

The St. Petersburg Chapter
Florida Society
Sons of the American Revolution
CHARTERED 1928

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CHAPTER WEBSITES
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2018 UPDATED CHAPTER MEETING & EVENT CALENDAR
Please mark your calendars

January 20 – Guest speaker Ren Cushing: Life in pre-revolutionary America
St. Petersburg Yacht Club

THIS MONTH IN REVOLUTIONARY WAR HISTORY

1773 – Boston Tea Party

1776 – Battle of Trenton

1777 – Continental Army winters at Valley Forge



President's Message



Dear Compatriots:

In December several compatriots attended the annual Wreaths Across America ceremony at Bay Pines Cemetery, after which a luncheon was held. The proclamation from SAR's President General is enclosed in this newsletter.

I am pleased to announce that our January 20 meeting will feature guest speaker Ren Cushing, who will talk about life in pre-Revolutionary America. Ren and his wife Muriel are active in the General Society of Mayflower Descendants, and both have served the Society at the national and state levels.

I have also enclosed the following article regarding navigation "back in the day" that I hope you'll find interesting.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Rogers

How a minor navigation error lead to The American Revolution

Among many miracles about the Mayflower journey I find the entire area of navigation in 1620 an interesting subject. While trying to sail to Asia, Columbus in 1492 had stumbled on the new world. Between 1519 and 1521 Magellan had circumnavigated the world proving that the earth was indeed a globe. By 1620 the new world had been explored primarily by the Spanish and Portuguese and later by the English, namely John Cabot and Sir Frances Drake.

The Mayflower's Captain Jones knew that the new world was about an 8 week sail to the west. The navigation East to West was done by deductive calculation (dead reckoning) based on time, speed and vector (points on the compass). Time was measured by a 4-hour hourglass. Mariners at that time didn't know that magnetic north wasn't constant. Depending on your location on the globe, magnetic north will vary from true north. Additionally, magnetic north moves over time further compounding error. As I consider the many entry points for error (turning the hourglass at just the second it emptied, manually measuring speed by counting knots on a line which even



if accurately done cannot compensate for the error caused by ocean currents and yaw caused by prevailing westerly winds. Even though there is no record of the route taken by the Mayflower, the Gulf Stream would probably have impeded the Mayflower as she sailed west. It would be another 100 years, with the invention of an accurate clock, before mariners would be able to locate their longitude on the globe with any accuracy.

Before electric light, the night sky was vividly clear most of the year. Polaris (North Star) was used to navigate because it did not disappear below the horizon and could be seen consistently throughout the night. The virtue of Polaris is that it stays fixed over North, it is relatively bright, and is easy to find by extending a line through the two far stars of Ursa Major (the big dipper) so unsophisticated sailors could find it in a star-cluttered sky at night at sea. The stars had been used for navigation for hundreds of years and improvements such as the cross staff had been developed to calculate latitude (degrees from the equator). The calculation was based on precisely sighting Polaris and simultaneously sighting the horizon. Being off by just one degree is a 60 nautical mile error (about 69 US miles). Captain Jones knew that land south of latitude 40.7° North (mouth of the Hudson River) was where the colony had obtained permission from the crown to colonize in Virginia. So the question you might ask is why did Captain Jones not sail more south while at sea after the near disaster of the hurricane they encountered? I'm certain that Captain Jones didn't know his latitude until he landed in the area of Province Town, Massachusetts where he could take a more accurate reading on solid ground. Province Town is at latitude 42.06° . Therefore, a navigation error of 1.36° (42.06 less 40.7) translates to finding themselves about 92 miles too far north. This is to me an amazingly accurate navigation to be only 92 miles north of their intended location after a 3,100 mile voyage, and additionally having survived a hurricane that blew the Mayflower further off course.

Having discovered his error at Province Town, Captain Jones decided to sail south along the coast of the New World to the Patent (permitted location) near the mouth of the Hudson River. Captain Jones had no charts for this area and as the Mayflower rounded the Cape the Mayflower sailed directly into what is now named the Nantucket Shoals. This is an area of dangerously shallow water in the Atlantic Ocean that extends from Nantucket Island, Massachusetts, eastward for 23 miles and southeastward for 40 miles. In places water depth can be as shallow as 3 feet according to the US Coast Guard. Depth soundings are unpredictable here due to the strong currents. Miraculously, Captain Jones was able to turn back from certain disaster without any damage, returning to the relatively protected water off what would become The Plymouth Plantation.

Because they were not in Virginia, the Mayflower Compact was drawn up to stipulate the ground rules for self-government and for electing their leaders. This was a major turning point. Neither self-government nor electing their leaders would have occurred had they landed in Virginia where they would operate according to the laws of Great Brittan and the Crown. The Virginia Company was a commercial venture which brought slavery to farm labor intensive tobacco and later cotton for the mills in Great Brittan. The Mayflower Colony was primarily about religious freedom, self-sufficiency and self-government, and never considered slavery an option. It is clear that these risk-takers seeking religious freedom with audacious bravery started a conceptual process that would result in the American Revolution.



VP / Chaplain's Message



The end of year Holidays are such a beautiful time and always busy too. I hope that all of our members and friends are both enjoying this time but also taking a moment to be thankful for the many blessings that we have. I want to share with you the following prayer from the SAR prayer book.

Gracious Heavenly Father, our lives are filled with joy and thankfulness at this holiday season. We thank thee for the many gifts thou hast bestowed upon us and especially for the gift of love you gave us at Christmas. Fill our lives with this spirit of love. Let thy love be in our families, that they may be havens of joy and happiness; in our Churches, that they may be places of praise and fellowship; and in our country, that it may be a place of liberty and freedom. Defend the members of our armed forces who serve at this time as peacemakers in many parts of the world. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Let us all look forward to a wonderful and prosperous New Year. I pray that 2018 will be a great year for each of us and especially for our SAR Chapter.

Respectfully submitted,

David Munson Chestnut

Registrar's Report



If you know anyone who may be interested in becoming a member please have them get in touch with me to assist them with their application.

Respectfully submitted,

Will Scott



WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

DECEMBER 16, 2017

Let it be known that one of the initiatives of the Sons of The American Revolution is to honor ALL veterans, living and deceased. Memorial Day is the springtime day on which we formally participate as a nation for those who have passed. Near the start of winter, we can do this with the national **Wreaths Across America**.

Following on the heels of Thanksgiving and preceding the holiday season, it is appropriate we take a few minutes to reflect on our good fortune to be in this country amidst wealth beyond the imagination of those who created the living document that is our country and heritage. We all can find our brothers, fathers, uncles, aunts, cousins, or other relatives, friends and fellow countrymen who served us and are now resting in National and other cemeteries across the country.

On December 16th, take a moment or more to remember that we owe a debt of gratitude to those who served us, for without their sacrifices we would not have been able to keep the Republic that our Founders gave us. The **Wreaths Across America** programs at National Cemeteries allows each of us an opportunity to personally thank our relatives and friends by placing a wreath at someone's grave in memory of all, for as long as we remember, their lives are real to each of us.

Grateful for all we have,

Larry T. Guzy

President General 2017-2018



Compatriot Soderlund found this interesting video on Revolutionary soldier's rations:

This is the introduction to the new 18th Century cooking series at Jas. Townsend and Son Inc. - This video describes typical soldier rations in 18th century European and North American theaters. [#townsendsrations](#)

<https://youtu.be/qUt1ZHs3wQ8>



Compatriots and friends at Wreaths Across America ceremony





Compatriots Stewart, Scott and Rogers at Bay Pines ceremony

