



EMPIRE PATRIOT

Empire State Society, Sons of the American Revolution

Preserving the Past, Forming the Future

Vol. 23 Issue 1 July - October 2022

Summer Issue



Joseph B. Fitzpatrick, President

Message from the President

Brother Compatriots,

In Memoriam

It is with regret that we announce the passing of Compatriot Colonel (Ret.) Peter K. Goebel, on September 10, 2022.

Peter was former VPG, and currently a SAR National Trustee, and our ESS-SAR Chaplain.

Peter was a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, Westpoint. He

served in the U.S. Army until his retirement in 2012.

He continued to serve his country, community, and veterans. He most recently served as the director of the Rensselaer County Veteran Service Agency. He had affiliations and service with Sons of the American Revolution, Empire State Society SAR and Saratoga Battle Chapter; Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Chapter #38, Chandler Young VFW, Veterans of Lansingburgh, American Legion Melvin Roads Post, Dutch Settlers Society of Albany, NY, and the New York State Military Museum and Veterans Research Center, Saratoga, NY.

Our condolences to his wife, children and grand daughter, as well as his brother Jonathan E. Goebel, our ESS-SAR Secretary.

A hero lives as long as his name is pronounced

Joseph B. Fitzpatrick, President

Empire State Society, NSSAR

JOIN/RENEW SAR at www.sar.org/find-your-chapter/NY



Upcoming Event

November 12, 2022

ESS-SAR Bord of Managers Meeting
Pegasus Restaurant
Coxsackie, NY

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Who is Col. Brown?

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Schoharie Hessians,
conclusion**

* * *

September ESS-SAR Board of Managers Meeting



ESS-SAR President Joseph F. Fitzpatrick (l.) opens the recent BOM meeting.

The summer Board of Managers Meeting (BOM) was held on September 10, 2022, in Coxsackie NY, hosted by the Walloomsac Battle Chapter, SAR.

ESS-SAR was pleased to announce the results of the NSSAR Knight Essay contest. Our entrant, Mr. Jiayang Jin, was the national winner.

The Empire State Society will be the Atlantic Middle State Conference sponsor for 2023.

New Business: We do not have a State Flag. We need one for the upcoming AMS Conference. A discussion followed as to which flag we should chose. The ESS-SAR shall decide upon a flag and purchase it.

Next Board of Mangers Meeting is Scheduled for November 12th

The Columbia - Mid Hudson Valley Chapter will be hosting our BoM meeting on Saturday, November 12, 2022 at the Pegasus Restaurant in Coxsackie, NY.

Coffee and danish will be available at 10 AM during sign-in. The business meeting will begin at 11 AM followed by a buffet lunch. The registration form follows below.

The meeting is open to all SAR members. Now that we are able to hold in peron meetings again won't you join us for some commaradery?

Pegasus Restaurant
10885 Route 9W - Cossackie, NY 12051
Phone 518-731-6720

(From the South: NYS Thruway to Catskill Exit 21, take Rt. 23 east to Rt. 9W, go north 8 miles, on left)

(From the North: NYS Thruway to Exit 21B, take Rt. 9W south for 5 miles, on right))

Motels available in Cossackie, NY order online for better rates

Holiday Express - one tenth of a mile north off Exit 21B on 9W- Phone 518-719-1999

Best Western – two tenths of a mile south off Exit 21B on 9W- Phone 518-731-8100

ESS-SAR BOM MEETING SATURDAY - November 12, 2022

Hosted by
Columbia – Mid Hudson Valley Chapter SAR, (CMHVSAR)
www.cmhvsar.com

COST OF BUFFET IS **\$30.00**

10:00 AM SIGN IN
COFFEE & DANISH until 11:00 AM
GENERAL MEETING 11:00 AM

Buffet Menu

Chicken Marsala

Roast Beef with Mashed Potatoes and Gravy

Mixed Veggies, Tossed Green Salad, rolls & butter.

Dessert- Apple Pie al a mode

Includes Coffee, Tea, Milk, Tax and Gratuity

Any wine, beer or alcohol drinks or extras, pay cash to the Server.

