



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



Volume ?, Issue 3 March 22, 2012

President's Message



friends or family members who might wish to join us, please encourage them. Thanks to Montie Monzingo and Gary Lowell for the interesting and informative programs this year. We have a lot of talent within our chapter and we also hope to bring in outside speakers from time to time. You do not want to miss the April meeting to hear Tom Crowe speak. Bob Vickers, thank you for arranging this program. Several from the chapter will be attending the TXSSAR State Conference in San Antonio later this month. We're hoping for a Chapter award on our Yearbook put together by Tom Whitelock. We will be taking the winning poster from the chapter to try for a repeat on our win last year. On a personal note, I would like to thank all for the hard work that I see making the Chapter meetings a place that all compatriots will look forward to each month. This makes my job easy.

Walt Thomas

Thoughts from the President
Our chapter is off to a very good start this year. I certainly want to welcome David Powell and Gary Snowden, our two newest members in the chapter. New members are the life blood of the organization and I hope we can induct several more this year. We have several prospects and we hope to get them to attend one of our meetings and learn of the benefits of membership in the Sons of the American Revolution. If you have

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In this issue, we have a second article by Compatriot Frank Roberts; "Hijacking Gunpowder for the Colonies".

Frank's article begins on page 7.

Our Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on April 12, 2012 at the Texas Land & Cattle Steak House on Lake Ray Hubbard in Garland. Our speaker will be Tom Crowe, a genealogist from Rockwall. Mr. Crowe has approximately 30 years experience in the field of genealogy and has done over a dozen presentations to groups such as the Sons of the American Revolution and Eastfield College Seniorfest.

Minutes from the March 2012 Meeting of the East Fork-Trinity Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution

The March 8, 2012 meeting of the East Fork-Trinity Chapter of the SAR was called to order at 7:05 by President Walt Thomas, at the Texas Land and Cattle Steak House in Garland.

Twelve members and seven guests were in attendance:

Members and spouses; David and Barbara Powell, Robert and Della Vickers, Frank and Jane Roberts, Allen and Jane Christian, Paul and Dottie Ridenour, Gary and Mindy Lovell, Montie and Vivian Monzingo.

Members; Harmon Adair, Tom Whitelock, Walt Thomas, Gary Snowden, and Jess Lovell.

In the absence of Chaplain Bill Bellomy, Compatriot Gary Snowden opened the meeting with prayer.

Compatriot Robert Vickers led the pledge of allegiance to the US flag. Compatriot Allen Christian led the pledge to the Texas flag. Compatriot Paul Ridenour led the pledge to the SAR.

Secretary Montie Monzingo presented the minutes, which were approved as corrected:

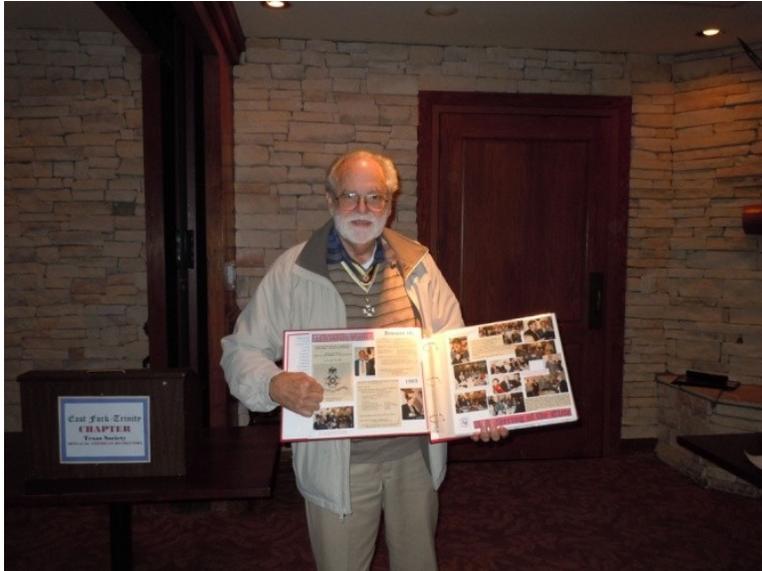
Replace "Compatriot Paul Ridenouer showed the audience a pin designed by the Plano Camp of the SCV to honor civil war veterans from both sides of the conflict. He reported that the pin was rejected by the National SCV Organization, but has been widely accepted by others."

with

"Compatriot Paul Ridenour showed the audience a pin designed by the Plano Camp of the SCV to honor civil war veterans from both sides of the conflict. He reported that the pin was rejected by the National SUVCW Organization, but has been widely accepted by others."

