

Tampa Chapter Sons of the American Revolution



May 2024 Newsletter

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Tampa SAR Officers 2024

President: Robbie Robinson
1st Vice President: Roger Roscoe
Secretary: Bob Yarnell
Treasurer: Will Wagner-Hart
Registrar: Dick Young
Chaplain: Matt Balencie
Sergeant-at Arms: Darren Acosta
Historian: Bob Yarnell
Past President: Charles Klug
Color Guard Commander: Dick Young
Members-at-Large: Terry Doan,
Thomas Spangler
Newsletter: Bob Yarnell, Dick Young,
Robbie Robinson

Presidents Message:

Compatriots,

May is now upon us, and I am sure it will be a busy time for everyone as we get ready for the summer months.

First, I want to remind everyone that we voted at our April meeting to move the dates for future meetings to the second Saturday of the month. Therefore, our next meeting is going to be held on May 11th, at our normal location in the University Mall and starting at 11:30am, as usual. Unfortunately, I will be out of town that week, but our Vice President, Roger Roscoe, is ready to lead the meeting.

I want to remind everyone again that the Florida Society of the Sons of the American Revolution (FLSSAR) will be holding its semi-annual Board of Management (BOM) meeting on Friday and Saturday, 17-18 May 2024, and the Annual Membership meeting will be held on that Saturday afternoon. The election of FLSSAR officers will be held, and changes to the By-Laws will be considered.

Also, please look through the schedule of events for the summer timeframe since we have several activities that should be of interest to you, including Memorial Day, Independence Day, and some Color Guard events throughout the next several months while we are on

summer break from our normal meetings. Hope to see you at some of them.

Best Wishes to All,
Robbie



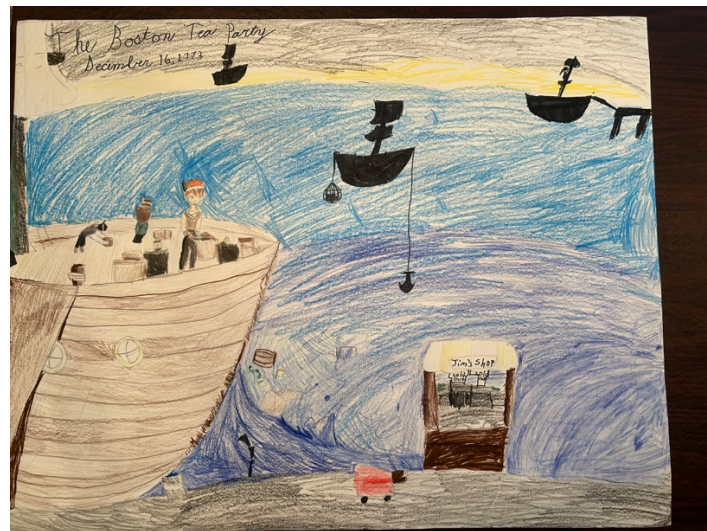
April Meeting Summary:

Our April 20, 2024, meeting was held at our normal meeting location at the University Mall. President Robbie Robinson called the meeting to order at 11:30.

After the Invocation by Chaplain Matt Balencie, Vice President Roger Roscoe led us in the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the SAR pledge. President Robinson then asked members and guests to introduce themselves.

Robbie then asked the officers to provide their applicable reports. For his report, he stated that he had given a check to the VA Fisher Houses of Tampa a check for \$1000 on behalf of the Tampa Chapter, and mentioned that he would like the manager to provide a briefing sometime in the fall timeframe and provide details about the Fisher Houses.

Robbie also showed everyone a photo of a poster that was made by a student at the Genesis Preparatory School, which will be the chapter's entry in the FLSSAR Patriotic Poster contest to be held at the May BOM.



Genesis Preparatory School student poster

Will Wagner-Hart provided the Treasurer Report, as follows:

Balance \$8,133.19, with \$600 deposited with the St Petersburg Yacht Club for the 2025 George Washington Birthday Celebration.

- Will mentioned that we have SAR merchandise for sell or he can order.

Will also gave us an update on the chapter's database he is building that will house information about our members as a repository of data about offices held, medals and awards earned, etc.

ROTC Chairman Terry Doan reported that all the J/ROTC awards have been covered by Tampa chapter members and thanked everyone for their support.

