



EMPIRE PATRIOT

Empire State Society, Sons of the American Revolution

Preserving the Past, Forming the Future

Vol. 15 Issue 3: January – March 2017

Winter Issue



Duane Booth

President's Message

Greetings Compatriots:

I begin my final message as I began thanking Karl and his wife Eleanor for three year of service as Editors of the Society's newsletter the *Empire Patriot*. You have done a wonderful job and I am saddened to see you retire. I am hopeful that someone else will take the job.

When I was first elected in 2014 I expressed a desire to do four things: 1) restart our newsletter 2) update our constitution and bylaws 3) get an online database to serve the society's chapters

and 4) to be responsive to you, the membership and to your chapter and society officers. Through the efforts of many dedicated members we have accomplished goals 1 to 3 and hopefully I have been responsive to you, to chapter officers and our board of managers but I leave that up to each of you to evaluate.

I was fortunate to be involved in, and to be in attendance, at some wonderful events. Many of you worked hard to make the events successful and you succeeded. We chartered the Thousand Islands Chapter and they are doing great things and increasing their membership rolls. The Old Fort Niagara meeting, the Oyster Bay meeting and the Atlantic Middle States meeting were three events that I thoroughly enjoyed!

I am appreciative for the opportunity to have served in this office. I wish our new leadership team the very best and I look forward to them growing our membership, serving you, our existing members and the serving the communities that we live in.

Fraternally,
Duane

Duane Booth
President
Empire State Society
Sons of the American Revolution

JOIN/RENEW SAR at www.sar.org/essar



Upcoming Events

May 6, 2017

ESSSAR Board of Managers /Annual Meeting hosted by Oriskany Chapter Holiday Inn Utica/New Hartford, NY

May 9, 2017

SAR President General's Tour
"The Road to Saratoga 1777"
Dedication of SAR sign at Ft. Ann, NY

September 2017

ESSSAR Board of Managers Meeting
hosted by Oriskany Chapter
Details TBA

November 2017

ESSSAR Board of Managers Meeting
hosted by Columbia Mid Hudson Chapter
Details TBA

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March ESS-SAR Board of Managers Meeting

The Empire State Society Board of Managers Meeting, hosted by the Saratoga Battle Chapter, was held on Saturday, March 25, 2017. at the Pegasus Diner in West Coxsackie, NY.



Saratoga Battle Chapter host Pres. Doug Gallant and Registrar Thomas Dunne.



Mrs. Judy Armstrong (center), Duane's companion, and other attendees.



(l-r) Sec. Peter Goebel, guest Don Winnie, and Karl Danneil talk over coffee.

The Investment Committee reported on the ESS-SAR portfolio -- investments are up 7%, bonds up 4%. The Membership Committee reported that we finished the year with an increase of three members. The Nominating Committee submitted a slate of Officers for the coming year, to be voted upon at the May meeting.

The Veterans Affairs Committee co-chair Karl Danneil invited two guests from Capital Region Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs), as part of its liaison program with Veterans Organizations.

The guests were Cdr. of the Nassau, NY American Legion Post, Mr. Don Winnie; and Mr. Frank DeSorbo, Pres. of the Delmar, NY chapter of Patriot Flights. Mr. DeSorbo spoke about the Patriot Flights program which provides free flights to Veterans of WWII, the Korea War, and is being opened up to Vietnam Veterans as well. It takes the Veterans to visit their national War Memorials in Washington, DC. (See www.patriotflight.org). ESS-SAR voted to make a yearly \$500 donation on a rotating regional basis in support of the program.



(l-r) Duane Booth, Mr. DeSorbo and Karl Danneil.

A number of National and State SAR awards were presented. Several Chapters as well as individuals received recognition



Peter Gobel presented, national awards from the 2016 Congress.



Brent Downing, Liberty Medal



Thomas Dunne, Liberty Medal.



Joseph Fitzpatrick, Liberty Medal.



Liberty Medal accepted for Joseph Vermaelen by his sister Mary Alice.