President Walt Thomas acknowledged and welcomed the guests present.

Treasurer Harmon Adair reported that as of March 8, 2012, the chapter's balance was \$1073.40. Additional expenses were approximately \$100 for the yearbook, and approximately \$100 for the medals.



Historian Tom Whitlock announced that, with the exception of the posters, the yearbook was completed. He expressed his hope that the chapter might receive an award for the yearbook.

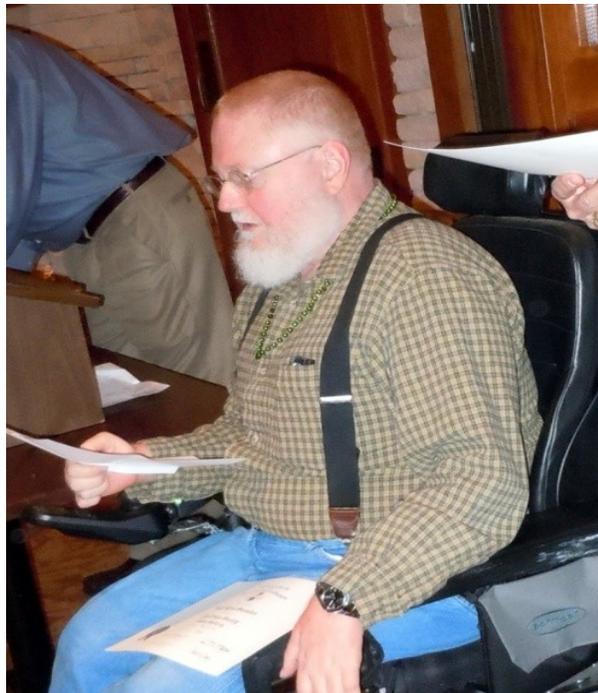
Compatriot Allen Christian updated the chapter on the attempt to contact the Sheriff Eavenson in regard to Deputy Kevin Rowen receiving an award from our chapter. Thus far, the sheriff has not returned calls or emails, but this issue will be pursued.

Compatriots Allen Christian and Walt Thomas discussed the importance of presenting awards at area schools, and they urged chapter members to take part in this endeavor.



District 6 VP Harmon Adair inducted Gary Snowden and David Powell into our chapter. Each was presented with a membership certificate and a SAR rosette.

Gary Snowden's patriot ancestor was Rueben McLeroy, born in 1759 in North Carolina. Rueben McLeroy served in the North Carolina Militia and took part in the Battle of Guilford Court House, North Carolina. He later became a Baptist preacher in Georgia.

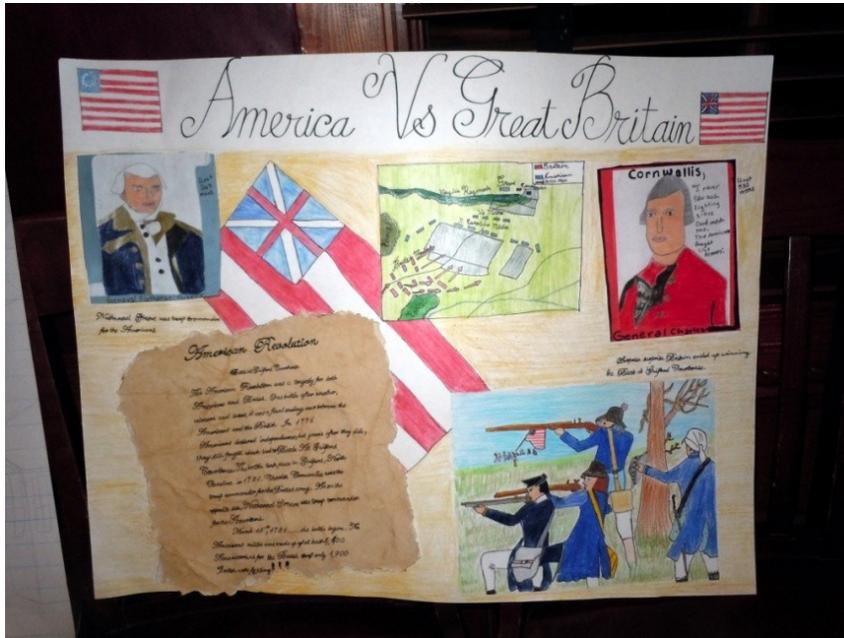


David Powell's patriot ancestor was Lucius Tuttle, born in 1749 in Connecticut. Lucius Tuttle served in the 4th Co. 10th Reg. of the Connecticut Militia, where he rose through the ranks to become a captain.

