

Sons of the American Revolution, California Society

Sons of Liberty Chapter

The Liberty Tree

Published continuously since 1982



*Revolutionary War
Events
This Quarter*

1776-

January 1, 1776 George Washington unfurls the first Union flag of thirteen stripes at Cambridge, Mass.

January 1, 1776 Norfolk, Va., partly burned by Governor Dunmore.

February 27, 1776 Battle of Moore's Creek, North Carolina McDonald's loyalists routed by militia; seventy killed and wounded.

March 2, 1776 Silas Deane appointed political agent to the French Court.

March 17, 1776 Howe evacuates Boston.

March 23, 1776 Congress authorizes privateering.

“What a glorious day for America”

Samuel Adams in responsible to the Battle of Lexington

My Journey of Discovery

By Gary Bohannon

The discovery of my Patriot Ancestor has led me down paths I never envisioned and in directions I would have never guessed. I was always mildly interested in family history, and one day—it must have been summer—when I was in middle school, I was listening to a radio talk-show where the guest was a "genealogist." I called in and was told the derivation of my surname was Irish, most probably from county Clare. He made his assertion with so much confidence, I assumed it was true, and went about telling anyone who cared, mostly family, that we came from the Old Sod. I got a Bohannon "Coat of Arms" at Disneyland that said the name was Irish, so that cemented it —I mean, could the Disney Corporation be wrong?

As I'm sure many of you have, I fell victim to "experts." I didn't yet know that the folks who peddle easy answers, framable Coats of Arms and coffee-table histories are not interested in accuracy, and even, in some cases, quite happy to peddle pure fantasy.

It was many years after that I started to develop a real interest in genealogy.

CLEAN THAT MUSKET !

By Ronald M Johnson

The need for this article became apparent upon the return to our chapter's possession a musket used in color guard activities. The condition of the firearm was one of total neglect with caked powder residue covering the lock works outside as well as inside. The barrel had an equally fowled bore and included rust and light pitting from sweaty hands on the outside surface. It is unreasonable to expect everyone involved in the color guard or reenactments to be mechanically accomplished or familiar with black powder firearm maintenance. The following will describe a simple approach to Revolutionary War musket cleaning. The necessary tools can be purchased at any gun shop but here I will describe a procedure using readily available household products.

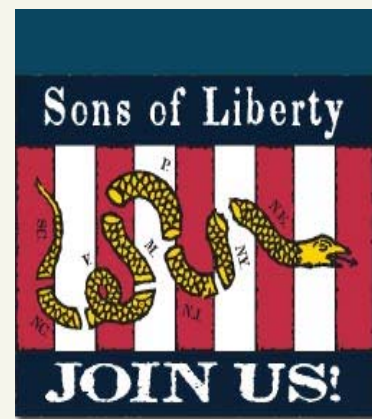
The screw driver used for disassembly should be sharply squared, flat sided, with a thickness to fit the screw slots. A grinding wheel carefully used is the easiest way to properly dress a screw driver blade but with a little more effort a fine file, a rough whetstone or even abrasive paper on a flat surface will work. When done, keep this tool for future use with the musket only. Burred

Book Review

By Larrison C. Jackson

When reading history books I generally rate them on a sliding scale for both the quality of the scholarship and the quality of the narrative. Lets face it, everyone loves a good story. However, with history, it is important to make the distinction between fiction and the representation of fact. I use three criteria when rating the scholarship. The first is the reputation and credentials

of the author. To be sure there are many fine amateur historians and a degree is no guarantee of quality. It might take a little work but I do like to check to see how the author's body of work is perceived by the academic community. The main way to assess the scholarship of a book is the quality of the



Book Review Continued..

citations. Quantity does not always mean quality. I specifically look for citations of primary sources. Secondary sources are, of course, acceptable but I try to scrutinize these sources by the same criteria as the book itself. Finally, I judge the scholarship based on the degree to which it stimulates further areas of inquiry.

