



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



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## Highlights of September Chapter Meeting

The meeting was called to order about 12:30AM (following some setup delay) with Secretary Oscar Kraehenbuehl officiating. President George Dennis was unable to attend for medical reasons and VP Joe Motes was called out of town for business. The event took place for the first time on a Saturday and at the Pompano Elks Club. Sixteen members and guests were present, which is a marked improvement over the recent meetings and should improve further based on the expectations expressed by some who were absent. It was particular gratifying to have Opal Spencer (DAR Past Regent and Sr. President of CAR Swamp Fox Society) and the wives of Harry Calevas, Jim Cox, Robert Joynt and Registrar Ted Duay.

Just prior to the meeting, we were informed by the Elks Club management that there would be a \$100 charge for use of the room for all future meetings, regardless of the attendance. This was deemed unacceptable and another facility will be found for future meetings, but still on the 3rd Saturday.

Treasurer Rich Jones reported that the current operating account balance is \$2,461 which includes reimbursement from the FLSSAR Endowment Trust for the 22 medals presented to JROTC cadets this year. This is deemed quite adequate to cover foreseeable expenses for the near future.

Registrar Ted Duay announced that membership applications for Jim Lohmeyer and John Tomlinson were approved recently as well as 4 more of his personal Supplementals (total is now 18 with several being new SAR lines). Previously this year, approvals have been obtained for Ted Duay's father and James Robert Dennis, Pres. George's son. The application for Jim Perdue has been submitted and the necessary documentation is being gathered for Robert Joynt's application. – Ted (and his wife) received kudos for his membership commitment and successes.

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## October 16th Meeting (Saturday) – NEW LOCATION **“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 (includes tax and tip)

Offerings: Soup, salad bar, 9 entrees, dessert bar,  
beverage cocktails available.

Casual attire will be appropriate.

## Guest Speaker:

James J. Shannon, Jr. will be the guest speaker.

He is a former General President of the Sons of the Revolution and will provide some history and activities of that society and share personal experiences while being its national leader. Many SAR members are eligible for membership in the SR and this will be an opportunity to learn its merits and how to apply, in addition to meeting Jim.

**Don't miss this opportunity. -- Bring guests.**



*NEXT MEETING - OCTOBER 16th*

## **“Flaming Pit”**

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(11 blocks north of Atlantic Blvd.)*

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*Buffet luncheon - \$11.00*

*FOR RESERVATIONS CALL:*

*954-441-8735*

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

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Secretary Oscar Krahenbuehl provided an updated roster. He also reported that the CD containing the chapter trust funds (\$9909) has matured and been deposited in the checking account awaiting disposition by new trustee to be appointed by the Executive Committee. A report summarizing the trust fund and the contribution history was distributed to the officers.

Opal Spencer highlighted the history and progress of the CAR Swamp Fox Chapter and described some future plans. Thanks were expressed to the Ft. Lauderdale Chapter, and particularly Pres. George Dennis, for past support and hope that it will continue.

Additional copies of the American Heritage CD and brochure were available. This is the professionally prepared CD that provides history teachers with supplemental lesson material for teaching American history to students in elementary, middle and high school. Three copies were taken (in addition to 6 previously). Contact the Secretary at the numbers below if anyone wants another copy.

During the next month, a nominating committee will be canvassing the membership for 2005 chapter officer candidates. Volunteers and wanted ... and needed. It was pointed out that most of the present officers, with the exception of the Registrar, have served in some capacity for the past 7 years (Joe Motes for 9 and Oscar K. for 14 years). The present secretary and treasurer have stated that they will not be candidates for re-election to these positions. New men with new ideas and enthusiasm are needed to help energize the chapter. – **PLEASE**, let any present officer know of your willingness to serve in a position of your preference or wherever needed. The slate will be announced at the October meeting and election held in November.

Another Chapter need is **meeting speakers**. Now that attendance has and is expected to continue increasing, it should be more conducive to attract willing, interesting speakers. Subjects of interest have been suggested (history, military, genealogy, community attractions, et al ) but not introductions to specific persons. Please let President Dennis know of any prospects and the means to contact them (or do it yourself and let it be known if they are willing). Dennis can be reached at: 954-942-3081 and [grdennis@attbi.com](mailto:grdennis@attbi.com). Backup contact: Oscar Krahenbuehl at 561-488-5585 or [OscarK@pobox.com](mailto:OscarK@pobox.com).