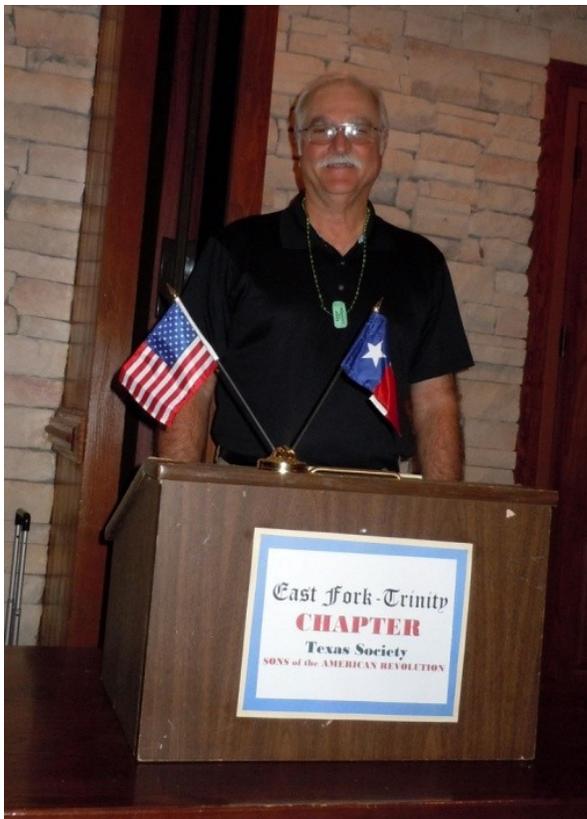
Announcements:

Several chapter members plan to attend the state convention of the TXSSAR which will be held in San Antonio later this month.

The poster contest judging was completed and this year's winner was Aanchal Malik. Aanchal is in the fifth grade at Walnut Glenn Academy in Garland. His teacher is Mrs. Sonsel.



Aanchal Malik's winning poster.



Compatriot Gary Lovell's presentation was titled, "Pensions for Revolutionary War Veterans and the unintended benefit for us today". It was both entertaining and informative. Compatriot Gary Lovell detailed some of the pension changes that were enacted over the short span of time. Using the pension application of his patriot ancestor, John Ham, Compatriot Gary Lovell highlighted the war exploits of John Ham, whose contributions to the war ranged from the menial, but important, task of driving pigs, to serving under Colonel Francis Marion.

Compatriot Tom Whitelock conducted a drawing for seven doors prizes, which were won by Montie Monzingo, Paul Ridenour, Frank Roberts, Jesse Lovell, David Powell, Walt Thomas, and Harmon Adair.

Compatriot Walt Thomas led the closing, and Compatriot Gary Snowden gave the closing prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15.

Respectfully submitted,

Montie Monzingo, Secretary

Notes:

1. The photos in this newsletter were furnished by the Chapter Historian Tom Whitelock.
2. Compatriot Allen Christian suggested that chapter members check out “www.fold3.com” on the web. It is a storehouse of military records.
3. The Chapter’s next meeting is on April 12, 2012 at the Texas Land & Cattle Steak House, and our speaker will be Rockwall Genealogist, Tom Crowe. Mr. Crowe has approximately 30 years experience in the field of genealogy and has done over a dozen presentations to groups such as the Sons of the American Revolution and Eastfield College Seniorfest. Dinner at 6:00; the meeting starts at 7:00.

