



August 2010, Number 4

Our State Registrar, Carlen P. Booth reports that SAR National Headquarters has given final approval to the following new members:

Todd Michael Craig Porter Holden
Wareham, MA

Robert Stetson Butler
West Greenwich, RI

Former State President Compatriot Daniel Allen O’Connell is now a Dual Member in Rhode Island after his transfer to the Massachusetts Society.

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A Report from Former State President Bruce MacGunnigle on his trip to Marietta, Ohio for the reenactment of the 1789 Funeral Procession for General James Mitchell Varnum and Marker Dedication Ceremony.

Mr. President,

I'm pleased to report that eight Rhode Islanders were present for a reenacted Funeral Procession and dedication of a grave marker for General Varnum's recently rediscovered and unmarked grave. The Sons of the American Revolution, The First American Regiment of Marietta Ohio, the Kentish Guards and the Varnum Continentals of East Greenwich, R.I., and the Marietta Masonic Lodge all taking a prominent part in the ceremonies. Chapter President Jean Yost and the Marietta Chapter Ohio SAR, researched, organized, planned the July 2, 2010 events.

Due to multiple memberships, these eight Rhode Islanders have the following memberships; each group was there in support of the honors given to General Varnum:

- Four RI SAR members: Carlen Booth, John & Chris Collins and Bruce MacGunnigle
- Seven members of the Varnum Continentals: Bruce MacGunnigle, Martin Denny-Brown, Ron Sullman, Carlen Booth, Richard Sherika, John Collins, and Lydia Rapoza
- Three uniformed members of the Varnum Continentals: MacGunnigle, Denny-Brown and Sullman
- One uniformed member of the Kentish Guards: Sherika
- Three associate members of the Kentish Guards: MacGunnigle, Sullman and Booth

Much to my surprise, at the ceremony, I was called on to read the actual dedication of Varnum's new marker!

The four RI SAR men had dinner together on Friday evening at the Marietta Brew House. I'm sure Varnum would have approved of this, and he probably joined us in spirit.

The outgoing SAR President General Ed Butler was there, as were many other SAR dignitaries, fresh from the Annual SAR Congress held at Cleveland this year.

Jean Yost, President of the Marietta Chapter SAR did a magnificent job, and I suggest that the RI SAR consider presenting him with an SAR Good Citizenship Medal, or some other mark of distinction.

A very good time was had by all.

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News from NSSAR genealogist General Joseph W. Dooley:

Gentlemen,

Hopefully by this time next year, you will be able to view SAR applications on Ancestry.com.

The SAR has signed a contract with Ancestry which provides that Ancestry will digitize and index all SAR applications, and will post on their website those applications that were approved through 1970.

In the interest of preserving privacy, the SAR will not allow Ancestry to post more recently approved applications, but Ancestry will digitize and index them for us.

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While in Boston at a luncheon in April, PG Butler mentioned that the new SAR headquarters building was in the vicinity of what was once Ft. Nelson during the Revolutionary War. Here is what appears on the SAR website written by PG David Sympton at NSSAR about the history of the area:

The Falls of the Ohio River was a natural obstacle in the river's course from Pittsburgh to New Orleans, prompting the founding and settlement of Louisville. Captain Thomas Hutchens made the first survey of the region in 1766. In 1773, Captain William C. Bullitt, under a commission from the College of William and Mary, spent most of the summer surveying, so land could be transferred by the end of the year. Ironically, Bullitt fought to drive Lord Dunmore out of Norfolk during the Battle of Great Bridge on Dec. 9, 1775.

Not to be outdone, the surveyor of Fincastle County (the major portion of the present Commonwealth, which included the site of Louisville), Col. William Preston, would not recognize Bullitt's survey as being official, and ordered the survey redone in 1774, even though Bullitt's survey was used under the original conveyance. Land-claims disputes crowded the dockets of early Kentucky courts.

Staunch Tory John Connolly received a deed for 2,000 acres opposite the falls from Lord Dunmore for assistance to the Crown during the French and Indian War. In 1774 the land was advertised; however, with the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, little more was accomplished until 1778, with the arrival of Lt. Col. George Rogers Clark, who felt the Crown's land grants were very much out of fashion.

Soon after his arrival on May 27, Clark established a fort on 7-acre Corn Island, located in the Ohio River, starting at about the present 600 block of West Main Street. The small fort served as a base for the expeditions against British-controlled Kaskaskia and Cahokia, both in present-day Illinois, as well as Fort Sackville, which later became the town of Vincennes, Ind. The Corn Island fort was located on the margin of the favorite hunting ground of numerous, hostile tribes of Indians.

On April 24, 1779, lots were laid off on the Southside mainland along both sides of present-day Main Street (a block from the river's edge), from First to 12th Street. In 1779, Fort Nelson, a fort-on-shore, was constructed between Sixth and Eighth Streets on the north side of Main Street. The fort occupied about an acre of ground; present-day Seventh Street would have passed through its front gate. The fort was named for Virginia Continental Congressman Thomas Nelson Jr.

