapter Officers will be determined at the October meeting, with the election in November. Please notify George Dennis, Joe Motes or Joe Fordyce of your willingness to serve.

Unless other suggestions are made, it is likely that the Annual Meeting will be held the first part of December at the Sea Watch (6002 N. Ocean Blvd., Ft. Lauderdale). This restaurant was looked upon favorably by those present at this meeting and will be discussed further and decided at the next meeting.

Some of the miscellaneous things discussed:

- + US Senate approved a resolution to confer honorary citizenship of the US on Marquise de Lafayette for his serves and support in the American Revolution. Only six individuals have received the honor.
- + Results of a voluntary, comprehensive, multiple-choice test of general knowledge by graduating college seniors in Arizona produced some of the following results. (They were paid to take test and for correct answers.):
  - 78 % failed the test (less than half right); no one got more than 85%
  - Only 14% know the writer of the Constitution was James Madison
  - Only 21% recognized Gettysburg Address as source of "Gov. of the people, by people....."
  - Only 49% know what is the Magna Charta
  - 93% properly identified Snoop Doggy Dogg

The guest speaker was Jack Bresnahan, who was assisted by his daughter, Colleen. He shared some of the many quotations and incidents he has collected from the life of Abraham Lincoln and displayed a large photo collection of related events. This included a copy of every known photograph taken of Lincoln during his life. Too bad more members weren't present to enjoy the occasion. It is hoped meeting attendance will improve as Fall approaches to justify and support the efforts expended by the speakers and by Joe Fordyce in obtaining them.



**Chapter President George Dennis presented the Certificate of Appreciation to Jack R Brasnahan for his presentation during our September chapter meeting.**

## OCTOBER MEETING PROGRAM

The speaker at the October 10th meeting will be Carolyn Kayne. She is the Genealogy Librarian and Asst. Dept. Head of the Reference and Information Services for the Broward County Main Library, Fort Lauderdale. She will tell about the genealogy research resources available at this library. --- There is a lot more available than most people realize, plus some of it has been relocated in the library. Come hear what is where, how to use it and who / where to get help.

**NEXT MEETING - OCTOBER 10th  
TOWER CLUB !!!**

**\$20.00 INCL. TAX AND TIP  
11:30 SOCIAL 12:00 LUNCH  
28TH FLOOR BANK OF AMERICA  
1 FINANCIAL TOWER  
SE 3RD AVE & BROWARD BLVD  
FORT LAUDERDALE  
FOR RESERVATIONS CALL:**

**954-441-8735**

*Members living in North Broward need to dial the area code plus the phone number, or e-mail me at: [JoeMotes@aol.com](mailto:JoeMotes@aol.com)*

**Starting this month and for the next 12 issues, we will be covering *The Philadelphia Campaign of Spring 1777*.**

## Head of Elk, Maryland

In late July 1777, a 265-ship armada under General Howe's command finally arrived at the Head of Maryland's Elk River. 17,000 soldiers aboard the ships had endured a debilitating six week journey originating at Sandy Hook, New Jersey, across from Staten Island, New York.

Howe had hoped to complete the trip much faster than he did. He didn't. In Maryland, he hoped to find a legion of Loyalists ready to fight with the British. He didn't.

What he did have to do was to get all his ships unloaded of men, horses, weapons and supplies. Then he had to begin his march on Philadelphia to the north.

In between, stood George Washington and the Continental Army ready to stop him.

### Howe's Voyage

The largest armada ever assembled in America set sail off of Sandy Hook, New Jersey. It was carrying 17,000 British soldiers and sailors in over 260 ships. The armada was headed for an attack on the capital city of Philadelphia. They underwent a distressful 34-day sea-trek. The voyage took its toll in lost time, seasick soldiers, and scores of dead horses.

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Washington's troops started in northern New Jersey and shadowed the movement of the British fleet.

Washington lost sight of the fleet for an agonizing three-week period, starting when the armada moved further offshore as it passed the Delaware Capes. He feared that the fleet may have doubled back to New York to help General Burgoyne in his attempt to capture upstate New York against the Americans headed by General Gates.

Until he could determine the destination of the fleet, Washington needed to maintain a position where he could move north or south. When their destination was clear, Washington moved south to a position between Head of Elk and Philadelphia.

### The Landing

3:00am in the moonlight, the Eagle has landed. Aboard the Eagle, a 64-cannon ship-of-the-line, was General William Howe, British Commander-in-Chief.

As the dawn approached, soldiers on the ships began making their way above decks, some seeing daylight for the first time in weeks. They were tight-legged, filthy, and battle rusty.

### Library of Congress

Admiral Richard Howe, brother of General William H Howe---

The problem at hand for Howe was that of landing 265 ships laden with soldiers and ordnance into a narrow river neck.

Contributing to the logistical logjam was the Elk River's shallow and muddy character, which left the heavier frigates and ships-of-the-line farther up river for fear of being stuck in the mud.

In fact, many ships had already become mud-bound during the journey up the Elk, despite the best efforts of mercenary American river pilots who helped the British navigate the unfamiliar waterway. No ships were stuck for long, but it was another complication and delay.