Hijacking Gunpowder for the Colonies

As the Revolutionary War developed into being in 1775, a major problem facing patriots of the American Colonies was the critical shortage of gunpowder for the Continental Army and the state militia forces. This point was driven home to the South Carolina Provincial Congress when the South Carolina delegates attending the Continental Congress in Philadelphia sent an urgent letter dated July 1, 1775, asking of that body: “...to procure from you a quantity of gun-powder for the use of the armies in the field for the service of America...” The need was made even more apparent as the delegates also requested that any damaged gunpowder be sent to Philadelphia for recovery along with any surplus saltpeter for the manufacture of gunpowder. This gunpowder shortage di-



lemma of the colonial patriots was not lost on British authorities as several groups of patriots had already raided British Army arsenals and spirited away precious gunpowder stores.

In June of 1775, Sir James Wright, Royal Governor of Georgia, learned through loyalist spies that certain citizens of Charleston, South Carolina, and in the patriot cause were laying plans to intercept and seize a British armed merchant ship, the *Phillipa*, destined for Savannah, and carrying gunpowder, muskets, and

Fig. 1. Governor Sir James Wright of

Georgia. Portrait by Andrea Soldi.

other military goods in its hold. Wright immediately sent a letter to Admiral Samuel Graves in New York, commander of all British Navy vessels and personnel in North America, requesting that armed vessels be posted to the Port of Savannah to protect British shipping coming in and out of the harbor. Wright feared, rightly so, that capture of this ship loaded with gunpowder would spell major difficulties in the governor’s efforts in Georgia, as well as governors and the British military in the rest of the colonies in North America, in foiling a growing rebellion. Wright was also aware that patriots had intercepted information that the gunpowder and munitions on the *Phillipa* were des-

tinued for distribution to Creek and Cherokee Indian tribes, to be encouraged by British Army officers to mount attacks on patriot settlements along the western colonial border.

South Carolina's revolutionary governing body issued orders in early June to Captain John Barnwell of the 1ST South Carolina Regiment, and John Joyner, the Port Royal, South Carolina, harbor pilot to execute such a venture. Their orders were to take command of and equip two armed barges, recruit a crew of forty men, and await orders to sail to Bloody Point, on the southern tip of Daufuske Island, north of the mouth of the Savannah River. Once there, they were to lay in wait, and upon arrival of the *Phillipa*, seize the ship and



her cargo of gunpowder and arms.

Fig. 2. Map of Savannah Sound Area. Extract of Map from David Rumsey Collection.

Bloody Point, the north landfall for all ships entering or exiting the Savannah River, would give the South Carolinians an excellent vantage point to watch for the *Phillipa* or any other ships of interest. Around mid-June, Barnwell and Joyner completed preparations including recruiting crews for both barges. Thus ready, they received orders to sail, departed from Beaufort with their armed barges manned by a contingent of sailors and militiamen, moved down the coast, and took up station at Bloody Point.

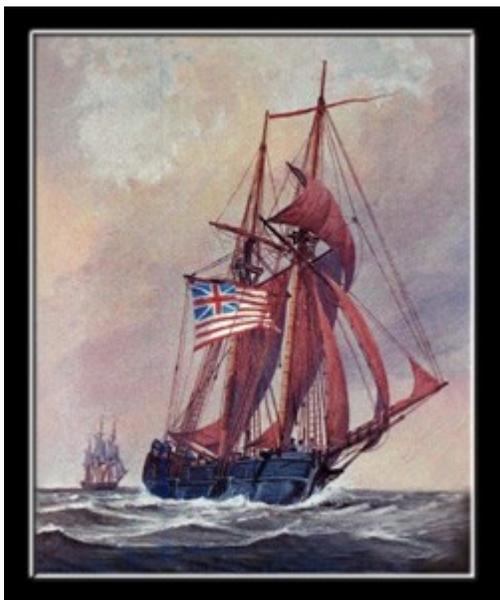
Reports from loyalist spies of the presence of the two barges at Bloody Point and patriot-fomented unrest in the Savannah River area weighed heavily on Governor Wright, waiting for much needed naval aid from Admiral Graves. Unfortunately for Wright, his letter to Graves requesting armed British naval vessels be sent to his aid was intercepted by agents of the South Carolina Committee of Safety. A forgery was produced and sent on to Graves assuring him that all was peaceful and that no naval or military assistance was currently needed.

Some fortune finally seemed to smile on Governor Wright in the form of the British naval schooner *HMS St. John*, Lieutenant William Grant, commanding. Grant had set out from St. Augustine, East Florida on June 27, 1775, with dispatches for Wright from Florida's Royal Governor Patrick Tonyn.