\$5.00 EXTRA CHARGE AT DOOR FOR UNSCHEDULED ARRIVALS

FOR NON-EATING ATTENDEES - \$5.00 CHARGE FOR USE OF FACILITY

Name _____ Chapter _____

Name _____ Chapter _____

Name _____ Chapter _____

Buffet \$30.00 _____ Using Facility only \$5.00 _____

Detach, fill in names / chapter, make check payable to “CMHVSAR”

Richard Wambach – 232 Starbarrack Road, Red Hook, NY 12571-2252. Please, no later Nov. 4, 2022.

The ESS-SAR in Action

by Joseph Fitzpatrick

August 5, 6, & 7th: Attended the Atlantic Middle State Conference sponsored by New Jersey Society. Made a report on membership and activities conducted by the Empire State Society. In attendance were VP Powell, VP Middlebrook, Board of Managers Joseph Vermaelen and Steve Thorne.



We usually submit the name for 2023 Vice President General at the Convention. The applicant is voted on at the next National Convention. I conferred with VP Powell and VP Middlebrook and nominated Board of Manager, Long Island Chapter President Joseph Vermaelen for the 2023 Atlantic Middle States Association Vice President General. The Empire State Society will be the AMS Sponsor for 2023. At the closing of the Conference the NJ State President Charles Morgan Jr. presented me the AMS Banner for the 2023 AMS Conference.

Long Island President Joseph Vermaelen and I had a conversation with the NSSAR Genealogist General and Registrar General concerning the Oneida Indians having a blanket membership entry into the NSSAR. They stated that they would bring the subject to the attention of the Genealogy Board of the NSSAR.

August 27, 2022: Attended the Maryland 300 Commemoration at the Old Stone House, Brooklyn, New York. I want to thank VPG Robert Meyer for representing Empire State Society on the Committee.

We were the only State Society that did not have a State Flag present for the Ceremony.

I had the honor of meeting Chief Brancoto of the Nansemond Indian Patriots Chapter. He would like

to be put in touch with the Oneidas. I asked Long Island President Vermaelen to invite him to our next meeting I want to express my gratitude to the Atlantic Middle States Honor Guard members from New Jersey, Virginia, Maryland, Connecticut and Long Island for attending the Commemoration Ceremony.

August 27, 2022 Battle of Brooklyn Chapter held a special meeting. We elected Dual Member VPG Robert Meyer—President, Compatriot Peter Fountaine—Treasurer, Compatriot Richard Sage—Secretary, Compatriot Richard Rossin—Registrar. We will be contacting present members to see if they will step up and be willing hold chapter positions. I want to thank Wesley Oler for offering to help the new Treasurer with the dues for 2023.

I have been in contact with VP Powell concerning the purchase of a New York Revolutionary War Flag. I have purchased the Empire State Society Banner. These Items would be under the control of the State President. He would make them available for SAR and NSSAR functions. I will bring this up under New Business.

September 10th, Attended the viewing for former VPG Retired Colonel Peter Goebel at the William F. Hogan Funeral Home, Highland, Falls, N.Y. The internment at West Point Cemetery was private. Peter held many positions in both the Empire State Society and the National Society Sons of the American Revolution. Peter was a Dedicated Compatriot and will be missed.

September 18th, I attended the SAR Wreath Ceremony at the DAR monument in Saratoga National Park. I also attended the meeting of the Saratoga Battle Chapter after the ceremony. Saratoga Battle Chapter President Edward Munger gave me the honor of installing their new members.

October 15th, I attended a Memorial Service at the Stone Arabia Church, Stone Arabia for Col. John Brown. (Ed. Note: See article in this issue on Col Brown.)



Chief Brancoto of the Nansemond Indian Patriot Chapter and pres. Fitzpatrick. (rt.)



Pres. Fitzpatrick (l.) at the AMS Banner presentation



NJ State Regent Diane Waugh Oliver, pres. Fitzpatrick, NJ State Pres. Charles Morgan Jr. VPG Robert Meyer.



Old Stone House Brooklyn.



Pres. Fitzpatrick (2nd rt) with ESS-SAR wreath at the Battle of Saratoga Memorial.



Honor Guard for Col Brown Grave, pres. Fitzpatrick at rt.

Who was Col. Brown?

