



East Fork-Trinity Chapter
Newsletter
 Texas Society
 Sons of the American Revolution



Volume ?, Issue 10 January 1 , 2013

Happy New Year

Feliz año Nuevo

Ein glückliches neues Jahr

שנה טובה

Bonne année

Felice Anno Nuovo

Buon anno

С НОВЫМ ГОДОМ

新年好

明けましておめでとうございます。

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In this issue, we have a ninth article by Compatriot Frank Roberts;

“The Penobscot Expedition Disaster”

Frank’s article begins on page 14.

Our January Meeting will be held at the Texas Land and Cattle Steak House on January 10th at 7 p.m.

Come earlier and join the group for dinner.

This meeting will celebrate our chapter’s 20th anniversary, so be sure to attend.

Also, be certain to bring photos, newspaper articles, flyers, school programs, etc., to our Historian, Tom Whitelock, for possible use in the chapter’s scrapbook.

Minutes from the December 13, 2012 Meeting of the East Fork-Trinity Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution

The December 13, 2012 meeting of the East Fork-Trinity Chapter of the SAR was called to order at 7:00 by President Walt Thomas, at the Texas Land and Cattle Steak House in Garland.

Eleven members and ten guests were in attendance:

Members; Allen Christian, Gary Snowden, Frank Roberts, Montie Monzingo, Walt Thomas, Tom Whitelock, Robert Vickers, Paul Ridenour, Harmon Adair, Gary Lovell, and William Bellomy; and guests Montye Whitelock, Jane Christian, Jane Roberts, Joyce Adair, Vivian Dennis-Monzingo, Barbara Thomas, Della Vickers, Mindy Lovell, Martha Bellomy (aka Penny Merle), and Drake Peddie.

Chaplain Bill Bellomy opened the meeting with a prayer.

President Walt Thomas acknowledged and welcomed the guests present.

It was noted that Bill and Martha Bellomy were celebrating their 60th anniversary.

Also, it was noted that Frank and Jane Roberts were making another missionary trip to India; Frank's fifth trip and Jane's fourth.

The nominating committee presented the following slate of candidates for the officers for 2013, all of which were elected:

President, Montie Monzingo

Vice President, Gary Lovell

Secretary, Frank Roberts

Treasurer, Harmon Adair

Historian, Paul Ridenour

Registrar, Allen Christian

Assistant Registrar, Dave Powell

Chaplain, Gary Snowden

The positions of newsletter editor and webmaster are to be appointed later.

The officers for 2013 will be sworn in at our January meeting.

Allen Christian received a supplemental lines certificate based on his patriot ancestor, William Hamersly.

William Hamersly, born in Prince Edward County, Virginia, was a Presbyterian Minister who preached at Buffalo Creek Church. He was the son-in-law of Reverend Richard Sankey, who, like Reverend Sankey, signed the Petition for Religious Liberty.

President Walt Thomas presents Allen Christian with a supplemental lines certificate.



Secretary Montie Monzingo presented the minutes from the November meeting, which were approved as posted.

Compatriot Harmon Adair presented the treasurer’s report:

The chapter has a balance of \$1288.97 including a deposit of \$76.00.



Penny Merle, a poor cousin of Minnie Pearl, stopped by for a nice visit. Penny discussed things going on in her life, notably that the DAR gave her a medal for winning the cow patty throwing contest. In one of her letters, Penny mentioned the bad weather; “it rained twice one week, four days the first time and three days the second time”.

Penny Merle telling us what’s going on in her life.

The Knight Essay Contest was discussed. Compatriot Frank Roberts reported that he will finish rating the Rockwall-Heath essays by the end of the month.

Drake Peddie requested that our chapter donate items for the silent auction at the state convention to be held in Dallas in March. He announced that the Plano chapter would raffle a Pennsylvania musket; which would be awarded at the Saturday night drawing.

Gary Lovell won the evening's prize, and was warned by Tom Whitelock not to tear the wrapping paper, as this would decrease the value of the prize.

Tom Whitelock donated an ROTC medal to the chapter.

Chaplain Bill Bellomy closed the meeting with a prayer, expressing his thanks that our ancestors helped make this country free.

Compatriot Montie Monzingo led the closing.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:13.