James Eagan accepts Knight Essay Contest Participation Award.



The Columbia-Mid Hudson Chapter, Partners in Patriotism Certificate.



First NY Continental Chapter, Partners in Patriotism Certificate.



Long Island Chapter, Partners in Patriotism Certificate.



Syracuse Chapter, Partners in Patriotism Certificate.



Robert Gang III, Patriot Grave Marking Medal.

Empire State Society SAR Board of Managers/Annual Meeting

The Oriskany Chapter will host the next Empire State Society Board of Managers/Annual Meeting on May 6, 2017 at Holiday Inn Utica/New Hartford, NY. Coffee and danish will be available at 10 AM during sign-in. The business meeting will begin at 11 AM with a buffet lunch following. Election of Officers will be held.

Please RSVP by April 21, 2017






The meeting is open to the general membership. Detailed information and reservation form is available at our website: www.ess-sar.org

Empire State Society Offers Premium Patriot Certificates

To commemorate your ancestral patriot, the Empire State Society, Sons of the American Revolution has designed this beautiful certificate. 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.

Printed on premium quality heavy paper. A perfect reminder to you and your family who your revolutionary ancestor was. The price for this valuable family record document is very modest at \$20. Order yours today.

See a sample below.

| | | |
|--|---|--|
|  | <p>Empire State Society of the Sons of the American Revolution</p>  |  |
| <p>This is to certify that Joseph Brian Fitzpatrick has been duly admitted a member of the Society by right of services rendered in the Revolutionary War by his ancestor Peter Kinnan who thereby aided in achieving the independence of The United States.</p> | | |
| <p>In witness whereof, the signature of its President and Secretary and the corporate seal are hereto affixed</p> <p>Dated _____ in the year of our Lord and the independence of The United States</p> | | |
|  | <p>National Number 168760</p> <p>_____ President</p> | <p>State Number 13092</p> <p>_____ Secretary</p>  |

To order, just print the following form and mail with your check as indicated.

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

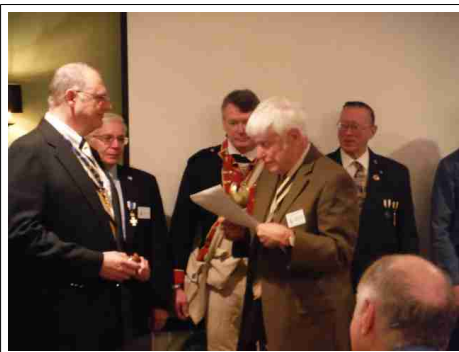
- **Saratoga Battle Chapter** -- The chapter held its Annual Meeting/George Washington's Birthday Party on February 18, 2017 at the Century House Restaurant and Inn in Latham, NY. ESS-SAR president Duane Booth administered the oaths of office to the Chapter officers for 2017-19. Some photos from the event:



(l.) Michael Companion in Revolutionary War uniform. (Rear) Mrs. and Mr. Joseph Fitzrick, and Dennis F.M. Marr.



The new officers for 2017-19 line up for their inauguration to be conducted by ESS-SAR president Duane Booth (r.)



(l.) Pres. Doug Gallant, (r.) Duane Booth. (Rear l-r), 1VP Patrick Reilly, 2VP Michael Companion, Historian Karl Danneil.