On board the Eagle were Howe's brother, Admiral Richard Howe, and Captain Baurmeister, the officer who orchestrated the movement of the armada's six divisions of ships.

The British spent the day debarking.

### Washington Watches Howe

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On Tuesday morning, a party of American horsemen, including Washington, left their camp in Wilmington. They reconnoitered the British from Iron Hill, a rise nine miles northwest of the British position.

Flanking Washington were Major General Nathanael Greene of Rhode Island -- Washington's most trusted general -- and the Marquis de Lafayette.

As was often the case, Washington would rely on the skills learned as a young man in Virginia to personally reconnoiter the enemy.

#### The British Don't Unpack

Typical British camp, unlike the one established at Head of Elk

Because Howe had lost so much time getting here, he was in a rush to complete the debarkation and begin his march on Philadelphia. The troops had been ordered not to unpack their "baggage or camp equipage." Repacking would take too long, and Howe wanted to move out immediately.

#### Washington Learns Little

Because the usual camp formations weren't established, this complicated Washington's ability to correctly gauge troop strength.

This resulted in Washington seeing few tents from his position on Iron Hill and later from Gray's Hill, nearer to the British, but on flatter ground. In general, surveying from a higher elevation, even if farther, gave a better idea of topography and troop strength.

Later, Washington wrote to Congress:

"They remain where they debarked at first. I could not find out from inquiry what number is landed nor form an estimate of it from the distant view I had of their encampment."

#### A Storm Intervenes

Charles Willson Peale after life portrait, Portrait Gallery (Second Bank) Lafayette

On Tuesday night, a terrible storm kicked up, soaking the rail and cornstalk huts of the already water-weary British. Rain rutted and flooded the dirt roads. And the storm disturbed plans and destroyed ammunition of both armies.

Washington, Greene, and Lafayette dined and stayed overnight through the storm at a farmhouse near Cooch's Bridge. Had history played out a little differently, Washington might have been captured.

Howe had ordered Cornwallis's men to march north at 3:00a.m., Wednesday morning, but countermanded the marching orders:

"Since the heavy rain continues, and the roads are bottomless, and since the horses are sick and stiff, we had to countermand the order to march."

#### Surveying the Storm's Damage

Both armies spent Wednesday surveying the damage.

When wet, black powder and paper cartridges were useless, and therefore, muskets, cannon, mortars, and howitzers would be useless. Both sides lost critical supplies of ammunition.

British Captain John Montresor wrote:

"...the order for marching was countermanded ... The roads heavy and the horses mere Carrion the soldiery not sufficiently refreshed and great part of their ammunition damaged, made it upon the whole no delay...The guards [alone] had sixteen thousand cartridges damaged by the storm."

In the morning, Washington returned to his Wilmington headquarters. He, like Howe, was forced to curtail troop movements. Washington had hoped to send part of the Continental army to confront the enemy. Instead, the task at hand was to replace ruined ammunition.

After the Deluge On the soggy Wednesday morning of August 26th, General Cornwallis was assigned the task of scouting ahead.

He and two officers assigned to him, Brigadier General William Erskine and Lieutenant-General Charles Grey reconnoitered a few miles north toward the town today called Elkton.

Of immediate concern to Cornwallis was the condition of the roads, which were “very rugged and broken ground.”

And, of greater concern was the absence of the expected outpouring of Loyalist support.

#### Young Militiamen Taunt the British

A spirit of optimism and defiance prevailed among the Delaware militia on the 27th. At least, it was probably a detail from the Delaware militia on a break from commissary duty. They decided to tease the British Royal Navy.

When a boat of British midshipmen crossed the Elk River to search for milk, “the rebels” captured the boat and its crew.

The boat -- which had all of four oars -- was immediately entered for the Patriot Cause.

Its captors rowed it out to a British galley, which they fired on. The galley fired back. The Americans rowed away unscathed.

*Part 2 of 12 continues next issue.*

### **2002 CHAPTER OFFICERS**

**PRESIDENT - GEORGE DENNIS**

2771 SE 15 STREET  
POMPANO BEACH FL 33062--7506  
954-942-3081

**VICE-PRESIDENT - JOSEPH MOTES**

2133 NW 208 TERR  
PEMBROKE PINES FL 33029-2320  
954-441-8735

**SECRETARY - OSCAR KRAHENBUEHL**

19211 N CREEKSHORE CT  
BOCA RATON FL 33498-6218  
561-488-5585

**TREASURER - RICHARD JONES**

2651 PALM AIRE Dr SOUTH #406-27  
POMPANO BEACH FL 33069-4221  
954-974-5591

**REGISTRAR/GENEALOGIST - JOSEPH FORDYCE**

20843 VIA VALENCIA DR  
BOCA RATON FL 33433  
561-852-9964

**CHANCELLOR - EDWARD SULLIVAN, ESQ**

2837 NE 27 STREET  
FORT LAUDERDALE FL 33306-1912  
954-564-1014

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR - JOSEPH MOTES**

2133 NW 208 TERR  
PEMBROKE PINES FL 33029-2320  
954-441-8735