Respectfully submitted,

Montie Monzingo, Secretary

East Fork-Trinity Chapter

Sons of the American Revolution

CHRISTMAS PARTY 2012

Frank
and
Jane
Roberts



Some
of our
goodies



Barbara, Drake, and Montie discuss important matters while Walt and Allen play rock, paper, and scissors.



Vivian, Bob and Della Vickers, Jane, and Joyce and Harmon Adair



Tom and
Montye
Whitelock



Bill and
Martha
Bellomy
(aka
Penny
Merle)



Gary and Mindy were the big prize winners



Gary Snowden and the Bellomy's in the foreground

ROCKWALL CHRISTMAS PARADE 2012



Getting ready





Robert Kittrell, Walt Thomas, Barbara Thomas, and Tom Whitelock



A friend and Mindy Lovell (Gary Lovell is driving the truck)



Paul Ridenour and his Corvette



Allen waves to his adoring crowd as Montie struggles to keep the boat from tipping over.



Peggy Atterberry and other Rockwall Dar members



The winning float.

HONORING SGT. BOBBY RAY KING



North Texas Patriot Guard Riders



TXSSAR Honor Guard

JAMES JEFFERSON JOHNSON, JR., Denton & Plano,
BILL NEISEL, Plano, DON SIELERT, Plano, BLAIR RUDY, Plano,
MONTIE MONZINGO, East Fork Trinity, and DAN REED, Plano President

The Penobscot Expedition Disaster

The summer of 1779 spelled a naval disaster for the American Revolution styled by many historians to have been second only to the Japanese raid on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii Territory on December 7, 1941. The aftereffects of this naval loss resulted in a court of inquiry and court martial of its naval leader, Commodore Dudley Saltonstall and, among others, Lieutenant Colonel Paul Revere, the commander of artillery for the land forces.

British war planners in London looked to establish a port in the District of Maine (at the time a part of Massachusetts) as a base for naval ships to protect their cargo vessels from American privateers, and Continental and Colonial naval vessels. As well, this would establish a safe haven to settle Loyalists fleeing from the persecution of American rebels, and a military presence closer to the colonies. Local British authorities selected the Penobscot Bay area as the ideal location for establishing a base of operations.



To affect this venture British General Francis McLean and three British war ships, the *HMS Nautilus* (16), the *HMS Albany* (14), and the *HMS North* (14) (note: the number in parentheses is the number of guns carried aboard), accompanied by transports loaded with approximately 640 soldiers and field artillery, left Halifax on May 30, 1779. The convoy arrived at Penobscot Bay the following day, and McLean and the commander of the British convoy, Captain Andrew Barkley, picked a peninsula called Bagaduce (now

Initial Disposition of American and British Forces

known as Castine) located between the Bagaduce River and the Penobscot River, a location allowing control of both rivers. Troops were landed and the construction of fortifications was immediately begun with the principal works, Fort George, located in

the center of the peninsula. In addition, two batteries of artillery were located outside of Fort George at the lower end of the peninsula and one battery was located on a small island, Nautilus Island (also called Banks Island), just south and at the entrance to the Bagaduce River. The batteries were positioned to protect the *HMS Albany*, Captain Henry Mowat commanding, initially the only warship to be left at the newly established stronghold, and to be anchored between the guns of the peninsula and Nautilus Island.

News of the activities at Bagaduce was quickly relayed to Boston where the Massachusetts General Court happened to be in session, and the decision was made to drive out the British before they had time to establish a permanent base. The purpose of this action was; to insure keeping the Penobscot Indian Tribe from allying with the British; to protect Massachusetts' claim over the territory; and to prevent interference with the activities of American naval and privateer vessels intercepting and capturing British cargo vessels along the upper New England coast.

A naval force was quickly assembled, including three vessels petitioned by the Massachusetts General Court from the Continental Navy. These were the sloop *Providence* (12), the brig *Diligent* (12), and the frigate *Warren* (32). Massachusetts furnished their naval vessels, the *Active* (14), the *Hazard* (14), the *Tyrannicide* (14), and a galley, the *Lincoln*, believed carrying either 4 or 8 guns. Note: the number in parentheses designates guns carried by the ship.

In addition, New Hampshire hired a privateer, the *Hampden* (20), and six more privateers were hired by Massachusetts, with a spread of 16, 14, and 12 guns. Four privateer vessels from Massachusetts, not hired, joined in the venture, the largest carrying 20 guns down to 16 guns for the smallest. Twenty-four transports were hired by Massachusetts to carry troops, cannon, and military supplies. This entire flotilla was placed under the command of Commodore Dudley Saltonstall, a Continental Navy officer.

