



Pine Shavings



Piney Woods Chapter #51 Texas Society of Sons of the American Revolution

December 2013/January 2014

Volume 24, Issue 4



Compatriots,

I wanted to wish all of you a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and Happy New Year. It has been a great year for the SAR Piney Woods 51 Chapter with many successful activities and many events supported by you, our superlative membership. I am proud to be associated with such a fine group, who so ardently support the ideals of the Sons of the American Revolution.

We have a very active and busy 2014 coming up. With our dedicated Chapter, we are sure to continue to perform at a high level for all of our activities.

I look forward to seeing you all at our upcoming January meeting. Best wishes to all of you and your families.

Ben Stallings
President, SAR Piney Woods No. 51 Chapter

In This Issue	
Events/Calendar	1, 3
Chapter News	4
Revolutionary History	2, 5-8
Color Guard	3
Editor's Note	9

Officers for 2014 – 2015

President	Ben Stallings	Registrar	Larry Stevens
1 st VP	Greg Goulas		Kermit Breed
Secretary	Joe Potter	Chancellor	Allan Henshaw
Treasurer	John Beard	Chaplain	Cannon Pritchard
Historian	Jim Mitchell	Web Master	Ray Cox
Genealogist	Kim Morton	Past Pres.	Larry Blackburn

Meetings - 2014	
January 16, 2014	Member-Guest
February 20, 2014	Member
March 20, 2014	Member-Guest (Officer Induction)
April 17, 2014	Member
May 15, 2014	Member Guest
August 21, 2014	Member
September 18, 2014	Member/Guest
October 16, 2014	Member
November 20, 2014	Member/ Guest
December 18, 2014	Member

Meeting—January 16th
Member—Guest
Jimmy G's
307 N. Sam Houston E. Parkway, Greenspoint
6:30 p.m.

RSVP FOR THE MEETING

Please respond with the number of people attending and their names by Tuesday before the meeting date. Please RSVP ASAP, to Ben Stallings bbstallings@gmail.com or John Beard Johnbeard@suddenlink.net
NOTE THAT THIS IS A MEMBER/GUEST MEETING AT JIMMY G'S.

Piney Woods Officers

President

Ben Stallings

Bbstallings@gmail.com

1st Vice President

Greg Goulas

greg.red.river@att.net

2nd Vice President

Vacant

Secretary

Joe Potter

potterj1@mac.com

Treasurer

John Beard

Johnbeard@suddenlink.net

Chancellor

Allan Henshaw

Allan_henshaw@aigag.com

Genealogist

Kim Morton

genmorton@usa.net

Registrar

Larry Stevens

wardtracker@aol.com

Historian

James Mitchell

Chaplain

Cannon Pritchard

cannon1@livingston.net

Sgt. at Arms

Larry Blackburn

Lblackburn@eereed.com

Newsletter Editor

Larry Stevens

wardtracker@aol.com

Web Master

Ray Cox

coxmr@earthlink.net

Christmas Day 1776



“General George Washington’s commitment to cross the Delaware River on Christmas of 1776 foreshadowed the many hardships faced as well as the eventual victory of the Continental Army during the American Revolution. At first glance, the decision to transport 2,400 Continental Soldiers across an icy river in one night, directly into a severe winter storm seems irrational.

“Washington’s decision, however, was based on a strategic motivation, understanding that the Continental Army desperately needed a victory after months of intense fighting with several significant defeats and no major victories. Washington also understood that the element of surprise was the only way that he and his army stood a chance of defeating the highly trained Hessian mercenaries.”

Mt. Vernon Website



“...and put your cell phones on vibrate.”

UPCOMING EVENTS

National

George Washington Parade Laredo February 22, 2014
 Spring Leadership and Trustee Meeting Brown Hotel Louisville February 28 - March 1
 NSSAR 124th Congress Greenville, South Carolina July 18 – 24, 2014

Texas Events

TXSSAR 119th Annual Convention at the Omni Hotel, 9821 Colonnade, San Antonio, Mar 27-30, 2014

TXSSAR Fall BOM October – Location Not Selected

Events



Color Guard

Here are two pictures of the Conroe Christmas parade held this day, Saturday December 14, 2013, with members of the Piney Woods [Larry Blackburn] and Freedom Chapters with a total of 7 SAR participating or assisting with coordination. The parade began promptly at 1 pm on Saturday, December 14 and concluded before 2:30 pm.

