The Tampa Chapter
Florida Society
Sons of the American Revolution

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FEBRUARY MEETING

Our February meeting will be Saturday February 20th at the Best Western Resort & Convention Center Hotel, 820 Busch Boulevard, Tampa, Florida at 12:00 Noon. Each Person will be responsible for payment of their own meal. Come on fellows lets have a great turnout for this meeting. Bring a guest and those who are not members but receive this newsletter you are welcome to attend all of out meetings and bring a guest.

PROGRAM FOR FEBRUARY MEETING

Since 1999 is G. Washington's bicentennial and the month of February is President's month, we will honor the memory of George Washington's birthday with a program on George Washington at this month's meeting. The speaker is Walt Schroeder. Walt received his undergraduate training in history at Princeton and then went on to graduate school at the University of California at Berkeley. Upon finishing there he worked for the Pentagon before embarking on a teaching career that eventually brought him to west Florida. We are pleased to have Walt as our Washington speaker this year.

Claude Richie Jr. February 2
Kevin Yarnell February 15

Janet, guest speaker Jim Hayword, Jim Chambers, Elwin Thrasher, Marty Miller and Bob Yarnell

Jim Chambers gave a brief report on the JROTC program. Bob will see to it that the medals are ordered. Marty gave a treasurers report and reported on dues collection. Additionally, the pennies for patriots push is doing fine. Bob read to the chapter a note received from Charlene Herred, Sr. President of the Ft. Brooke CAR chapter, again thanking us for including them in the October meeting and hoping that this will become on annual event. Bob also reported that the audit committee found the books in order and commended Marty for his organization.

Following all of the reports, the new officers were installed by Compatriot Jim Hayword

The meeting then adjourned for lunch.

Following lunch VP Dwight Tetrick introduced Jim Haywood as our guest speaker. In keeping with the ongoing theme of presenting programs either dealing with Colonial/revolutionary America or Florida history, Mr. Haywood spoke on King Philip's War, an Indian war in colonial Massachusetts in the 1600's. He provided the members with several handouts. There was a brief question and answer period following the talk.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:35 PM.

Bob Yarnell, secretary

OUR FORGOTTEN PRESIDENTS

It was a time of stirring events and great men, but oddly, history has forgotten the twelve men who served as President between Independence Day and the government under the New Constitution in 1789.(13 years)

Some of these men are remembered for other deeds, John Hancock for his bold signature, John Jay as first Chief Justice, Richard Henry Lee as the man who proposed independence and Arthur St.Clair as a renowned Indian Fighter, but their roles as President of the Continental Congress have been overlooked. Four of these men were signers of the Declaration of Independence, Hancock, Lee, Huntington and McKean. Two of them affixed their signatures to the Constitution, Thomas Mifflin and Nathaniel Gorham. Six were signatories of the Articles of Confederation, Hancock, Hunnington, Lee, McKean, Henry Laurens and John Hanson.

The other Presidents have indeed been forgotten. They are Elias Boudinot and Cyrus Griffin. Samuel Johnston of North Carolina was chosen President on July 6, 1781; when he declined the honor McKean was selected the next day. Prior to Hancock's election Peyton Randolph of Virginia and Henry Middleton of South Carolina served as presiding officers of the Continental Congress, but this was before independence. Hancock many beleive was the country's first chief executive because he was President of the Congress when the Declaration of Independence was voted in 1776. Supporters of Maryland's Hanson say he was Number one because he was the first to be elected following organization of the new government under the Articles of Confederation in 1781.

The original intention of the congressional leaders was to rotate the presidency among the states. North Carolina, Georgia, New Hampshire and Rhode Island never had representatives elected President while the powerful states of Virginia, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania had two each.

The years during which these twelve Presidents served can be divided into two periods. From 1776 until the Articles of the Constitution set up a permanent form of government and from 1781 when the Articles took affect until 1789 when George Washington was inaugurated as President under the present Constitution.

During these thirteen years many momentous decisions were made, many important issues discussed and many new governmental policies were formed.

In the first period Presidents Hancock, Laurens, Jay, Huntington and McKean had to worry primarily about winning the war and internal recognition of independence. The second group of Presidents, Hanson, Boudinot, Mifflin, Lee, Gorham, St.Clair and Griffin faced many challenging situations in trying to develop a new government with limited power.

