

# *The Tampa Chapter, Florida Society Sons of the American Revolution*

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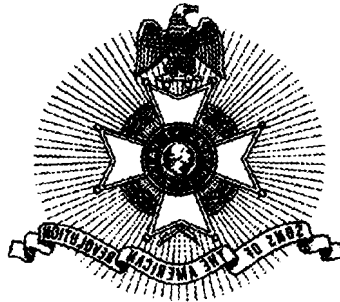
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## **January 2002 Newsletter**

**January Meeting:**

The January meeting will be at noon on Jan. 19th at the Piccadilly Cafeteria on Dale Mabry. Members will be responsible for their own meal and gratuity.

**January Program:**

The program will be a talk on "Descendants of Valley Forge", presented by the Honorable Charles A. Wilkeson Florida Brigade, Society of the Descendants of Washington's Army at Valley Forge. He also enjoys members of Sons of the American Revolution, Sons of the Revolution, and Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. He is a past-Exalted Ruler of Winter Haven Elks Lodge.

Also Compatriot Wilkeson will officiate as "Installing Officer" at the "Installation of Chapter Officers Ceremony" scheduled for the January meeting.

**January Historical notes:**

1777----"Common Sense" by Thomas Paine is published. This pamphlet made the case for American independence in a simple, understandable way and provided a moral and psychological lift for the patriot cause.

1777---Gen. Washington and his army followed up their success at Trenton with a victory at Princeton.

Minutes of the Tampa Chapter SAR meeting, December 15, 2002

The meeting was called to order by President Tetrick at 12:00.

Jim Washburn offered the invocation. The secretary led the pledge to the flag and the President led the SAR pledge.

Members present were Marty Miller, Dwight Tetrick, Jim Chambers, Jim Washburn, Ted Dickerson, Barry Rich, Robert Yarnell, Daniel Stutzman, Elwin Thrasher, Jack Bolen, Kirby Halbert, Walter Wishart, Fred Patton, and Kevin Yarnell.

Welcome guests were Helen Halbet, Jane Dickerson, Billie Washburn, June Bolen, and June Patton. Regional Vice President Larry Bradley was also in attendance.

The president called on the members to introduce the spouses present at the meeting.

In order to accommodate the schedule of our speaker, the meeting dismissed to lunch immediately.

Following lunch, President Tetrick introduced Vice President Yarnell who, in turn, introduced our guest speaker. Paula Stahel works in the area of personal history. She is a board member of the Association of Personal Historians. She talked on the importance of writing a personal history.

Ms. Stahel's talk was most persuasive. She suggested at least three reasons to make an effort at writing a personal history. 1. There seems to be a health benefit to writing about emotional experiences. 2. The benefits to the writer's children and grandchildren can be significant, often more than we might appreciate. 3. The stories can teach lessons to others as well as to ourselves.

A question and comment period followed. The president presented Ms. Stahel with a SAR pen in appreciation for her presentation.

President Tetrick proceeded with the business meeting.

The minutes were approved as printed.

The secretary/ treasurer reported that 2002 dues collection is nearly finished. Only 6 current members have yet to renew their membership. The treasury has a balance of \$2678.26.

Larry Bradley commented on the reasons for the new, earlier state deadline for dues.

Bob Yarnell apologized for glitches in the previous two newsletters. He believes the kinks are worked out. The president commented that the chapter would begin emailing the newsletter to those capable of receiving it electronically and who are agreeable to that format. The new method is likely to save the chapter a fair amount of postage expense.

(contact Bob Yarnell if you would like to receive the newsletter online)

Jim Washburn apologized for his absence for the last few meetings.

The president swore in to office our newest members, Walter Wishart and Daniel Stutzman. Both received their membership certificates.

Ted Dickerson won the 50-50 drawing. The chapter's share was \$11.00.

The recessional was said followed by the benediction offered by Jim Washburn. The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

(ed. note.—as space and time permit we will include on this page of the newsletter brief biographies of overlooked or less well known figures from the colonial/revolutionary period or a brief discussion of an over looked or less well known incident from the period. Members who may wish to contribute are requested to send their submissions to the editor via e-mail with the proviso that the submission may not be used and, if used, may have to be edited for space.)

## TROUT RIVER AND ALLIGATOR CREEK

While most Americans are familiar with Saratoga, Valley Forge, Yorktown, Lexington and Concord, most, including most Floridians, know little, if anything, about the war in Florida.

Spain ceded Florida to the British at the end of the French and Indian War in 1763, thus beginning twenty years of British rule. Florida remained loyal to the crown during the War for American Independence and became a haven for southern loyalist. Because of this and the desire for the rich farmlands and plantations along the St. Johns, patriot forces in Georgia made several attempts to capture Florida.

When the war began, most of the military activity, if it can be called that, consisted mostly of raids across the border by Georgians to steal cattle and burn farms. To combat these raids, British Governor Tonyn called for the raising of a militia force to safe guard the farms and homes along the St. Johns. Thomas Brown, a loyalist refugee from Georgia, raised the unit and commanded it throughout the war. This unit, known as the East Florida Rangers, though never numbering more than 200, twice was instrumental in saving Florida from capture by the Georgia patriot forces.

During the winter of 1776-1777, Brown's Rangers and some Creek Indian allies struck north into Georgia, successfully capturing a fort and repaying the Georgians for their raids in northern Florida. The Georgians responded with an invasion of Florida in the spring of 1777. The Georgia forces ravaged frontier homes and looted much of north Florida. A combined force of 300 Rangers, Creeks, and British regulars stopped the invasion at Trout River, just north of modern day downtown Jacksonville. The defeated Georgians retreated. Throughout the remainder of 1777 and into the spring of 1778, Brown and his Rangers conducted raids into Georgia. These raids kept the patriot forces in Georgia off balance and protected the farms of north Florida from being raided.

By the summer of 1778, the American forces in Georgia were ready to strike back. A force of 3000 men, including 1000 Continental troops, invaded north Florida. While the British regulars in St. Augustine hastened north, the East Florida Rangers nipped and slashed at the flanks of the invaders. The two forces clashed on Alligator Creek, just south of the St. Mary's River. The Rangers guerrilla work had given the British regulars time to assemble and after a brief fire fight, the American force retreated, thus ending the last major threat to Florida during the War for Independence.

As members of the SAR we should, perhaps, be disappointed that the patriot forces failed in their attempt to capture Florida. As Floridians, however, we should be proud that the farmers and homesteaders of north Florida banded together to protect their land from an outside invader.

Or, perhaps there is a simpler way of looking at it. The Georgia running game was stopped by an aggressive Florida defense, which resulted in a turnover that was returned for a touchdown. And thus Florida won the first Florida-Georgia game.