It was a special honor to assist "new" SAR Compatriot Kix Lamp in his efforts with the Conroe Kiwanis Club for this parade. There were a surprising number of folks participating with over 200 floats and entries. TXS-SAR Color Guard was pleased to be number 3 in the parade behind the VFW Post 4709 Honor Guard and Conroe HS Key Club. We enjoyed participating, and the crowd gave us good cheer as the SAR Color Guard passed in review.



Above: Larry Blackburn, John K. Thompson and John Meredith with Veterans of Foreign Wars members

Above: William Cox, Larry Blackburn, Kix Lamp, John Meredith and John K. Thompson

November Meeting

Because of business obligations, President Ben Stallings was not able to attend the December meeting. Highlights of the meeting are as follows:

The Members Meeting on December 19th, officers for the 2014 – 2015 were nominated. Since the first year of two years terms in just ending, this motion was made to satisfy TXSSAR Bylaws. The 30 days waiting period will begin when chapter members are notified. There was no change in officers for the next term. New PineyWoods Member Kermit Breed said he would like to help Registrar Stevens with applications and learn the process.



John Beard, Joe Potter, John K. Thompson, Kermit Breed, Jim Jones and Larry Stevens

The Chapter Annual Report was discussed and the need to get started. Stevens suggested all officers work on the report. The report must be completed and sent by the 14th January. Report instructions can be found on the Texas Web.

Registrar Stevens reported that he has mailed three new PineyWoods applications for approval.

Larry Blackburn said he hopes to have JROTC Scholarship Candidate before the end of the year.

Ray Cox said after the first of the year we need to update our Web-site. New pictures, revised tool bar etc., and would like to have a working meeting just to discuss and do some work on the site.

Jeff LaRochelle is working on an Eagle Scout Candidate and will advise.

John Beard reported the chapter an account balance of around \$1400.00 at the end of the year.

Kermit Breed, Larry Blackburn, John Beard, Ray Cox, Jim Jones, Joe Potter, Larry Stevens, John Thompson approved the slate.

The Proposed combined March 2014 nominations meeting; Freedom Chapter, Robert Rankin Chapter and PineyWoods was discussed. This would be a joint meeting were the Texas President Elect would swear in officers at the same time. This would help ease travel commitments by the incoming President. It was agreed we need to choose a date for the meeting with the other two chapters. Locations for the meeting were discussed including the Steamboat House, the Hilton Garden on 290, and at a hotel at Greenspoint.



Blackburn presents PW Treasurer Beard with \$986.00 check representing BOM profits.



Larry Stevens with prospective member Eric Ramsey signing application for membership



Christmas With George

“Christmas was primarily a religious holiday in eighteenth century Virginia. It was also, however, a festive occasion marked by visits between friends and relatives, celebratory parties, and public assemblies. As described by George Washington’s correspondence, diaries and cash accounts, Christmas at Mount Vernon followed a typical pattern for the region and time period.

Religion played a significant part in the observance of the holiday at Mount Vernon as the Washingtons frequently attended church on Christmas day. In 1770, for example, Christmas fell on a Tuesday. After going to nearby Pohick Church in the morning, the family returned to Mount Vernon for dinner. Similar patterns were followed in 1771 and 1772, when December 25 fell on a Wednesday and Friday.

The Washingtons preferred to spend the holiday with family and friends, and George and Martha frequently had guests over at Mount Vernon to celebrate Christmas. While at Mount Vernon guests were encouraged to make themselves at home and take part in typical seasonal activities. Hunting and foxhunting, for example, were particularly favored activities. Twice in 1768 and three times in both 1771 and 1773, George Washington went hunting with visiting friends between Christmas and Twelfth Night.” By Mary V. Thompson, Research Historian, Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens (Excerpted from a larger article)

George Washington rode away from Mount Vernon on May 4, 1775 and was given command of the continental Army six weeks later. He had little time for Christmas celebrations 1775; at least not as much as his advisories. December 1776 found him on the banks of the Delaware. His plan was to cross the icy river and march on Trenton New Jersey on Christmas Day 1776. The attack was a total Christmas Surprise Package for the Hessians who had bundled up for some rest only to awaken at 5:00 in the morning on December 26th to the blast of cannon.