Col John Brown was part of the Pittsfield (Massachusetts) Militia Company. He participated in the successful attack on Fort Tieconderoga on May 10, 1775. He was involved in many efforts to gain American freedom. On the morning of October 19, 1780 Col. Brown and 380 militia men from Fort Paris in Stone Arabia met 900 British and Native Americans on a raid into the Mohawk Valley. During the brief Battle of Stone Arabia Col. Brown was shot from his horse and killed along with 30 of his men. The raiders destroyed the area of Stone Arabia, burned its two churches and fled westward for a later encounter that day with General Van Rennselaer's 1500 troops in the Battle of Klock's Field. We are forever grateful for Colonel John Brown's ultimate sacrifice for our Independence,

Get Your ESS-SAR Patriot Certificate

This certificate is personalized with your name, your ancestors name, with your state and national member numbers. The certificate is custom printed using the highest quality professional equipment available. This is an heirloom-quality document suitable for framing.

The price for this valuable family record document is very modest at \$20. When you purchase a certificate, five dollars of the purchase price is donated to your chapter. This beautiful heirloom certificate was designed by compatriot Joseph B. Fitzpatrick, President of the Leather Stocking Chapter, Vice President of the Capital Region, ESSAR., and current Empire State Society President.



Above is a sample of the Patriot Certificate, which will be printed on premium quality heavy paper. To order your Certificate/s, please print and complete the form below.

Empire State Society SAR Patriot Certificate

ORDER FORM

Please Print

Name_____

Address_____

City_____State_____Zip_____

National Number_____

State Number_____

Patriot Name_____

Chapter Name_____

Cost \$20.00 make check out to ESSSAR

Send to : Schoharie L-S Chapter SAR
C/O Joseph B. Fitzpatrick
PO Box 193
Esperance, NY 12066

Chapter News

Capital Region Chapters

- **Saratoga Battle Chapter** – On September 18th, the Saratoga Battle Chapter participated in the SAR Wreath laying Ceremony at the DAR monument in Saratoga National Park. Following the ceremony the chapter held a meeting and installed 13 new members.

On October 19th the Chapter's Color Guard performed a cannon salute at the Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery for a dedication of a memorial stone for Pvt. Oliver Barrett killed at Breymen Redoubt on October 7, 1777.



ESS-SAR pres Joseph Fitzpatrick (2nd l..) installing Saratoga Battle Chapter new members.

- **Walloomsac Chapter** - The Walloomsac Chapter hosted the ESS-SAR September Board of Managers Meeting.



Duane Booth, (center) hosts the September BoM meeting.

Central Region

- **Syracuse Chapter** – The Syracuse Chapter held it's 2022 Heritage Luncheon Meeting

Metropolitan Region.

- **Battle of Brooklyn Chapter** – On August 27th the chapter held a special meeting and elected new officers.

Western Region

- **Rochester Chapter** – On July 30th 2022 the Chapter held a dedication at the Webster Union Cemetery.

September 11th, 2022 the Chapter presented a Sea Cadet Award at the Naval Reserve Center.



Award presentation to Sea Cadet.



Webster Union Cemetery Dedication.

History Corner

The following is a lengthy article written by Mark Stolzenburg. This is the final installment. The first installment appeared in the previous Empire Patriot issue.

Burgoyne's Hessian Troops and the Hessian Heritage of the Schoharie and Mohawk Valleys

by Mark Stolzenburg

Continued from previous issue

Another factor likely contributed to Hessians voluntarily walking over to the Americans, and Gates was indeed happy because he probably felt he could, in part, take credit for it. A few days before he wrote the letter to Hancock, the Major General had hatched and carried out a plan with the help of his German interpreter, John Tilghman, to infiltrate the Hessian lines to distribute propaganda designed to encourage the Hessians to desert. Tilghman, who was born in Germany, wrote a poignant propaganda letter dated October 1, 1777 to his "countrymen," Burgoyne's Hessians. An English translation of the lengthy letter exists in the Gates Papers Collection housed at the New York Historical Society. In his prose, Tilghman appealed to all the sensibilities that may have been going through the mind of a discouraged Hessian soldier who may have been thinking about deserting to live in America. The letter provided a strong economic rationale for desertion: "Employ and live better with half the labour in this country as in Germany." Tilghman also appealed to German family ties: "Even blood relation you will find here." Further, advice and promises to the would-be deserter were offered by Tilghman:

Come only to one of our armies you will be received and rewarded + a free men, and go where you please, and the further you go South and So[uth] West, the more countrymen you will find.