On June 29, when less than a dozen miles off Tybee Lighthouse, marking the southern side of the mouth of the Savannah River, Grant intercepted and temporarily detained a sloop from Providence, Rhode Island. Grant sailed the *HMS St. John* and the intercepted vessel to the southern entrance to the Savannah River and anchored near the Tybee Lighthouse. In plain view of Grant and his ship's crew was a tent erected next to the lighthouse, and several boats grounded along the shore. What he saw was a group of South Carolinian patriots sent by small boat from the two barges at Bloody Point along with a reinforcement of a few Georgia "Liberty Boys", all of whom had seized the lighthouse and encamped there to guard the southern side of the river. Not knowing who was at the lighthouse, and leaning towards the cautious side, Grant ordered his crew on alert and dispatched the detained sloop on to Savannah with a letter to inform Governor Wright of his arrival.

On his own initiative, Grant began sending his small boats to intercept and search vessels entering and leaving the bay, looking for illicit goods being smuggled in or out of Savannah. The results were disappointing and after a couple of days of fruitless activity and hearing nothing from Governor Wright, he sent another letter to Savannah via a ship's officer in one of *HMS St. John's* small boats.

As events on the river and in the sound were unfolding, the situation in Savannah turned worse for Governor Wright when, on July 4, the Second Provincial Congress of Georgia convened, and joined the American Association and the rebellion. Georgia patriots in Savannah, encouraged by letters from the South Carolina Committee on Safety urging them to assist the South Carolinians anchored off of Bloody Point, decided to participate in capturing the *Phillipa*.



Georgia patriots quickly acquired the schooner *Elizabeth*, owned by Samuel Price and Richard Wright, both of Savannah, and commissioned her the Georgia Navy Ship *Liberty*. James Habersham, a leading member of the Georgia Provincial Congress, was assigned the task of outfitting and arming the *Liberty*. Habersham had already participated, in the company of other prominent Georgians, in a raid relieving the British Army of 600 pounds of gunpowder at their magazines in Savannah. He quickly fitted the ship with ten

Fig. 3. USS Wasp, 1775. Armed Schooner similar to the *Liberty*. US Navy Photo.

eight-pound naval carriage guns and several swivel guns, and recruited a crew of fifty patriot sailors.

Oliver Bowen, later to be appointed commodore of the Georgia Navy Department, was commissioned as captain of the *Liberty*, and Samuel Price as the ship's pilot. Bowen's orders were to join with and assist South Carolinian Captains Joyner and Barnwell in capturing the *Phillipa* and seizing its gunpowder and munitions cargo.

The British armed merchant ship *Phillipa*, Captain Richard Maitland commanding, had left London on May 2, and had on board a load of 16000 pounds of gunpowder, Indian trade muskets and other military materials. Enjoying favorable southern route trade winds, Maitland, with no inkling of a planned hijacking, was anticipating arrival at the Savannah River mouth around the end of the first week in July.

New reports of two hostile barges at Bloody Point along with his previous observation of the unidentified group of men at Tybee Lighthouse, who were now flying a strange flag, gave Grant further cause for concern. The overly cautious lieutenant moved the *HMS St. John* further out to sea, in the process hampering his ability to observe all ships entering or leaving the mouth of the river. This move would prove disastrous for Grant and for Governor Wright as well, for on July 7, Maitland and the *Phillipa* sailed up on the Savannah River and anchored nine miles off of Tybee Point, out of sight of Grant.

Still more misfortune was in store for Governor Wright as, upon anchoring, Maitland sent a boat in to Savannah requesting a pilot, an act alerting the Georgia patriots of the arrival of the *Phillipa*. The next day Captain Bowen moved the *Liberty* to the river's mouth and anchored in the middle of the main stream, positioning his ship to block Maitland from passing on to Savannah. Unaware of the presence of the *Liberty*, Maitland took on board a pilot, weighed anchor and proceeded towards the mouth of the Savannah River. It would appear that the pilot was loyal to the patriot cause as he said nothing to Maitland about the presence of patriot barges, common knowledge to anyone in Savannah, or the *Liberty*, which he had to pass as it was anchored in plain sight in the entrance to the Savannah River.