Registrar—Dick Young gave an update on applications at National awaiting action as well as a color guard report.

President Robinson then gave the following medals:

- Mike Willis received the SAR War Service Medal



President Robinson presenting Mike Willis with the War Service Medal

- Bill Swain received the Military Service Medal



Bill Swain receiving Military Service Medal

- Dwight Hamborsky, Lisette Young and Kathy Robinson received the Tampa Chapter's Bronze 250th Anniversary Medal for their attendance at our meetings and events.

- Kathy Robinson was awarded the Chapter's Achievement Medal for her outstanding support for the recent George Washington Dinner.



Dwight Hamborsky (above) and Lisette Young (below) receiving the Bronze 250th Anniversary Medal



- Dick Young and Robbie Robinson received the Gold 250th Anniversary Medal



Dick Young (above) and Robbie Robinson (below) receiving the SAR 250th Anniversary Gold Medal



Kathy Robinson receiving the SAR Achievement Medal

Following the lunch break, President Robinson gave a presentation about major events in the life of our first US President George Washington. It included a discussion of his immediate family, his involvement in the events of the French and Indian War when he was a young officer, and culminated in his election as our first president.

Following the benediction and SAR Recessional, President Robinson adjourned the meeting at 1:15 PM.

May Meeting:

Our May meeting will be held at the University Mall--our normal meeting location--on May 11th starting at 11:30am. Our schedule of events will include the induction of several new members. Compatriot Bob Yarnell will be our guest speaker, and he will be giving a presentation about how history may or may not change, depending upon how information is handled. (See related article, below.)

Tampa Chapter Schedule for 2024:

- 14 Sep: Chapter Meeting, University Mall
- 12 Oct: Chapter Meeting, University Mall
- 9 Nov: Chapter Meeting, University Mall
- December: Wreaths Across America

Color Guard Upcoming Dates:



Tampa SAR Color Guardsmen at the St Petersburg Airport with a young admirer

10 May: Galvez Day Celebration, in Pensacola

11 May: Tampa Chapter Meeting-Eagle Scout Recognition

17-18 May: FLSSAR BOM and Annual Meeting

27 May: Memorial Day Ceremony at the American Legion Post #5 in Tampa

4 Jun: Honor Flight #50, St Petersburg Airport

9 Jun: Rays Baseball Game, Tropicana Field

14 Jun: DeSoto DAR Chapter Flag Day

17 Jun: Battle of Alligator Bridge, Jacksonville

4 Jul: Safety Harbor Independence Day Parade

10 Sep: Honor Flight #51, St Petersburg Airport



Tampa and Clearwater SAR Members at St Petersburg Airport

Revolutionary History Notes (by Bob Yarnell)

How and Why History Changes--Or Doesn't When it Should

Many people often wonder why what is taught in history classes today differs from what was taught years ago. There are two answers to the question. The first is that people interpret the evidence differently; we'll tackle that in another column. For this month, we'll consider the simple fact that new information becomes known. A diary, journal, or a cache of letters, for example, may be discovered that no one knew existed. Or the government might declassify documents.¹ Either would allow historians access to heretofore unknown information.

At the start of my teaching career in the late 1970's and early 1980's I tried to find a niche in the world of Florida history. The Florida Historical Society had just moved its headquarters from USF to a refurbished Art Deco post office in Cocoa, on the east coast. I began driving over on Saturdays to help them unpack and move into their new digs.

One Saturday as I unpacked a box of books, I noticed an uncatalogued book. It had no stamp inside and no catalogue mark on the spine. I quickly scanned it and took it to show Nick Wynne, the Society's director, who supervised the

move and usually helped with the dirty work on Saturdays. He looked at it and asked, "What is it?" I told him I don't know, it's not catalogued, and that it might be a diary. He said, "Well, since it's not catalogued, it's yours. Take it home, look at it more carefully and see what you've found." At that time neither of us thought it was of any importance since, although it was in the Society's collection, it was not marked or categorized in any way.