T. H. Breen the author of "American Insurgents American Patriots" has very good credentials including study at both Yale and Oxford. He has a significant number of articles in peer-reviewed journals. The book itself has received many positive reviews from his peers. The quality of his notes and citations are excellent.

The book itself is an excellent read, in that, I did not have to read any passage more than once to properly comprehend its content.

I particularly recommend this book because it focuses on the people not just key players. People just like my qualifying ancestor who was a pillar of his local community but played no particular role at the national level. The book also illustrates that it was the common people who often drove the move to independence often well ahead of their leaders

Clean that Gun Continued..

screw heads are to be avoided. Ruin a different screwdriver for paint chipping or can opening. For the barrel, if shot gun cleaning equipment is available, that is the easiest, but two cleaning rods will need to be coupled together as the barrel is much longer than on most shotguns. A bronze brush will reduce barrel cleaning time but is not absolutely essential. A 3/8 inch wooden dowel is a good substitute for the above but will need to be slotted around the end and a hole drilled to hold the cleaning patches securely. T-shirt material is ideal for cutting patches.

Disassembly is accomplished by the removal of two screws on the left side of the stock. The entire lock mechanism as a whole can be lifted out of the stock's right side. Further disassembly is probably not necessary except in extreme cases. Cleaning is easily done with the product 409 and a toothbrush. This is very messy so wear old clothing. When you think all the residue is loosened, rinse the entire unit under running water. Repeat as needed. If compressed air is available, blow away all moisture. An alcohol rinse and/or a hair dryer will work for this step as well. Spray the lock completely with WD 40 and set aside.

Barrel cleaning can be done without removing the barrel from the stock. There is no breech plug so you are dealing with a dead end. The musket is laid down on the right side with the flash hole down over some paper towels and an appropriate sized patch secured through the cleaning rod hole, wrapped around the rod, and over the end. 409 is sprayed in the barrel and on the patch then worked in and out with a rotating motion. (If a brush is used the rotation is essential to be able to retrieve the rod from a closed breech). A clean patch is wrapped and the process repeated until the patches come out clean. Follow this with a patch wet with water then a dry one. Finish with a clean patch and WD40. A lot of black goo will have come out of the flash hole. After cleaning up any remaining dirt with a rag and WD40 the lock plate can then be replaced and secured with the two screws set snug, but not heavily torqued down.

Exterior rust usually caused by sweaty hands and damp storage can be removed by a rag and the product CLR or some other rust remover. These chemicals will often etch the surface which you may want to refinish with a metal polish. If the rust has left pits, you may just have to accept it. After the above cleaning, all the metal surfaces are wiped down with WD40 and the gun stored without leaving fingerprints.

My Journey Continued..

I found an old copy of an annotated family history among my grandmother's things after she passed away. Her parents were from Norway, and reading about how my great-grandfather had left Norway, immigrated to Minnesota by sailing ship, then covered wagon, dug his first shelter in the earth and covered it with a sod roof, and went on to become a successful farmer and merchant, got me hooked. Here was the story of America written by my own ancestors! I bought a copy of Family Tree Maker and got to work.

I started researching my surname, which I'm sure is the way most people start. I was very fortunate that my dad had an old copy of "The History and Genealogy of Northeastern Kansas," which contained a biography of my great-grandfather. Again, this fascinated me. So much more than names and dates, this told the story of my great-grandfather as a flesh-and-blood human: what he did, what he thought, how he lived. I also was given a family portrait of him and his family, taken when my grandfather was about 10. I learned that he came to Kansas from Missouri, so I was on to the hunt again.

Again I was fortunate that at about this time genealogy on the Internet was becoming accessible, and the information available was expanding exponentially (although I learned to become a skeptic). At this time I was also fortunate to discover the work of another genealogist online who had published quite a bit on my family online. His research, which was well documented, traced our line not to Ireland, but to Scotland, from where my ancestor had emigrated around 1650, at the end of the English Civil Wars. So much for the "experts." He sailed from Weymouth to Barbados, where I learned many Scots had journeyed at that time. The Highlanders had often been loyal to King Charles I, and were not too popular with the new government created by the victorious Roundheads. Many times the Scots were deported from Britain, with one of the destinations being the Caribbean. My ancestor, Dinkin, was married in Barbados, and later, was able to immigrate to Maryland,

My Journey Continued..

where he received a patent in 1662. He sold that property and migrated to Virginia around 1667.