As the *Phillipa* sailed down on the *Liberty*, Maitland observed that "...the schooner was full of armed men and had ten carriage guns mounted". As Maitland's ship neared the *Liberty*, Bowen fired two musket shots and hailed Maitland to identify himself and drop anchor. Maitland attempted evasive maneuvers, but his efforts were futile, and he was forced to haul in sail and drop anchor in compliance with Bowen's orders. There were a few tense moments as some hot words were exchanged between the two captains, though the patriots did not attempt boarding the *Phillipa*. Bowen raised a white flag bordered in red with the words "American Liberty" also in red, and identified his ship as being an armed vessel of the Georgia Navy. Seeing that the *Phillipa* was outgunned and outmanned, Maitland wisely chose to comply with Bowen's demands.

Contrary winds and an ebb tide convinced Bowen not to try the passage of the two ships up the river that night, and ordered the *Phillipa* to anchor in close to and under the

watchful eye of the crew of the *Liberty*. Next morning Bowen ordered Maitland to move his ship up the Savannah River ahead of the *Liberty* to Cockspur Island and again anchor close by the *Liberty*. At the same time the two South Carolina barges were moving up river to join the *Liberty*, and upon arrival, Bowen, Joyner, and an armed party of patriots boarded the *Phillipa*. Maitland was forced to surrender his papers, at which point Joseph Habersham, acting on behalf of the Georgia Provincial Congress, handed Maitland an order seizing his cargo.

On board the *Phillipa* were found the anticipated 16000 pounds of gunpowder, plus “seven hundredweight of leaden bullets” along with “...bar-lead, sheet-lead, and shot.” Also found were Indian trade muskets, confirming the suspicions of the colonists of the intent of the British to arm hostile Indians. Part of the gunpowder was immediately loaded aboard the *Liberty* along with several kegs of musket balls, and the rest was left on board the *Phillipa* to be unloaded at the docks in Savannah later that day.

At the Savannah docks the remaining gunpowder was divided between Georgia and South Carolina, with Georgia getting 9,000 pounds of powder and most of the small arms. The Georgian gunpowder and arms were transported to and stored in the Savannah city magazine for safe keeping, and later 5,000 pounds of Georgia’s gunpowder share were sent to Philadelphia for use by the Continental Army.

The South Carolinian patriots took 7,000 pounds of seized gunpowder to Beaufort, South Carolina, to be placed in the care of Colonel Stephen Bull, commanding the patriot militia in the Beaufort District. In response to the request from their representatives in the Continental Congress, the South Carolina Provincial Congress sent 4,000 pounds of their share to Philadelphia.

Amazingly, it was a bloodless affair as no firefights occurred and no casualties were suffered on either side. The cooperation of Georgians with South Carolinians resulted in the capture of the *Phillipa* and the acquisition and distribution of much needed gunpowder for the two colonies as well as for use in the muskets and cannons of the Continental Army.

Author’s Notes:

Fig 4. The term “barge” seems to be synonymous with the term “row galleys”, which are small boats with no sail, and mounting one long gun facing over the bow, and two or more long guns facing starboard and port and located towards the stern. When fitted with a lateen sail, the term “gunboat” seems sometimes to be used.



At left is the gunboat *USS Philadelphia*, on display at the Smithsonian Institute, Washington, DC. This gunboat was one of several used at the Battle of Valcour Island, Lake Champlain, October, 1776.

Photo: ©BrokenSphere/Wikimedia Commons.

Fig. 5. Shown at right is a swivel gun, mounted on the American schooner *Lynx*, similar to those used on the Georgia Navy Ship *Liberty*. Swivel guns are small cannons usually loaded with grape shot, and used as anti-personnel weapons against hostile sailing ships.



Photo: ©BrokenSphere/Wikimedia Commons.

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Article by Frank E. Roberts

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Americanism, Main Program Presentations

2012

Meeting	Month	Member Name
1	January	Paul Ridenour
2	February	Montie Monzingo
3	March	Gary Lovell
4	April	Tom Crowe
5	May	Bill Bellomy
6	June	no meeting
7	July	no meeting
8	August	no meeting
9	September	Harmon Adair
10	October	Frank Roberts
11	November	Paul Ridenour [or meet with the DAR]
12	December	Christmas Party