December 1776 was a grave time for the Continental Army. Washington’s force had been pushed out of New York and New Jersey by Gen Sir William Howe. Fortunately for Washington, Gen Howe decided to winter in New York near Forts Washington and Lee content to maintain a safe area while Lord Cornwallis was left to deal with the Rebels.

Washington crossed the Delaware into Pennsylvania at McKonley's Ferry. Washington's scouts told him of Howe's movements and the locations of what British Force was in the field. With only around 4500 men who were ill clad, on poor rations, and in low spirits and enlistments due to expire December 31, Washington gathered his officers and hatched a daring plan to cross the Delaware on Christmas Day and attack at dawn when not expected.

Washington spread his pass word, "Victory or Death" and ordered the crossing of the river at about 3:00 PM. As dark approached, a cold winter storm blew in making the crossing even more difficult. After 14 hours Washington contingent of about 2400 were across and began the nine mile march toward Trenton. The Battle for Trenton and the engagements just days later gave Washington and the Continental Government a much needed victory.

Christmas Celebrations of 1777 at Mount Vernon was without George again. General Washington led his 12,000 Continental Soldiers into Valley Forge on December 19, 1777 for the winter after fighting what would be the last battle of 1777 called White Marsh. His encampment at Red Bank was only about 20 miles from Philadelphia and the headquarters of General Howe. However, he was close enough and distant enough to avoid a surprise attack. Only one of three of the soldiers left a trail of blood with their feet into Valley Forge. After Brigade camping locations were assigned and defense positions established huts and other buildings. wood for fires had to be transported. There was constant little relief was forthcoming. supply system. ed.



Finally on January 24, Continental Congress visited the deplorable conditions. "if the army does not get well supplied". By February 1778, Washington, given the supply system or the appointed Nathaniel Green and under his guidance a reliable supply system began. By April, the Continental Army was taking shape. Baron Von Stueben joined the camp and took over training and transformed the army into a fighting force. Further, the move to remove Washington as general of the Continental Army, known as the Conway Cabal was crushed for good, and then the news in May of the French Alliance, gave Washington's Army confidence as they marched out of Valley Forge towards New Jersey on June 19, 1778, six months to the day that they entered the valley.

Although George missed all of the old Religious Christmas Celebrations at Mount Vernon during the American Revolution, he did have Martha with him each winter including the time spent at Valley Forge. When asked of this, the Marquis de Lafayette is said to have responded, "She loves him madly."

Merry Christmas
Larry Stevens

Revolutionary War Historical Article

Christmas in the 17th and 18th Centuries

By Donald N. Moran

Editor's Note: This article was reprinted from the December 2001 Edition of the Liberty Tree Newsletter

In 17th and early 18th century Colonial America, a Christmas celebration did not resemble the festivities that we are familiar with today. Christmas was considered the first day in a season of celebration, a season which would last, in some areas, until the end of January. The Christmas Advent season consisted of December 25th, The Nativity of Jesus; December 27th, The Feast of St. John the Apostle and Evangelist (celebrated by the Masons); January 1st, The Circumcision of Jesus; January 6th, The Epiphany of Jesus (The twelfth day of Christmas); and February 2nd, the Purification of the Virgin. Christmas celebrations varied throughout the colonies, from the Puritans in New England who did not celebrate Christmas at all, to the Southern Anglicans whose revelries most closely match modern Christmas celebrations.

The Puritans of New England outlawed Christmas until the mid-19th century. In the early part of the 16th century, the Puritans in England, under Oliver Cromwell, outlawed the celebration of Christmas, calling it "Popish" (Roman Catholic) and considering the secular celebration a continuation of pagan beliefs. The Puritans in Massachusetts and other parts of New England held on to these beliefs.

In 1659, a law was enacted in Massachusetts to punish anyone who ". . . is found observing, by abstinence from labor, feasting, or any other way, any such days as Christmas day, shall pay for every such with offense five shillings." The immigration of other religious denominations to the colonies saw this attitude in New England, but weren't able to change it until about 150 years ago.

Although Christmas wasn't outlawed outside of New England, several denominations, mostly found in the middle colonies, were opposed to the celebration. In 1749, a visitor among the Quakers in Philadelphia noted that: "Christmas Day. . . The Quakers did not regard this day any more remarkable than other days. Stores were open. . . There was no more baking of bread for the Christmas festival than for other days; and no Christmas porridge on Christmas Eve!"