The letter is signed: "from a friend and wellwisher to the German nation." The timing of Tilghman's work makes it probable that it is one of the letters, perhaps the only one, described by Jephtha Simms as having been discreetly carried to the Hessian camp and distributed. But someone had to get it there.

Christopher Fischer of Col. Schuyler's regiment was requested by Tilghman to deliver the letter to the Hessian camp. He was a German-speaking private from a Schoharie German family. According to Jacob Van Alstyne in an interview by Simms, Fischer accepted the dangerous mission knowing he would be treated as a spy by the British if his purpose was discovered. An elaborate ruse was concocted for Fischer to gain entry to the Hessian camp. To bolster Fischer's cover in preparation for the mission, plans were made for some choreographed maneuvers by Col. Morgan's Riflemen that would be in full view of the Hessians shortly after Fischer would be arriving in the Hessian camp. Fischer would pose as a local loyalist with information for the Hessians about American troop movements, specifically those that Col. Morgan would be executing. He would bring Tilghman's letter and some freshly killed mutton, to ensure he would be welcomed, since everyone knew that provisions in Burgoyne's army were in short supply. Fischer crossed the no man's land between the two armies and was met by the sentries of the Hessian camp.

The ruse was a success. Fischer was taken by the Hessian sentries to their officers whom he convinced of his hatred for the American rebels and that he offered the officers truthful intelligence about American plans and troop movements. After all, everyone could see the Riflemen maneuvering as Fischer had told the officers they would. The Hessians were, of course, unaware of the pre-arranged plan which Col. Morgan's men were acting out. Fischer convinced the officers he was not a threat and was given liberty to wander the enemy camp, presumably distributing Tilghman's letter and talking up the propaganda points to convince the rank-and-file Hessians to desert.

Since Christopher Fischer was both of German descent and had ties to Schoharie, it is possible that the topic of Schoharie and the Mohawk Valley might have come up as a potential welcoming destination for Hessian deserters. German countrymen would certainly be found there as Tilghman had promised. Could Fischer's mission have coaxed some Hessian deserters to the Mohawk and Schoharie Valleys? It seems

possible that those who had not already heard about the not-to-distant German communities southwest of Saratoga knew of them after Fischer's visit.

Late in the day a diversion created by Col. Morgan's Riflemen kept the Hessians busy allowing Christopher Fischer to slip away from the enemy camp and return safely to the American lines. He was rewarded with gold and discharge papers. The date was probably between October 1, the date on Tilghman's letter, and October 7, 1777, the day of the Battle of Bemis Heights. Christopher Fischer's accomplishment was particularly impressive given that the Hessians were under orders as of August 23, 1777 to be on the lookout for just such an intruder in their midst. In fact, they were offered bonuses for exposure of enemy agents who might try to entice German soldiers to desert.

Tilghman's promise to reward Hessians for desertion was no joke. In the Horatio Gates Papers, Series 2, there is a return (list) of 111 deserters, 100 of them by name, and the amount of cash paid to each of them by Deputy Quartermaster General Udney Hay. In total £555.4 was doled out to the deserters, each receiving from £1.12 to £8.0. Amounts probably varied because there was also pay for arms surrendered, another promise made by Tilghman in his letter to the Germans. A date of desertion is listed for each man from September 21 through October 12 and a note in the margin refers to the list as a "Return of German deserters to the 12th October 1777."

Since this list provides us with a date for each soldier's desertion, it gives us some idea of the desertion rate over time. If the list includes all the deserters from these dates, the daily number of enemy soldiers going over to the Americans was trending upwards from September 21 through October 12. Of the 111 men, 75 of them deserted in the four days from October 9 to October 12, while only 36 deserted in the eighteen-day period before that. As deserters these men were then free to go to Schoharie, Tryon County, or wherever they pleased. There is evidence that other Hessians were sent to the Mohawk and Schoharie Valleys involuntarily.

Hessian Prisoners of War - Where to send them?