- **Columbia - Mid Hudson Chapter** -- The chapter was honored to receive a Partners in Patriotism Certificate at the March 25, 2017 ESS-SAR meeting.
- **Valcour Battle Chapter**
 - At the January Meeting Bob Arnold reported on the education committee. He has made significant progress on his program of America's Past Through the Eyes of Local History. He received a call from Dr. Powell, president of the SAR Foundation, who expressed great interest in the program and in lending Foundation Support. The program could cost up to \$500,000.
 - Brian Cook has completed his task of documenting all known revolutionary patriot graves for Franklin County. This completes the list for our three county area.
 - The Valcour Battle Chapter will commemorate the tenth anniversary of its founding with a luncheon at the Valcour Brewing Company, Plattsburg, NY, on Saturday April 8, 2017. Guest Speaker will be Historian Donald Wickman telling his discoveries relating to the Champlain Valley during our struggle for independence.
- **Walloomsac Battle Chapter** -- The Chapter participated with the Saratoga Battle Chapter in celebration of George Washington's birthday on February 18, 2017, at the Century House Restaurant in Latham, NY. The Chapter is working with The Friends of the Bennington Battlefield and other local historical groups for the commemoration of the 240th anniversary of the Battle of Bennington fought on August 16, 1777 in Walloomsac, NY (on NYS Rte. 67 near Hoosick Falls). This year on the weekend of August 12-13 a number of activities are planned for the Battlefield including reenactments and displays. On Wednesday, August 16, a program of commemoration will be conducted in the evening.



Walloomsac Chapter pres. John Sheaf

Central Region Chapters

- **Binghamton Chapter** -- The Chapter held its Annual Joint SAR-DAR Meeting on February 11, 2017 at the Endwell United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall, Endwell, NY. Fifty members of the Binghamton Chapter, ESSSAR and Tuscarora Chapter, NSDAR attended the Winter lunch meeting. Our guest speaker was Jean Zimmerman, of Westchester County, NY. Her novel *The Women of the House: How a Colonial She-Merchant Built a Mansion, a Fortune, and a Dynasty* (2006), was the subject of her talk.



Bob & Pat Clemons seated with Tuscarora Chapter DAR members & guests.



George Cummings, Joan & Richard Burdick and Sharon Burdick.



The appreciative audience listening to guest speaker Jean Zimmerman.

Western Region Chapters

- **Rochester Chapter** -- Some photos from the Rochester Chapter's recent events.



Presentation at Athena Middle School, January 27, 2017.



Visit to the St. Ann's Community Center, February 21, 2017.



Thank you to Peter "Harmonica" DuPree

Metropolitan Region Chapters

- **1st New York Continental Chapter** -- The chapter held its 140th Annual George Washington's Birthday Ball on February 24, 2017.

Pictured are Wesley Oler IV, president of the 1st New York Continental Chapter, Empire State Society, Sons of the American Revolution and Henry Tiffany, chapter member, standing in front of the stage at the February 24, 2017 George Washington Birth day Ball at the Metropolitan Club, New York City.



(l-r) Wesley Oler IV and Henry Tiffany.

- **Long Island Chapter** -- The Chapter was awarded the Partners in Patriotism Certificate

History Corner

New York in the Revolution

Aftermath of the Battle of Valcour Bay -- Did Arnold kill his own sailors?



Arnold memorial near present day Adams Ferry Rd., Panton, VT. It was called Ferris Bay, NY in 1776.

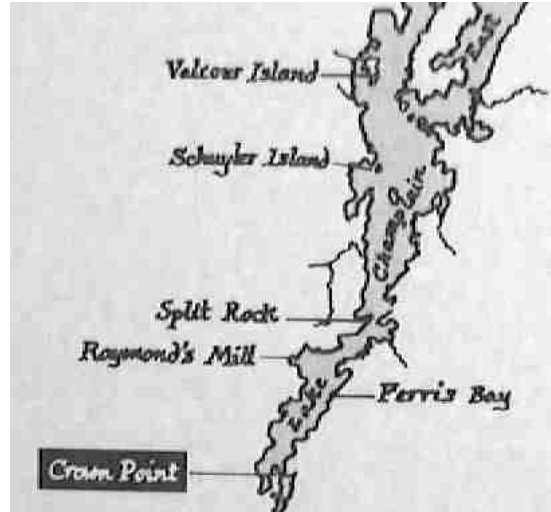


Photo of map in the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, Vergennes, VT

The following is an excerpt from the Spring 1987 Vol. 55, No. 2, Vermont History, The Proceedings of the Vermont Historical Society.