When I got home, I started reading it more carefully. As I read, I realized I had stumbled onto the diary of Thomas Browne, commander of the loyalist East Florida Rangers. They patrolled the Georgia / Florida border and defeated two Georgia incursions, one at the Battle of Thomas Creek and the other at the Battle of Alligator Creek. The diary ended with a note from his son telling the story of Browne moving his family to Nova Scotia after the war and dying there.²

For a young history teacher this was Nirvana. An unknown diary from the American Revolution written by a loyalist military leader in Florida. Wow! I figured it would result in at least an article or two getting published and a few speaking engagements. I called Nick and told him. He offered his congratulations, assured me the diary was mine to use and encouraged me to begin transposing it.

I did, but here is where the story gets interesting and fits into the question of

why and how history “changes”. A few weeks later Nick called, he started by asking about my work on the diary. He then dropped the bombshell. He told me the Society needed the diary back, I was to quit working on it, and I was now legally prohibited from using it for any articles or speaking engagements. It seems a historian, whose name I have long since forgotten, was working on a book on the Revolution in the South. He had contacted the Society asking for any primary sources he could use, and in particular, any that had not yet seen the light of day. Nick told him about the diary.

The Society quickly reached a deal with him. He would get exclusive use of the diary in exchange for a favorable mention in the acknowledgement section of the book and verbal acknowledgement in any oral presentations he made where he referenced the diary.

I returned the diary³ but never heard or saw that a new book on the war in the South came out and never heard anything about the diary. I don't know whether that man is still alive and, if he did pass, if anyone took the time to go through all his books and recognized the value of the diary. Sadly, it is possible that the diary was thrown out. We'll never know how the information in the diary might have changed the way we look at the Revolution in Florida. Maybe the historian using it found it to be useless. Maybe the info in it didn't

quite fit his proposed narrative and so he didn't use it. Again, we'll never know.

And even assuming I had been able to keep the diary, and it had contained new information about Thomas Creek or Alligator Creek, that would be meaningless unless I would have been able to get an article published to get the new information out.

That's how the history game is played. Individual decisions get made about what information is relevant. Primary sources get used or thrown out depending on circumstances. Those decisions influence what gets taught or published. And thus history “changes” based on new information...maybe.

Notes:

¹ A good example of this is my master's thesis. The British Government had just declassified the Cabinet minutes from the spring of 1939 during which the British made the decision to guarantee Poland. Penn State gave me the job of using them to see if there was anything new or relevant. There wasn't. I did write my thesis on the British guarantee of Poland but nothing in the cabinet minutes altered the prevailing narrative.

² Dr. John Santosuosso taught political science and political philosophy at Florida Southern College when I attended in the early 70's. We have stayed in touch over the years. He taught political science, but Canada fascinated him, and he wrote the book *Canada: An Introduction for Americans*

[published: February 2007.] It is very good though it may be a bit dated now. So far as I know he's not revised or updated it. When I told him about the diary and Thomas Browne, especially the note from the son, he told me "I think I know where he's buried." Shortly after that conversation, Dr. Santosuosso traveled to Nova Scotia to research his book. While there he went tombstone hunting for me. He found the graveyard where loyalists who fled to Nova Scotia after the war are buried. Sadly, it has not been maintained. Tombstones are broken and scattered. Those that remain are mostly illegible. He's very confident that is where Browne is buried but couldn't find his tombstone.

³ Over the years people have told me I shouldn't have returned the diary or should have at least finished transcribing/copying it before giving it back. I trusted that Nick would be fair and do something to make it up to me. The Society never did.

Miscellaneous Reminders:

The face book page for the Tampa Sons of the American Revolution is Tampa Sar. The password to add anything is American1776.

Please feel free to upload pictures or comments. Invite all your friends to look.

Websites—remember you can find information about the chapter and programs on the chapter website: <http://www.tampasar.org>, and that you can find information related to Florida SAR at FLSSAR.org.

Secretary Request:

Any officer or committee chairman giving a report that includes numbers or names, I would appreciate it if you could give me that information either via email prior to or after the meeting or hard copy at the meeting. During the meeting I may easily miss those details and that information will enable us to have more accurate and complete minutes.

Chaplain Comments:

One of the duties of the Chapter Chaplain is to send cards to our members that are sick. Another is to send a sympathy card to the family of a member who has passed away. If you know of anyone that should be the recipient of these cards, please mention it to the Chaplain or one of the other officers at our next meeting.