The Presidents were not mere presiding officers of the Continental Congress, they performed the functions of a ceremonial head of state and worked hard as the chief executive of what government the thirteen colonies had during and after the Revolution.

When John Hancock signed his bold John Hancock to the Declaration of Independence, a smuggler became the President of the New United States of America. This minister's son, who inherited his uncle's wealth and became a leading Massachusetts

merchant, rose to prominence in the Patriot cause when the British seized his ship "Liberty" for violating navagation laws. In short, for smuggling wine.

John Hancock, born January 16, 1737, was educated at Harvard and reared by his uncle who sent him to London at the age of twenty-three for boarding and to develope business contacts. While in London he attended the funeral of King George II and saw a new reign start under a monarch who later was to declare him an outlaw.

Henry Laurens, a wealthy South Carolina Hugenot who was the new nations second wartime President, was captured by the British, imprisoned in the Tower of London and was so crippled by close confinement that he left prison on crutches. He has another claim to fame, he was the first white man cremated in America.

John Jay, a conservative New Yorker, was the third President. Jay was New York's first chief justice as well as reelected to the Continental Congress. He was a diplomat to Spain and one of the commissioners to negotiate the peace treaty with England. Washington named Jay Chief Justice after offering him his choice of federal office. From 1795 to 1801 Jay was Governor of New York.

Samuel Huntington of Connecticut the fourth President was born July 3rd, forty five years before the Declaration of Independence. Son of a farmer he learned the cooper's trade, studied law and was appointed King's attorney in 1775. Huntington was President from October 28, 1779 until July 10, 1781 when he resigned because of poor health.

Thomas McKean, the fifth President, was born in Chester County, Pennsylvania, March 19, 1734. He studied law and rose to prominence in the Stamp Act Congress. He was Speaker of the Delaware assembly in 1772, member of the Continental Congress, Colonel of the 4th Battalion of Philadelphia and governor of Pennsylvania.

John Hanson the sixth President was too old to fight in the Revolution at the age of 66. Hanson was born April 3, 1715 in Charles County, Maryland; a descendant of Swedes who settled near the Delaware River in 1643. He was elected President, November 5, 1781, at the first session following the adoption of the Articles of Confederation.

Elias Boudinot, the seventh President, was born April 21, 1740 in a room above his father's silversmith shop in Philadelphia near Ben Franklin's print shop. A long-time friend of George Washington who supplied the General with his cider. Boudinot faced many major problems in the fields of foreign affairs, western land, finance and confrontation with the military. He signed the Spanish Treaty and the preliminary articles assuring peace with Britain, April 15, 1783. Boudinot was a foe of slavery and founded the American Bible Society.

Thomas Miffin the eighth President was born January 10, 1744, a descendant of an old Quaker family of wealth. Graduated from the College of Philadelphia. He was chosen by Washington as an aide-de-camp and was the first Quarter Master General. Miffin's most important task was to secure the ratification of the definitive treaty with Great Britain officially recognizing America's independence January 14, 1784.

Richard Henry Lee was the ninth President. A Virginia planter born, January 31, 1733,in the same room at Stratford where Robert E. Lee was born 74 years later. He made the motion for independence at the Continental Congress. Died June 14, 1794.

Nathaniel Gorham, tenth President, a Massachusetts merchant born May 27, 1738 was a descendent of a Mayflower Pilgrim who fell overboard but lived to be the last survivor of the original Plymouth Company. He played a prominent part in the Continental Congress where he was presiding officer for three months. He was elected President June 6, 1787. Died June 11, 1796 at Charleston, Massachusetts.

Arthur St.Clair the eleventh President born April 3, 1734, - a foreigner at that - son of a prominent Norman-French family living in Scotland. He was educated at the University of Edinburgh. Studied medicine and then took up the profession of arms. He arrived in America in 1758, fought in the French and Indian War and married a niece of Governor Bowdoin of Massachusetts. When trouble with the British started he was commissioned Colonel, soon rose to Brigadier General then Major General after his prominent part in the surprise victory at Trenton. Suffered with Washington at Valley Forge - spent eight years fighting for his adopted country. Was chosen President February 2, 1787. Died August 31, 1818 at the age of 84.

Cyrus Griffin, twelveth President, the last President before Washington was born July 16, 1748. Educated at Edinburgh University and studied law at the Temple University in London. Griffin sat with John Marshall during the trial of Aaron Burr. He died December 14, 1810.

These are our twelve forgotten Presidents.