The land forces numbered approximately 1000 militia, under command of Brigadier General Solomon Lovell, the force supported by fifteen field guns and howitzers under command of Lieutenant Colonel Paul Revere. Additional land forces included 300 marines aboard Saltonstall's Continental ships. With the vessels gathered and troops and stores aboard, Saltonstall sailed from Boston on July 24, arriving at Penobscot Bay the same day.

The following day, nine of the largest American warships engaged the three British ships, kept on station when word came of the American fleet approaching. Little damage was suffered on either side. A landing was also attempted on the west side of the peninsula, but proved unsuccessful due to heavy British fire. On July 26, another attempt to land on the peninsula was made by militia, but again the main landing force to the peninsula failed when the lead boat was sunk by British gunfire. A simultaneous

thrust by Continental Marines was made on Nautilus Island, and the British battery of four guns and breastworks was captured.



Little action was taken on July 27, other than a bombardment from the Nautilus Island battery on the three British ships, now moved and anchored farther up the Bagaduce River. The next day another assault was made on the peninsula with Brigadier General Peleg Wadsworth in direct command, and leading a force of 200 Marines and

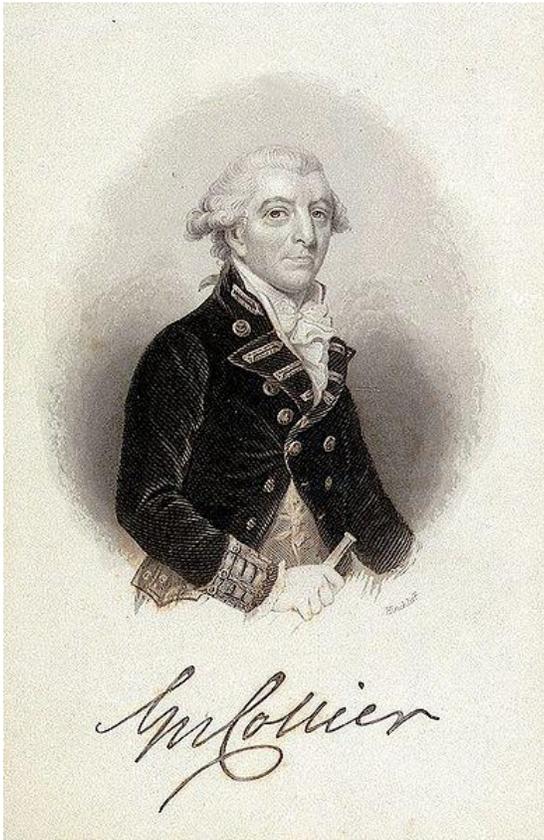
American Militia Overcoming British Defenders on Bagaduce Peninsula

200 militia. Under supporting fire from the *Tyrannicide* (14), and the privateers *Hunter* (18) and *Sky Rocket* (16), the force was able to capture high ground overlooking Fort George against a stiff resistance by the British led by Lieutenant John Moore. Lovell ordered a breastworks be constructed to place the fort under bombardment. American casualties suffered in the attack were high at 100 out of the attacking force of 400, with the Marines taking the highest casualties. Saltonstall was so appalled by losses in his Marine ranks that he refused to land any additional Marines and threatened to recall those on shore. Meanwhile, Revere landed higher up on the Penobscot River and placed artillery at the narrow neck of the peninsula, north of Fort George, and began firing onto the fort.

The bombardment of Fort George continued from July 27, on to August 12, with several attacks mounted on both sides, resulting in little gain, but with mounting casualties. In the interim much arguing and posturing was evident between Saltonstall and Lovell on how to take the peninsula and Fort George with Saltonstall reticent to risk his ships or Marines in attacking Fort George, forcing Lovell to continue the siege.

Several misadventures occurred during the siege, including one in which Saltonstall and several ship captains went ashore by ship's boat to reconnoiter the position of the three British ships moved east of the Bagaduce Peninsula to be out of range of the battery on Nautilus Island. Saltonstall and his party were cut off by British Marines who captured

the American boat, and Saltonstall's party was forced to return to safety by tramping through woods, thick brush, and swamps while dodging British patrols and outposts.



