



# BATTLE LINES

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## NEWSLETTER OF THE SARATOGA BATTLE CHAPTER EMPIRE STATE SOCIETY, SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

### *New Member Welcome*

We are pleased to welcome two new members to our ranks. Lauren Clyde Madge, Jr. of Latrobe, PA is a nephew of compatriot Walter Milbanks; he joins by right of descent from Isaac David Ver Planck, Private in the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment of the Albany County Militia.

Brian James Van De Wal of Schoharie Landing, NY, is a descendant of Levi Van Auchen, Lt. in the 3<sup>rd</sup> NY Regiment.

A hearty welcome to both new compatriots!

### *Notes of Condolence*

We are saddened at the passing of the mother of our late compatriot and President General Bruce Baird Butler, DDS. Dorothy Faye Baird Butler, widow of our former member Stanward Butler, died on February 18, 2002 in Schenectady, NY at the age of 95. Her service was held from Lisha's Kill Reformed Church on March 7; Dennis Marr represented the chapter at the service.

We also express our condolences to compatriot and past chapter president/chaplain/registrar Carlton E. Corvill on the passing of his brother William. Bill died March 4, 2002 at the Stratton Veterans Hospital in Albany. Bill served his country in WW II as a gunner's mate aboard the USS Sampson.

### *Battle of Saratoga Census*

Our good friend Eleanor Kenyon of the DAR has offered us the opportunity to participate in the development of a compilation of the descendants of the participants in the battles of Saratoga. Enclosed you will find a sample form to be completed for any ancestor(s) of yours who was at Saratoga during the Revolution. Please list all living descendants of that individual that you know of; they do not have to be members of DAR or SAR. The reports will be bound and presented to the Saratoga Battlefield.

All lists must be typed on bond paper, so just send your lists to Dennis Marr who will prepare them on his computer using a template and the required bond paper.

### *ROTC Medals Awarded*

The chapter awarded 3 silver SAR ROTC medals at RPI in April covering the combined programs with Sigma and RPI and including Army, Navy and Air Force. Jonathan Geibel represented us. Dennis Marr presented bronze ROTC medals at CDA in Albany and LaSalle Institute in Troy in May.

### *Chapter Annual Meeting*

The Annual Meeting and Washington's Birthday Banquet was held on February 16 at the Century House in Latham. This was a fine meeting, greatly enjoyed by all in attendance.

President Richard C. Saunders, Jr. presented on behalf of the National Society the NSSAR Gold Good Citizenship medal to Mrs. Freda Solomon, widow of the late Congressman Gerald R.H. Solomon. The medal had been approved by National some time ago, but we had been unable to arrange to present it to the Congressman in person before he passed away last fall.

The award had been approved by the National Society in recognition of Congressman Solomon's tireless efforts on behalf of numerous matters near and dear to the SAR, including: efforts to protect the flag from desecration; citing of the new National Cemetery in Saratoga; preservation of the Saratoga Battle Monument; preservation of our constitutional rights, among many others.

President Saunders and Registrar Marr reminisced about the process of accumulating the nearly 2 pounds of documentation that was sent to National in support of the application for this medal.

We also enjoyed a brief presentation from Mr. J. Russell Williams, speaking on behalf of the Gerald R.H. Solomon Freedom Foundation. A collection was taken up and members donated a total of \$200 to the Foundation.

Another highlight of the evening was the presentation of NSSAR service pins to compatriots of long standing. We were especially honored to have with us Genealogist General, and dual member from Delaware, William Benjamin Neal, a 20-year member. Also receiving 20-year pins were: Kurt H. Kilmer, Charles F. Walter and past president Clyde W. Childs, Jr. Carlton E. Corvill received the 25-year pin. Newly transferred member Noel Haskett was honored for his 20 years of membership, as was William G. Lowndes, Jr., a dual member from the Stone Arabia Chapter.

There was no election at this meeting, it being an "off year;" our officers serve 2-year terms and will remain in office until the next Annual Meeting.

### *Eagle Scout Winners*

We are honored to have two winners of the SAR Eagle Scout contest this year. Lucas E. Seelig of Saratoga and William D. Courtney of Glenmont will be presented their awards in the near future.

Many of us who have researched and documented Revolutionary War ancestors will often find ourselves feeling that one particular ancestor is a "favorite;" for me that ancestor is my third great-grandfather, Francis Courtney.