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Norman Desmarais, Acquisitions Librarian at Providence College, has had his *The Guide to the American Revolutionary War in Canada and New England* published by Busca, Inc. Norman is also an active re-enactor with the 2nd Rhode Island Regiment and a member of the Brigade of the American Revolution (BAR). He is also editor-in-chief of the BAR's journal, *The Brigade Dispatch*.

The Guide to the American Revolutionary War in Canada and New England covers 403 battles, raids and skirmishes of the Revolutionary War, most of which do not get covered, even in the most detailed history books. It intends to provide comprehensive coverage of the confrontations of the American War for Independence and to serve as a guide to the sites. Mark Hurwitz, Commander of the Brigade of the American Revolution, wrote the foreword.

The text identifies the location of the sites as best as can be determined, provides the historical background to understand what happened there, indicates what the visitor can expect to see and identifies any interpretive aids. It includes URLs for websites of various parks and tourist organizations. These URLs are correlated with various battle sites and events. The many photographs have descriptive captions to identify details of historic buildings, monuments, battlefields, and equipment. The Glossary provides definitions for some 18th-century military and historical terms. The book also has a Bibliography and an Index.

This is the first volume of a projected multi-volume series that aims to provide a comprehensive history of military actions of the War of American Independence. The most extensive published list of engagements totals 1,330. The author has compiled almost 3,000 and provides documentation in the ample footnotes. The appendices (alphabetical and chronological lists of engagements) as well as a complete bibliography and the color photos are available at the publisher's website (<http://buscainc.com/html/guidetotheamericanrevolutionarywar.html>)

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From Compatriot Henry A. L. Brown writing in the Governor Francis Neighborhood Association Spring 2010 newsletter about the recent flooding.

Quoted from a letter written by John Brown to his son James on March 31, 1783.

“ I wish I could think of a better name which might be applicable and to call it Spring Green. Its applicable in every sense; first its been in the name of the Green Family 100 years and secondly its very Springy and consequently early in the spring is green, and thirdly in the Spring we enter on the Green Farm. “

The real estate development known as Governor Francis Farms, founded in 1938, was harassed persistently by a high water table especially in the area known as the Calf Pasture.On Spring Green Road near the intersection of Algonquin Drive was impassable every spring to high ground water that emitted in a free flowing river washing out the lane every April.

Henry's article indicates the severity of the water problems that always seemed to plague this area. Thank you, Henry, for the history and relating it to today's incredible flooding.

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For those of you that are traveling, a worthwhile museum in Texas—The National Museum of the Pacific War. Here is their website: <http://www.nimitz-museum.org/>

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Upcoming SAR events:

- September 13th – Cooke House Newport, RI luncheon
- October 2nd – Board of Manager’s Meeting—location to follow
- October 3rd –Debutante Presentation—Richmond Country Club
- November 7th –Veteran’s Cemetery, Exeter, RI followed by luncheon at Richmond Country Club.
- December 10th – Christmas Party—location to follow.

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“Bounty of broadsides” Providence Journal Editorial, Friday, July 9, 2010

After visiting the Rhode Island Historical Society Library in Providence, you may never think of Scotch Tape the same way again. That’s because of what staff librarians discovered when they painstakingly restored the society’s extensive collection of colonial- era broadsides — printed sheets nailed up in public places relating events of the day.

The job involved undoing various earlier preservation efforts, some of which had less than optimal effects on the documents. Restoration efforts during the last century were deeply flawed, says librarian Phoebe Simpson Bean, mainly because of the over-enthusiastic use of inorganic materials. This included storing priceless original documents in folders alongside photostatic copies that liberally leached chemicals, accelerating the deterioration of fragile items in the collection. Now the items are safe, housed in stout boxes and catalogued online.

The broadsides served as precursors to newspapers. One of particular interest was published by His Britannic Majesty King George III, seeking information, for the hefty reward of 1,000 pounds, on persons who burned his ship, the Gaspee, in June 1772. This was posted all over the colony, but no one ever came forward to claim the reward. The incident involved dozens of men, but to His Majesty’s great frustration, none was ever found or prosecuted and hanged. Another posting is a song about the incident that concludes with the lines: “But let him try his utmost skill; I’m apt to think he never will find out any of those hearts of gold, though he should offer fifty fold.”

Also among the documents were 1776 articles of enlistment in the Second Rhode Island Regiment of the Continental Army. Included is one “Thos. Mingo, negro,” followed by “his sign,” and an X. About half the enlistees signed that way. This document is not in fact a broadside but had been misfiled among them. It and other such finds are now easily accessible by researchers.

It is a fascinating collection of Rhode Island’s earliest public documents, harking back to an era of tricorne hats and clay pipes, and now available to scholars. Funding for the restoration was contributed by the Rhode Island Society of the Sons of the Revolution, the Rhode Island Society of Colonial Wars, the Rhode Island Society of the Sons of the American Revolution and the General Society of Colonial Wars.

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Anyone will articles, or dates, that they would like published, please contact:

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