Word had reached Halifax during this time and a British fleet commanded by Commodore George Collier was dispatched to assist the British forces at Bagaduce. Collier's fleet consisted of 7 warships, with the largest the *HMS Reasonable* (64), a ship-of-the-line, or in modern terms, a battleship, and the next largest, the *HMS Virginia* (32) and the *HMS Blonde* (32), the equivalent of heavy cruisers. Clearly, though Collier had fewer warships than Saltonstall, he had by far the advantage in firepower and in weight-of-metal that could be delivered on the American fleet. Collier was also carrying six hundred and fifty infantrymen and 50 artillerymen on transports to reinforce the garrison at Fort George.

On August 13, two American vessels, the *Diligent* and the *Active*, were cruising off of the mouth of Penobscot Bay performing picket duty, when, at about 2 PM, five enemy sails were sighted bearing in towards the bay. Soon two more sails came in

Commodore George Collier

Picture in Public Domain

sight and the *Diligent* sailed in to notify Saltonstall of the approaching British fleet. The captain of the *Diligent* accurately reported a British ship-of-the-line (64), 5 frigates (2-32 and 3-20), and one sloop (14). The *Active* came in the following day reporting the same numbers and arms of the British ships.

At a conference of American ship captains, all showed a lack of confidence in Saltonstall by recommending a retreat up the Penobscot River, rather than face a far superior force in guns and weight of metal thrown. The decision was finally made by Saltonstall to follow the captains' decision, and all American troops on shore were immediately embarked on the transports. On August 15, with the British fleet hot on their heels, all of the American ships retreated up the Penobscot River, in the process trapping the fleet in the river. The result was the destruction of Saltonstall's fleet with three exceptions. The galley, *Lincoln*, had been sent earlier in the siege to Boston with dispatches, and the brig, *Pallas*, privateer, and the brigantine, *Active*, Massachusetts Navy, both by skillful

maneuvering were able to escape destruction. The rest of Saltonstall's ships were either run aground and set afire or scuttled in the river, actions taken by their crews to avoid capture by the British. Ashore in hostile territory and without food or arms, the Americans were forced to march south, spending miserable days trekking through the wilderness until reaching New Hampshire or Massachusetts and safety.

In human losses, approximately 112 Americans were killed in action with many more wounded. The unfortunate retreat by the American force from Penobscot Bay and the wilderness march to find safety raised the total number of casualties to 474 killed, wounded, or missing. The British lost 25 killed, with 34 wounded, and 26 prisoners taken by the Americans. In material costs, the Massachusetts Board of War estimated a cost of £1,739,175.00 to Massachusetts. The largest part of that amount, £1,390,200.00, was charged to the Massachusetts Navy for the loss of three warships and a supply ship of the Navy, along with nine privateers and twenty transports.

A court of inquiry recommended the court martial of Saltonstall for failure to coordinate his sea and land forces, failure to reinforce Lovell when needed to capture Fort George, and his failure to engage and destroy the three British ships on station before Collier arrived. At court martial, Saltonstall was again found to be responsible for the failure of the expedition, declared guilty and dismissed from naval service. The court martial of Paul Revere found him guilty of disobedience and cowardice and dismissed from militia service, although he was later



Collier's British Ships Pursuing Saltonstall's American Ships

By Dominic Serres

cleared of the charges. Peleg Wadsworth, who supposedly mitigated human losses by effectively organizing the retreat of the forces upriver, was not charged by the court martial board. There are some claims, in particular George E. Buker in his book, "The Penobscot Expedition", stating that Saltonstall was the victim of a conspiracy and the real cause of the loss of the American fleet was Lovell. The fact is there are many failings

involved, and likely no clear explanation as to the results of the expedition will ever be known.

In 1972, the remains of a privateer, the *Defense* (14), were discovered in the Penobscot River. Other unidentified remains have been discovered in the river, most near Bangor, Maine, along with cannon balls and other relics. The works of Fort George still remain on Bagaduce Peninsula, now known as Castine, along with earthworks of the several positions of both the Americans and the British. Archaeological digs in the area have uncovered cannons and cannon balls from various American warships and from the field guns of Revere. Little else remains of one of the worst defeats in American naval history.

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By: Frank E. Roberts

Rockwall, Texas