"An Incident Not Known to History: Squire Ferris and Benedict Arnold at Ferris Bay, October 13, 1776"

By Art Cohen

*That Benedict Arnold brought five of his fleet into this bay on the eastern shore of the lake and destroyed them, and escaped overland to Crown Point is a well documented historical fact. What took place, however, during the vessels' destruction has been a matter of much debate. J. Robert Maguire, in a pioneering essay published in Vermont History in 1978, carefully examined evidence pertaining to Arnold's actions in the fleet's destruction. This controversy centers around "a dreadful report," which circulated through the British ranks at the time in which it was said (emphasis added) **"That General Arnold, while burning his five ships had also burned about thirty sick and wounded men who were on board."** This quote, however, is from the journal of Major General Friederich Riedesel who was not there. Presumably then, Riedesel was commenting on a current rumor. Seeking a source for this accusation, Maguire discovered an eye-witness account written by Dr. Robert Knox, chief medical officer to the British army in Canada. Dr. Knox was on board the British flagship Maria during the entire battle. His account of the incident states that (emphasis added) **"Mr. Arnold run [sic] five ships ashore, and remained on the beach till he set fire to them, burning the wounded and sick in them."** Since Knox had nothing to gain by such a statement, Maguire felt forced to conclude that "Knox's account must be seen as providing firsthand corroboration" for the "dreadful report."*

What all accounts of the fleet's destruction have failed to mention is that these events took place in front of

Peter Ferris's dooryard and that Peter and his son, Squire, were there. Research into the life of the Ferris family has clarified the details of what Benedict Arnold did on October 13. Historical investigation led to a rediscovery of what fourteen-year old Squire Ferris saw from the vantage point of his homestead on the high bank at the head of the bay. Local history sources in Panton, (sic) This was Squire Ferris, and Tucker "wrote down his statement, as given by his own lips, in February, 1845." Ferris, who was eighty-three years old in 1845, remembered that the Congress and four gunboats came into the bay; that the men were landed and the vessel set on fire; that the British fleet reached the mouth of the bay before the explosion of Arnold's vessel took place, fired at the men upon the shore and at the house of his father, which was struck by one cannon and several grape shot, and his father and family retreated with Arnold to Crown Point and Ticonderoga.

The interview with Squire Ferris that Tucker mentioned in 1861 had originally been published in the Vergennes Vermonter in 1845. Unfortunately, that issue cannot be located. Samuel Swift, however, in his History of the Town of Middlebury, 1859, included a verbatim extract from the article originally published by Philip Tucker on February 26, 1845. This extract, according to both Swift and Tucker, has the actual words of Squire Ferris, and directly addresses the allegations about Benedict Arnold.

In 1845 Squire Ferris recalled, (emphasis added) "Lieutenant Goldsmith of Arnold's galley had been severely wounded in the thigh by a grape shot in the battle near Valcour Island, and lay wholly helpless on the deck, when orders were given to blow up the vessels. Arnold had ordered him to be removed on shore, but by some oversight he was neglected, and was on the deck of the galley when the gunner set fire to the match. He then begged to be thrown overboard, and the gunner, on returning from the galley, told him he would be dead before she blew up. He remained on deck at the explosion, and his body was seen when blown up into the air. His remains were taken up and buried on the shore of the lake. To his credit Arnold showed the greatest feeling upon the subject, and threatened to run the gunner through on the spot. The British fleet arrived at the mouth of the bay before the explosion of Arnold's vessels and fired upon his men on the shore, and upon the house of Mr. Ferris, which stood near the shore."

So, who were the Ferrises?

The following story is taken from the 31 December 2003 issue of the Lake Champlain Weekly newspaper.

Partisan Patriots of the American Revolution

by Eleanor L. Morris

At the start of the American Revolution most New Yorkers did not support independence. By some estimates, 30% were Loyalists, less than 30% favored independence and the rest were undecided. However, calling one of the segments "undecided" is misleading. Some may have been holding out, waiting to join the winning side; others may have been truly neutral or just didn't care; but the majority, like civilians caught in any war, were partisans.

