



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 2 new compatriots to the chapter since the last newsletter:

Luke Godfrey Nickerson – Albany, NY, by right of descent from Amos Northrup, CT Militia.

Charles Alan Greenfield – Cohoes, NY, by right of descent from Richard Woollen (born 1700), who signed the Oath of Fidelity in Hartford Co., MD and enlisted in the 6th MD Regiment.

WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY/ ANNUAL MEETING

Enclosed you will find details on our upcoming Annual Meeting. This promises to be a special event and we encourage you to try to attend.

Several years ago the chapter's application to present the NSSAR Gold Good Citizenship Medal to former U.S. Congressman Gerald B.H. Solomon was approved by the National Medals & Awards Committee and the Executive Committee. Unfortunately, Mr. Solomon's business commitments had prevented him from attending a meeting in person to receive his award. As you know, the Congressman passed away last fall.

We are honored to have his widow, Freda Solomon, with us at this meeting and accept the award posthumously.

Member recognitions will also be presented at the meeting.

VAN SCHAICK MANSION OPEN HOUSE

Several compatriots attended an open house this past November at the Van Schaick Mansion in Cohoes. As you know, this historic house, built in 1735, is the new home of the Gen. Peter Gansevoort Chapter of the DAR. The house is in wonderful condition and is under the stewardship of Past Regent Peggy Gifford. Tours are conducted regularly, and the house will be a living museum of local Revolutionary War history. Memorial bricks may be purchased for a \$50 donation, the funds going towards the upkeep of the house.

SARATOGA NATIONAL CEMETERY RENAMED

President Bush has signed a bill, sponsored by NY Senators Schumer and Clinton, authorizing the renaming of the Saratoga National Veterans' Cemetery in honor of the late Congressman Gerald B.H. Solomon.

As many of you know, the congressman, with much support from our chapter and others, led the fight during the 1980's and early 1990's to have a national cemetery sited in this area. After facing strong competition from several other potential locations, the land adjoining the Saratoga National Historical Park was selected.

This is only the third national cemetery to be named for an individual, the other two being named for Abraham Lincoln and Zachary Taylor.

This will be a fitting and lasting memorial to Mr. Solomon. In fact, it was his support of this cemetery as well as his proposed flag desecration amendment, that were prominently featured in the application that our chapter sent to Louisville in substantiation of his eligibility for the NSSAR Gold Good Citizenship Medal.

NYS MILITARY HERITAGE INSTITUTE

Past President G. William Glidden has passed along some information on the new NYS Military Heritage Institute in Saratoga Springs. The museum is located in the historic NYS National Guard Armory at 61 Lake Avenue. The building was completed in 1891 as the home of the 22nd Separate Company, NYNG. It was designed by noted architect Isaac G. Perry (1822-1904), who had also been appointed in 1883 to complete the beautiful Capitol building in Albany.

A Grand Opening is tentatively slated for 25 May 2002, but is subject to Gov. Pataki's schedule. Compatriot Glidden, a noted military historian, represents SAR on the Board. Bill also serves as North Country Coordinator for History and Veteran Research.

The museum will house over 10,000 military artifacts, some dating back before the Revolution. The museum is under the direction of Lt. Col. Robert H. von Hasseln, and is being renovated by the Office of General Services.

FROM OUR CHAPTER HISTORY

by

Dennis F.M. Marr, Historian

One of the more colorful members that we have had in our chapter was Ira Gray, known in the North Country as "Adirondack Ike." Ike joined SAR at age 87 in 1974 by right of descent from Asahel Gray, a Lieutenant in the 17th Regiment of the Albany County Militia.

In his member file we find a couple of narratives penned by Ike. One is a 10-page narrative of his life entitled *The Life of Ira Gray*. Ike was descended through his grandmother Sylvia Wilcox from 2 Mayflower passengers, Richard Warren and Francis Cooke.

Ike was born 17 October 1886 in the town of Corinth, Warren County, NY. In his early years, his family resided on several farms in that area. In one part of his story, Ike tells of going at age 4 with his father to the place where he did "sugaring." The sap spouts were made from sumac and emptied into hand-hewn wooden buckets. Two buckets at a time were carried on a shoulder yoke down the hill to the boiling place.

His father died in 1893 and his mother remarried to Charles Brooks, who owned a large farm on the Sacandaga River. They would make 100 to 200 gallons of maple syrup each year. One year they made 1,500 pounds of maple sugar, which they sold at 10 cents per pound.

In 1924, Ike got a job as a Forest Ranger. He had 12 fires that first year. In the 4 years that he had this job he helped build cabins, install telephone lines, cut trails, etc. The only part of the job he didn't like was fighting forest fires. He started at \$100/month and was making \$125/month when he left.

He later became a famed hunter, trapper, guide and all-around outdoorsman. He loved hunting large game and was proud of the 4 moose he had killed in Canada. He also had 3 bears to his credit, and had trapped numerous beaver, foxes and even a few mink. Ike wrote this manuscript in "1971, the first Sunday of deer season." He had just bagged his 84th deer.

At our Washington's Birthday meeting in 1981, the chapter noted that Ike was in a nursing home costing \$600/month and he could no longer pay his \$17 dues. A motion was passed to have the chapter pay for him. Ike passed away in 1984, but is remembered by many.

(Editor's note: this column, or a similar one, will appear from time to time in place of *Ancestor Corner*, for which we need submissions from members. Just send a brief narrative about your ancestor's life and/or service, and don't worry about not being the next Hemingway!).

GENEALOGICAL RESOURCES

Registrar/Genealogist Marr would like to remind compatriots of several resources that he has and which he gladly makes available to SAR and DAR members.

One of the most in demand such resources is the massive 4-volume set of books *Genealogical Abstracts of Revolutionary War Pension Files*. Compiled by Virgil White of Tennessee, these contain brief narratives of all genealogical information contained in every Rev. War pension file in the National Archives. The set comprises 3 volumes of data, the 4th volume being a 399,000+ every-name index.

Pensions are prefixed with an "S" (soldier's pension), "W" (widow's pension), "R" (rejected application) or "BLW" (bounty land warrant). Even a rejected file may contain valuable information. Many applications were rejected because the soldier did not serve long enough to earn a pension (6 months minimum). In addition, pensions were what we would today call "means-tested," that is, the person had to prove dire financial need. Those in better circumstances would not have even applied. With the file number from these books, you can go to the National Archives for the complete file.

A companion set of 4 volumes contains an index to all Revolutionary War military files in the National Archives. While these contain little or no genealogical information, they may contain muster rolls showing where and when your man was on duty, helping you to determine which battles he was in.

An amazing set of records is on a Kinship Press CD-ROM published by Broderbund, former owners of Family Tree Maker. The seemingly innocuous title "*Military Records: Selected NY Revolutionary War Records, 1771-1840*," belies the tremendous variety of records contained on it. Included is the complete text to *New York in the Revolution* as well as the index to the 6-volume HETRINA (Hessian Soldiers) and the entire text of the proceedings of the Albany Commission for Conspiracies. Like most CD's, this one features a searchable every-name index. It was here that Registrar Marr first identified his Hessian soldier, Johann Ludwig Zeilmann of Albany.

Also of tremendous value are the 2 SAR CD's, the *SAR Patriot Index* and the *SAR Revolutionary War Graves Register*.

Kinship Press also issued through Broderbund a 2-CD set containing the entire 17-volume *Massachusetts Soldiers & Sailors in the Revolutionary War* as well as *Revolutionary War Pension Lists* compiled between 1792 and the 1840 census. If you need a lookup in any of these materials, please contact Registrar Marr.