At first the Presbyterians did not care much for celebrating Christmas, but when they saw most of their members going to the Anglican Church on that day, they also started to have services. Philip Fithian, a Presbyterian missionary working among the Virginia Scotch-Irish in 1775, remarked that: "Christmas Morning - Not a Gun is heard - Not a Shout - No company or Cabal assembled - To Day is like other Days every Way calme & temperate."

To the Anglicans, Roman Catholics and Lutherans, the Christmas season was embraced and celebrated mainly by the Church of England and the Roman Catholics, and primarily in the southern colonies. (One exception is the Dutch in New York who celebrated Christmas with religious services.)



ARRIVING FOR CHURCH SERVICE, CHRISTMAS DAY - 1783
Painting by J. L. G. Ferris

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

The celebration of the Christmas season in the southern colonies consisted of parties, hunts, visiting, feasts and church services. Christmas decorations generally consisted of holly and ivy strung throughout the house, with a sprig of mistletoe prominently displayed. A great effort was made to decorate the churches with laurel, holly, and other garlands.

The traditional feast varied from household to household (depending on how wealthy the family was) but generally, consisted of wines, rum punches, hams, beef, goose, turkey, oysters, mincemeat pies, and various other treats. The season was considered a grown-up celebration, but presents would generally be given to children. Irena Chalmers notes that in 1759, that George Washington gave the following presents to his children: a bird on Bellows; a Cuckoo; a Turnabout Parrot; a Grocers Shop; an Aviary; a Prussian Dragoon; a Man Smoking; a Tunbridge Tea Set; 3 Neat Books, a Tea Chest. A straw parchment box with a glass and a neat dress'd wax baby. Southern families usually supplied rum and presents (often candy) to their slaves on the first of the year.

Traditional symbols of the American colonial Christmas did not resemble our modern Christmas celebration. The Christmas tree originated in Germany in the 16th century, but did not gain popularity in America until after 1842 when it was introduced in Williamsburg.

Life on the American colonial frontier was, as it would be expected, quite different from the well established east coast.



A CHRISTMAS EVE BALL AT MOUNT VERNON - 1798

Painting by J. L. C. Ferris

The frontier at that time was heavily populated with the Scotch-Irish. They organized their lives by the events of the Christian calendar, but differed greatly from the rest of British America. For reasons unknown to us, they seemed to have preserved some of the ancient Christian rituals which had lingered along the border lands between England and Scotland decades after they were abandoned in other regions of the British Isles.

Our frontier people seemed to have kept a day which they called "Old Christmas", on January 6th. On that day, even in the poorest of homes, feasts were common, and they lit bonfires that night. They also celebrated by continual discharging of their muskets. This had been the custom in the British borderlands. On the Southern frontier some of these customs continued to the 20th century. Visitors to Appalachia and the highlands of North Carolina found the practice of "Old

Christmas" with bonfires and the firing of guns, along with fireworks still exist.

One visitor noted: "In some parts of this country it is the custom to observe what is known as 'Old Christmas' ". Opinion varies as to the date: Some believe it is the 5th and some the 6th of January. This day is believed by these people who keep it to be the real date of the birth of Jesus. They say the Christmas we observe is a "man-made" Christmas."

The first Christmas card did not appear until about 1846 in England.

Christmas Carols were sung during the holidays, but most of the popular carols of today had not been written before the late 1700's. The most enduring hymn that was popular in colonial America was Joy to the World, written by Isaac Watts of Virginia during the 1760s.

Editor's Note:

Barbara and I had a unique treat last month. We were able to participate in a Patriotic program at Greentree Elementary. Many of you have heard me talk of the "Why America Is Free" program developed by two Houston ladies and implemented in ten states and in 23 schools in the Humble ISD. Though Ray, Barbara and I have been giving programs in many of these schools over the years, this was the first year that we participated in the evening program. It was incredible. All the fifth grade students, about one hundred and forty, came in small groups to a parents house. They were in their colonial attire, with colonial identities. They were first welcomed and ushered into a room where we were there to greet them. With one of the program founders and another mother, we told them it wasn't a party but a meeting of an officer from Valley Forge, who was traveling out of uniform and could be judged a spy if caught. Two children volunteered to lead him away if the Regulars arrived. It was great to see them all play their parts. Then Barbara and I read a letter from our son at Valley Forge, he was very ill and we had to send a wagon to get him. We then with the help of the children resolved to send goods to the soldiers in the wagon. Girls offered to make shirts and all volunteered extra blankets, shoes and food. They were really into their parts. They then went to a room where they met an indentured servant, the lady of the house and a militia recruiter. The boys had militia training during the day and many were eager to enlist. Then the children proposed toasts to the heroes of the Revolution. I was amazed at how many names they knew. They then went to another room to meet the Continental Officer and learn about the progress of the war and life at Valley Forge. It was said by eighth grade teachers that they can tell the students who have participated in this program, they not only know more about the Revolutionary War, they are also eager to learn more. We hope to be called on to participate in the evening program again.