Although Francis' birth date and place are not known, he was living in Montgomery Townships, Ulster Co., NY when he enlisted on 24 Dec 1776 for the duration of the war. His records show that he was a Sergeant in Capt. Jonathan Hallett's Co., 2<sup>nd</sup> NY Regiment, Col. Philip Cortlandt. His initial pay was 4 shillings per month.

Francis served until February 1783, seeing service at White Plains, Camp North Castle, Camp Jacob's Plain, Pompton Plains, camp near Morristown, Rochester, Fort Herkimer and at Hett's near Pompton. Most interestingly, Francis was at Valley Forge from Dec. 1777 through Jun 1778, surviving that horrible winter of privation with Gen. Washington.

As with so many soldiers who served such a long term, Francis managed to get himself into occasional hot water. In the Orderly Books for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment is a Court Martial on 21 Sep 1780: "was try'd Serj Courtney for the Disobedience of Orders, Pleads Guilty." The Court considered all of the circumstances surrounding the case and found him "not punishable" and ordered his immediate release from confinement. (A William White, court-martialed the same day for being absent one night, was sentenced to receive 100 lashes on the bare back).

Bible records show that Francis married Sarah Mott, born possibly 8 Mar 1766, on 25 Apr 1791 in Goshen, Orange Co., NY. He sold his Bounty Land and moved his wife and newborn son, George E., to Lake Pleasant, Hamilton Co., NY, settling on 500 acres that he had inherited from his uncle. A second son, and final child, John, was born to Francis and Sarah on 8 Oct 1795. I descend from their son George E. and his wife Elizabeth Sheares, who married on 30 Nov 1815.

Francis died 21 Sep 1797 at Lake Pleasant and is buried in an unmarked grave in the Courtney Cemetery located on South Shore Road. His Invalid Pension application for loss of sight during the Quebec campaign was denied due to lack of timely medical examination. I do note that this loss of vision did not prevent Francis from serving right up until the end of the war. Sarah received a Widow's Pension in 1836, initially \$35 per year, later raised to \$120 per year upon petition of her sons. Sarah died on 16 Jul 1839 and is also buried in an unmarked grave in the same cemetery.

I live but 30 miles from Lake Pleasant, visiting this family cemetery often. Sgt. Francis Courtney, 2<sup>nd</sup> New York Regiment, seems a very vivid part of my life. Through his service and suffering during the wintering at Valley Forge, I retain proud membership in the *Society of the Descendants of Washington's Army At Valley Forge*.

(Ed. Note: contributions to "Ancestor Corner" are always welcome and eagerly solicited).

On Memorial Day, May 27, President Saunders and a small group of compatriots and guests formally dedicated the stone erected by the chapter in the Memorial Walk at the Gerald B.H. Solomon National Cemetery in Schuylerville.

Patriotic organizations are permitted to place markers commemorating military events from American history. Our stone was acquired last fall through a grant from the Rhodes Memorial Fund and was informally unveiled in September.

Pres. Saunders thanked compatriots Carl Covell and Dennis Marr for their work in placing this marker, and he also thanked Dennis for his efforts in obtaining the grant money for us.

### *SAR Monument in Saratoga National Historical Park*

In 1976 our chapter, then called the Admiral George Browne Chapter, placed a small monument at the Saratoga Battlefield behind the Visitors' Center. After several years of negotiation with the Park and National Park Service, it has been agreed that the monument can be moved to a more conspicuous location. At the same time, we have ordered a new bronze plaque for it, commemorating the 225<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the battles of Saratoga. The new monument will be unveiled on July 4 at 11:00 a.m. All compatriots and friends are invited to this event.

Interestingly, it is no longer permissible for private organizations to place any markers in national parks. We have been told that the moving of our marker will be the last such event with respect to a private monument in any national park.

### *Unique Battle Commemorated*

Compatriot William Bellinger, Jr. informs us that there will be an exciting event held at the Old Stone Fort in Schoharie on August 10 and 11. This will commemorate the *Battle of the Flockey* in 1777, which featured the first cavalry charge by the U.S. Army.

The battle took place near a floodplain in present-day Fulton that the local German-speaking people called "Die Fläche."

The reenactment group, Sheldon's Horse, Second Continental Light Dragoons, led by compatriot Sal Tarantino of CT, will be participating in the event. This nonprofit group does first person reenactments at schools, supports civic events and engages in various reenactments. This mounted unit is very impressive to see and they have been at Saratoga Battlefield on several occasions for the September encampments.

For more information: [www.schohariehistory.net](http://www.schohariehistory.net), or [www.theoldstonefort.org](http://www.theoldstonefort.org).