Peter Ferris, a 50-year old widower and his 14-year old son, Squire, were two such civilians. There is no evidence that Peter was a militiaman at the time and his son was too young to join. Nevertheless, it is obvious from their actions that they had chosen the American side.

At the start of the Revolution, Ferris was a farmer on Lake Champlain's east shore, then part of New York. He built a cabin on a bluff overlooking Lake Champlain, about fifteen miles northeast of Crown Point. He called the area Ferris Bay. By 1775 he was actively supporting the American cause. His house was one of the few places open to Continental Army soldiers in the Champlain Valley. In the spring of 1776 Benjamin Franklin and two other congressional delegates stayed there overnight on their way to Canada to evaluate

the Canadian Campaign.

The campaign failed. Gen. Arnold retreated from Canada to the lake, where he prepared to fight on water. The first engagement came on October 11, 1776 at the Battle of Valcour Island. The Americans lost, but managed to escape. Two days later the British caught up to them near Ferris Bay and renewed battle. This time they did not escape. Arnold was forced to scuttle his ships in order to save his force of roughly 200 men. During the night with a small canoe, Peter Ferris and his son rescued two American prisoners of war from a British schooner anchored in Ferris Bay. Arnold rallied his men at the Ferris cabin, which took several rounds of British grapeshot. Ferris and his son fled with Arnold and the retreating force, leaving his property to the hands of the enemy. The Ferrises continued south and stayed in Schaghticoke, New York for a short time, possibly with Lewis, one of Peter's elder sons. Meanwhile the British stole Ferris' movable property, burned his crops, cut down his orchard, killed his farm animals, and used his land for a cemetery. They did, however, leave his house and barn. Ferris and his son returned to their ravaged home and salvaged what they could, preparing to survive the winter. The next year Peter Ferris fared no better. In June of 1777 Burgoyne's army passed through on its way to what became the Battle of Saratoga, and turned 200 horses loose in his fields, destroying his crops.

The following year in November of 1778, Peter Ferris and his son were the first prisoners taken in the British effort to remove American sympathizers from the shores of Lake Champlain. A band of British soldiers and Tories seized the Ferrises and imprisoned them aboard ship. On the same night British forces swept along the lakeshore from Bridgeport to Ferrisburgh, capturing all the men they could find, and leaving the women and children behind to suffer through the approaching winter. Next the British and Tories burned all the buildings on Peter Ferris' property, including his house. A total of 244 Americans were taken aboard two ships to prison in Canada.

The prisoners disembarked at St. John (modern day St-Jean-surRichelieu, Quebec) and marched through cold and snow to prison in Quebec city. Some tried to escape. Peter Ferris, his son and about 100 others were sent back down river to cut timber in January 1779. In the spring the Ferrises and nine other prisoners escaped by seizing a bateau during the night and crossing the river. The group split into two, but all were eventually recaptured. The Ferris group spent the next 18 months in prison at Three Rivers (Trois Rivières, Quebec). The Ferrises made another attempt to escape but were discovered and placed in a dungeon for 72 days. Peter and his son were separated, but in adjoining cells about eight by ten feet wide and too low to stand in. They slept on wet straw, in the damp and filth. Eventually they were transferred back together, to quarters opposite the guardroom. They soon set about planning their next escape. It took about six weeks to tunnel under the wall, after which Peter, his son, and six other prisoners sharing the same room escaped. Peter Ferris and his son remained together while the others separated. The Ferrises were free for three weeks, but ran out of food. After four days without food, and weak from hunger, they were recaptured and returned in chains to their former prison where they remained there until June 1782, when they were brought to Whitehall and exchanged for British prisoners.

Only 48 out of 240 prisoners taken to Canada from the neighborhood of Lake Champlain in November 1778 are known to have survived the ordeal. Peter Ferris lived to be 90, while his son Squire lived to be 87. Both died in what is now Vermont.

Sources

The Ferris Site on Arnold's Bay, A Research and Educational Program of the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, by David R. Starbuck, Archeological Director, 1989

History of the Town of Middlebury in Addison County, Vermont (1859)