The guest speaker for this month was Debbie Duay, Registrar of the Lighthouse Point DAR Chapter. She lead the enthusiastic group through the details of how and where to obtain information required to prove membership for the SAR and DAR --- all without leaving home (assuming you have computer access to the Internet). Debbie provided a comprehensive handout containing key genealogy resources, forms and samples of what will be found on sites like RootsWeb.com and The Family History Library (LDS) and how to search them. All compatriots, prospective members and guests benefited greatly by the presentation. For those not present or who want to improve their researching skills, the tutorial web site developed by Debbie is highly recommended. See:

[www.learnwebskills.com/family/intro.html](http://www.learnwebskills.com/family/intro.html)

### **Invitation to Lighthouse Point DAR – 11/6**

An invitation has been extended to all SAR members and their wives/guests to attend the meeting of this DAR chapter on Saturday, Nov. 6th, 10:45AM, at the Lighthouse Point Yacht Club. The speaker will be Stuart McIver, author and journalist and a specialist on Florida history. (Very worthwhile hearing if you missed his talk at the March SAR meeting.)

Cost is \$22.00. Contact Debbie Duay by October 30th: [debduay@yahoo.com](mailto:debduay@yahoo.com) or (954) 473-2754



**Chapter Secretary Oscar Krahenbuehl gives a Certificate of Appreciation to Debbie Duay for her outstanding presentation at our September chapter meeting.**

## Spy System 1777

Spying is a profession probably as old as the human race. Primitive man spied on his neighbors both as an offensive and defensive weapon, as a prelude to attacking or against being attacked, respectively. Gradually, as civilization advanced, spying became a more refined occupation of men against men and nation against nation. Modern spying has been much de-humanized by modern technology, even to the extent of analysis of information; but during the American Revolution (and even long afterwards) the human was still of paramount, indeed sole, importance in this clandestine business.

At the beginning of the Revolution, Patriot spying against their British adversaries was rather amateurish, since the Americans had little craft in such secrecy, a craft already much refined in Europe. Witness Nathan Hale's brave but foolhardy attempt to spy on the British in New York City in 1776, an amateur endeavor that virtually assured his capture and death, and an immortality far outweighing his usefulness to the American cause beyond his inspiring dying words, "I regret that I have but one life to give for my country"--if he ever really said them. They are more legend than proven.

By the time of the Pennsylvania Campaign of 1777, however, American spies had acquired far more finesse in their risky business than the Nathan Hales of the previous year. Perhaps Hale's well publicized death had acted as a serious warning. With the British capture of Philadelphia on September 26, 1777, and with the Continental Army opposing the invaders with declining numbers, equipment and health, General Washington, as a measure of exceeding importance to the safety and further maneuvers of his army, was obliged to seek immediate, first-hand intelligence of the enemy's intentions, motions, and condition. To supervise this vital work he sought for a man of intelligence and discretion, familiar with local inhabitants and locale, and who could be relied on to produce fresh, correct information by whatever direct or devious means were necessary. The General's choice fell on Major John Clark Jr. of Pennsylvania, Aide-de-Camp to Major General Nathaniel Greene, possibly at the recommendation of General Greene. Clark, the Commander-in-Chief was advised, had all the necessary requisites to undertake this perilous business. Apparently Clark, needing no urging, readily volunteered.

Clark, born in Lancaster, had studied law and been admitted to practice in York County, where he made his adult home. As early as the summer of 1775 he had joined a Pennsylvania Rifle Corps, accompanying it to the siege of Boston. On March 15, 1776 he was commissioned 1st Lieutenant in Colonel Samuel Miles' Pennsylvania Rifle Regiment. Happily, he was not with that regiment when it was captured at Fort Mifflin, New York, in November; having been appointed Major in Colonel Richard McAllister's Battalion of Pennsylvania Militia. Briefly furloughed from service, he took the occasion to return to York and marry a daughter of Captain Christian Bettinger of the State Militia. On January 14, 1777 he rejoined the regular Continental Army as Major and Aide-de-Camp to Major General Greene, an official office he retained while acting as spy-master for the army.