From the start of the Saratoga campaign in June 1777 until the October 17 surrender, the Americans had taken 731 British and Hessian prisoners of war. In the intervals between the major battles there was constant skirmishing and taking of prisoners until a cease-fire was negotiated on October 13. In addition, on October 8 after the Battle of Bemis Heights, Burgoyne moved his camp and abandoned his field hospital leaving behind over 300 wounded soldiers and medical staff. All became American General Gates' prisoners and were then moved to the hospitals in Albany and Schenectady.

It was clear by early October that Burgoyne's surrender was imminent. General Gates was then facing the prospect of dealing with Burgoyne's entire army as prisoners of war on top of the prisoners and deserters already being dealt with. The two jails in Albany were of limited capacity and some American officers were convinced that Albany was still vulnerable to attack from the south by Sir Henry Clinton as evidenced in correspondence. Col. Goose Van Schaick of the First NY Regiment wrote to Gates from Albany on October 17, 1777 concerned about the possibility of a Clinton advance up the Hudson to Albany:

Should the enemy push up the river it will be necessary that the sick, wounded, and prisoners in this town be removed...

Even as early as August 12, 1777 officials with the Commissary General of Prisoners of the Continental Army were concerned about the lack of secure locations in New York State to house POWs. There were no good options nearby to keep many prisoners. Gates, it seems, was under pressure to place prisoners wherever he could.

POW Chaos

This early in the war, lack of coordination and cooperation on the part of American officials in charge of POW's may have contributed to the problem of finding places to secure prisoners. George Washington's first Commissary General of Prisoners for the Continental Army was Elias Boudinot, appointed May 1777. Boudinot appointed John Adam (not the president) as his deputy for New York State. Separately, the New York State Committee of Correspondence appointed its own Commissary of Prisoners

for New York, Abraham Bancker, whom Boudinot refused to recognize as having any authority. Meanwhile, Major General Gates, apparently impatient with the Continental Army bureaucracy, appointed Daniel Hale to deal with POW's taken by his Northern Army. By October 1777 Hale was busily finding places to "dispose" of prisoners of war, probably at Gates' direction.

Hessian Prisoners to Schoharie

There must have been a sense of urgency as the surrender of Burgoyne neared, bringing with it thousands more POW's. John Adam, Deputy Commissary General of Prisoners for the Continental Army, having met with Gates in Albany on October 24, wrote to his superior, Elias Boudinot, and said that Daniel Hale had been orchestrating prisoner movements, with at least some directly to Schoharie.

...he (Gates) told me he had appointed one Mr. Haile for that purpose some time ago, and that the British prisoners of war were sent down/who were in health/ to New England, the Hessians to Schoary [sic] up the Mohawk River, among the Dutch...

In this letter John Adam would be referring to Hessian prisoners taken before Burgoyne's surrender because those men would have been under his jurisdiction as Deputy Commissary General of Prisoners. The rest of Burgoyne's troops who surrendered October 17 were handled totally separately from other POW's and were marched to Massachusetts according to the unique terms negotiated by Gates and Burgoyne.

Gates' Orders

John Adam's letter to Boudinot is evidence that some Hessians ended up in Schoharie by military orders and not voluntarily. More evidence for this is found in Revolutionary War pension applications of Schoharie Patriots. Private Nicholas Zeh of the Schoharie Valley community of Breakabeen states this in his 1842 affidavit about his 1777 Revolutionary War service in Captain Christian Brown's Company:

A short time previous to the taking of Burgoyne it was reported that Sir Henry Clinton had taken Fort Montgomery, and he (Nicholas Zeh) was ordered out with other militia and marched to Albany to go and oppose Clinton. Stayed at Albany overnight, and next day news came that Clinton had gone back. Before this some Germans belonging to Burgoyne's army had been taken prisoners, and he, the said applicant with the company to which he belonged went to escort eighty-five of them from Albany to Schoharie [sic] and that he formed a part of such escort. That the prisoners were there placed out among the farmers.