December 24, 2013, Barbara and I were to have flown to Sacramento to visit grand children, children, brothers, and aunts, and our good friends and PineyWoods members Ron and Conni Barker at Penn Valley California.

However, nature had a different plan, with the help of the source of an unknown leak into our formal dining room. As fortune would have it, Barbara was giving Mary-Claire Beard and her two lovely granddaughters Kayla and Sadie a tour of her Santa Claus and Nutcracker displays as well as her themed patriotic Christmas trees; which has been our annual Christmas for the past few years; when she, Barbara, stepped into our formal dining room barefooted and found a very wet carpet.

Later, she pulled the carpet corner up and found a soggy mess. Moving the dining table and chairs, displays and cases out of the way, we discovered fortune again. The leak had to be fairly new and had only spread under about 1/4th of the floor. So, Barbara contacted United and AVIS to put our flights on hold and canceled the car. I called Service Master to clean and dry the soggy mess.

So, here we are, at home, with our two beloved shelties, planning a feast of game hens and a few cordials, and writing the Newsletters which we were not able to do earlier in the month. At any rate, it stopped raining and hopefully the leak will stop until we can find someone to repair the damage. Not an easy feat during the holidays.

We still love the Christmas Season and the joy that celebrating the birth of our Savior brings and delight that this feeling can make anything seem insignificant. What is most important is that we will still have each other, and so many wonderful friends and family to celebrate with each year.

We hope you all are having a great Merry Christmas,

Larry Stevens
Editor

Christmas on the WWII Home Front

Christmas on the WWII Home Front

* During World War II Christmas trees were in short supply because of a lack of manpower to cut the trees down and a shortage of rail-road space to ship the trees to market. Americans rushed to buy American-made Visca artificial trees.

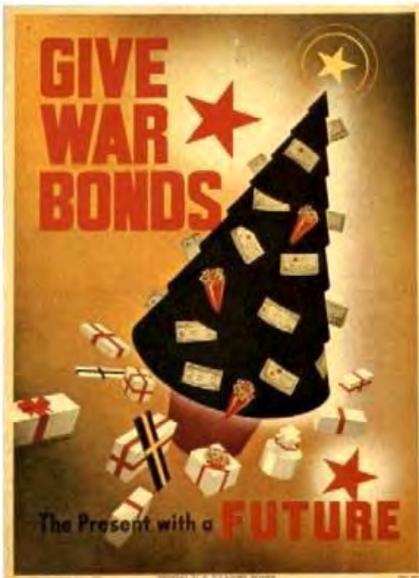
* In 1941, a five-foot Christmas tree could be purchased for 75 cents.

* The shortage of materials—like aluminum and tin—used to produce ornaments led many people to make their own ornaments at home. Magazines contained patterns for ornaments made out of non-priority war materials, like paper, string, and natural objects, such as pinecones or nuts.

* Electric bubble lights were created during the 1940s and remain popular even today.

* To give their Christmas tree a snow-covered effect, people mixed a box of Lux soap powder with two cups of water and brushed the concoction on the branches of their tree.

* Fewer men at home resulted in fewer men available to dress up and play Santa Claus. Women served as substitute Santas at Saks Fifth Avenue in New York City and at other department stores throughout the United States.



* “I’ll Be Home For Christmas” and “White Christmas” were both written during the 1940s and quickly gained popularity with the war-weary, but optimistic, population.

* Travel during the holidays was limited for most families due to the rationing of tires and gasoline. Americans saved up their food ration stamps to provide extra food for a fine holiday meal.

* Many Americans threw their German blown-glass ornaments and exotic Japanese ornaments in the trash as soon as the war began. Shortly after the war, Corning Glass Company in New York began mass-producing Christmas tree balls using machines designed to produce light bulbs. Corning could make more ornaments in a single minute than a German cottage glass blower could make in a whole day.

Happy Holidays from
The National WWII Museum