Although Clark's assessments and information as chief of spies were not always exact (nor could they be expected to be in such a risky task as his and his associates'), the correspondence between Washington and Clark reveals the exceeding pains and dangers experienced by Clark and his various spies to supply the Commander-in-Chief with the best advice possible. Extracts taken from this correspondence, mostly from the frequent letters of Clark to Washington during the latter part of 1777, omitting most of the erroneous information, are illustrative of the excellence of the corps of spies enlisted by Clark and sent in to Philadelphia, and the sharp perception of Clark himself as he tirelessly rode, despite declining health, around the perimeters of enemy fortifications, camps and maneuvers, reporting his and his subordinates' observations, as well as hearsay rumors, back to his chief.

Strangely, Clark's first communications to Washington commenced not near Philadelphia, but some thirty miles remote from the city, to the west, from the Red Lion Tavern (now Lionville) in Uwchlan Township, Chester County on October 6. These communications, timed respectively at 5 P.M. and 10 P.M., were directed to Washington at his camp at Pawling's Mill, and were principally concerned with reports on the recent (October 4) Battle of Germantown. The first letter confirmed the death of British Brigadier James Agnew as the result of wounds received in the late battle, and noted that "Several Quakers from the city say that upwards of two hundred wagons came in" to the city "with wounded (British) soldiers." Another informant, arrived from Philadelphia, state, as noted in the second letter, that "the enemy suffered prodigiously" in the battle, and that British officers conceded that Washington had "completely surprised" the enemy by his attack.

Clark also reported the fall of the American fort at Billingsport, on the New Jersey side of the Delaware River below Philadelphia, and that the enemy “have got up the lower tier of the cheveaux de frize” which the Americans had sunk in the river to prevent access of British shipping to Philadelphia. Also, “Provisions were scarce” in Philadelphia, and the enemy were frequently sending wagon trains to Chester under heavy escort to procure supplies from the British fleet stationed in the river at that place, below the American river defenses. Clark suggested that “If a few troops were sent down the Schuylkill” near its mouth “it would prevent” this enemy traffic.

Unfortunately a rather long hiatus now occurs in Clark’s preserved correspondence with the Commander-in-Chief. That letters were written is proved by Washington’s letter to Clark from the camp at Whippain of October 23, which thanked Clark “for your vigilance and exertions,” and desired Clark “to continue them for obtaining such information as may be material respecting the Enemy.”

Evidently Clark had reported a rumored imminent British abandonment of Philadelphia, which rumor Washington discounted. “Before they do it,” the Commander-in-Chief noted, “they must be entirely convinced of the impracticability of carrying Fort Mifflin” on the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware, and Fort Mercer at Red Bank, New Jersey. These defenses, with the cheveaux-de-frise, formed hopefully insuperable impediments against British shipping reaching Philadelphia.

The next preserved letter of Clark to Washington, dated October 23 from Goshen, Chester County, also concerned the defense of the Delaware River, particularly the Hessian defeat in their assault on Fort Mercer on October 22. Clark reported that two informants from Philadelphia had stated “that the enemy brought on shore thirty-three boat loads of wounded soldiers and seamen,” the latter from the British frigate Augusta which had been set on fire from shot from Fort Mifflin and blew up, “on the 23d instant...they curse Fort Mifflin heartily, and say it has given them more trouble than any thing they ever met with.”

Clark also noted that “The enemy have posted at every ferry” across the Schuylkill “and avenue to Philadelphia a number of the Tories who went” into the city from Chester County; “they are exceedingly watchful, and examine every person they see; this has prevented my getting intelligence so readily from the city as I imagined.” Clark himself had ridden to Chester in an attempt to elicit information, which “ride has almost laid me up, as my health is much impaired of late, but I shall leave no stone unturned to gain information, though the inhabitants watch me like a hawk would a chicken. I change my quarters very often” to prevent reports of his location reaching the enemy.

*continued next month.*

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