If true, this dates the arrival on Schoharie farms of eighty-five Hessian prisoners between the fall of Fort Montgomery on October 6 and the surrender of Burgoyne on October 17, 1777. Other writings have mentioned POW movements to Schoharie and prisoners hired out on farms in the Albany area. Zeh's brother David in his 1833 pension application says he "helped to guard prisoners of the Burgoyne men from Albany to Schoharie" at about the same time under the command of Capt. Richtmyer. Also, German historian and author Max von Eelking, in his 1863 book mentions an unnamed Hessian soldier:

... one of 44 men brought to Albany in October 1777, and at first imprisoned there, then distributed among the farmers...

Unfortunately, he does not say where the farmers were or name any of the 44 men. John Adam, the Zeh brothers, and von Eelking could have all been referring to the same prisoners. No list by name of prisoners sent to Schoharie appears to exist.

It is important to note that in early October 1777, local men of the Schoharie and Mohawk Valleys were being called to leave their farms as the militias were ordered out to assist General Gates at Saratoga and in the defense of Albany. And many men of the Valleys had also left their farms and families to join the British ranks as Loyalists. At the same time, help was needed to move grain from these fertile valleys to Saratoga to keep the massive American Northern Army supplied with food. Perhaps the arriving Hessian POWs were welcome help on the Schoharie farms, perhaps not. No evidence has so far been uncovered that shows the Schoharie Committee of Safety was consulted or notified before prisoners were sent to them. The question remains as to how comfortable Schoharie residents were with enemy POWs in their midst.

Hessian Prisoners Sent to the Mohawk River Settlements of Tryon County

The Horatio Gates Papers reveal that even several weeks after Burgoyne's surrender, Gates was still finding places for some Hessian prisoners. Two lists of "German prisoners" are designated as being ordered to Tryon County, which at that time encompassed practically the entire Mohawk Valley. One document indicates a move ordered directly by Gates. One group of 26 prisoners were wounded soldiers left behind at the hospital in Schenectady to recuperate further before being sent to Tryon County on December 5, 1777. The other is a list of 17 men held in Albany and ordered by Gates to be sent to the Tryon County Committee on December 23. These 43 POWs could perhaps be of the 44 men referred to by von Eelking (described above) as distributed among the farmers.

Prisoners Turned Deserters – The Convention Army

The Saratoga surrender agreement or "Convention" negotiated by Major General Gates and Lt. General Burgoyne was carried out October 17, 1777. According to the agreement, Burgoyne's remaining men, 2442 British and 2198 German, were to be marched as prisoners of war to Boston where they would be paroled and sent back to Europe, agreeing not to engage in the Revolutionary conflict again. They indeed marched to the Boston area but were not paroled until years later when the war ended simply because the Continental Congress could not stomach the lenient terms of the Convention that Gates had granted to Burgoyne. These prisoners, known as the "Convention Army" were held by the Americans for the rest of the war and marched during that time over several states where POW barracks were constructed. Each march and POW facility was another opportunity for escape, parole for work, and desertion. Many Hessians deserted on their first march from Saratoga to Massachusetts in October-November 1777. John Adam, Deputy Commissary of Prisoners wrote to Elias Boudinot from Albany on October 24, having observed some of the Convention Army's journey:

The Hessians I met with at Kinderhook about 20 miles from here on the march down, by all accounts they desert fast.

There is evidence that some of these Convention Army deserters also found their way to the Schoharie and Mohawk Valleys. Later marches took them to Pennsylvania, where many deserted, worked, and settled.

Summary

Several factors during the latter part of the British Saratoga campaign in September and October 1777 contributed to the movement of some of Burgoyne's Hessian troops to the largely German communities of the Mohawk and Schoharie Valleys. The lack of nearby facilities to secure prisoners of war, the proximity of those valleys to the action at Saratoga, and their largely German population made them attractive locations to expeditiously send Hessian prisoners of war. These POWs were the Hessians who immigrated at least at first, involuntarily. Some others, the deserters, found their way to Tryon County and Schoharie on their own, perhaps with some encouragement and knowledge of their intended destination having been fed to them in American propaganda. Prisoners or deserters, some surely were not welcomed and left the valleys leaving little trace in the local historical record. We know others managed to stay and somehow fit in. We know this because they and their descendants have left and continue to leave their mark on the history of the Mohawk and Schoharie Valleys.

The End

Note from the Editor: If your chapter would like to have your stories, events and photos published in the *Empire Patriot* send your material to Editor Karl Danneil at kdanneil@att.net