I have always been very grateful to that family historian, Captain Ed Dittmer (USN Retired). He saved me countless hours of research by giving me free access to everything he had. I try to do the same for researchers who contact me. That's one of the reasons I believe the Patriot Ancestor biographies we have on our web site are so important. With Ed's help, I now knew my ancestry back to the early days of colonial America.

It was after I obtained this information that I heard about the Sons of the American Revolution. Finding an ancestor who served the cause of Independence was spoken of by some as the "holy grail" of genealogy. I was disappointed that none of my ancestors appeared to have been active in the Revolution—but then it dawned on me that I had only researched my paternal line and that I had many lines un-researched. I don't know why this didn't dawn on me earlier, pure male chauvinism, I guess. But as I began to research my maternal lines I found that the Bohannons had married very well.

One of the first lines that piqued my interest was Gaines. My family has that name running through it for generations. My grandfather was named Robert Gaines Bohannon. He had an uncle Gaines. Every generation seemed to be peppered with the name. Why? As I traced my line I found that Milly Bohannon had married Thomas Gaines, and Thomas was a Patriot of the first order (see his biography on our web site: <http://www.sons-of-liberty-sar.org/patriots/thomasGaines.php>).

I wanted to learn all I could about Thomas Gaines, so I ordered his military records from the National Archives, and I received quite a surprise in the mail. Muster records show Thomas had been present at Valley Forge. While I had always been interested in the Revolution, it was coming alive for me like never before as I read the muster rolls.

I read everything I could about Valley Forge, trying to learn what Thomas' company had done and where it was posted. The National Park at Valley Forge maintains a database of all the soldiers who encamped there, during the darkest hours of our struggle for independence. I searched it and Thomas' name was not included. Armed with my muster rolls, I contacted the staff, supplied them with the supporting documentation and had Thomas Gaines added to the database. When I visited the park for the first time a few years ago, I was thrilled to find Thomas' name now included in the honor roll. In some small way, I was able to make sure his name and service were not forgotten.

The search for my Patriot Ancestors (I have now found several more) has been a tremendously positive experience for me. It brought me to The SAR and to this great Chapter. It instilled in me a respect, almost reverential, for the patriots who took a stand for independence. It has fueled my desire to learn about the founding of our country, and to ensure that the sacrifices of the patriots are never forgotten. I think that focus will fuel the growth of the SAR in the future. Sure, I'm proud of my family's involvement, and it would be easy to become a little smug. That's why my focus remains on the Patriots. When our focus is on them, we become inclusive and relevant. We have a special incentive to ensure that the legacy of the Revolution is taught and understood—today more than ever.



The “Gang” sporting are new Chapter ties. See David to get this must have item. Do not forget the bow tie.

Congratulations to our new members and those with newly approved supplemental Ancestors!



New Member Tom Pelton (R)



New Member Cris Chivarris (R)



Ron Johnson (R) received approval for a supplemental ancestor

The chapter thanks Heather Granados (L) for her interesting and lively narrative on the life of Alexander Hamilton at our March meeting.



Upcoming Events

April 21: Regular Meeting
Free genealogy workshop at 11:30, prior to the meeting.
Program: NSSAR Western Vice President General Lou Carlson

May 19: Regular Meeting
Program: Jeff Fromberg of a Tale Worth Telling, a project that focuses on personal histories and personal accounts of having been involved in significant local or national events.

June 8-10: 43rd Annual Genealogy Jamboree
Marriott Burbank Airport Hotel, 2500 Hollywood Way, Burbank, California. This is the second biggest event for our Chapter, after the Massing of the Colors. We have a booth at the Jamboree to help other genealogists and recruit members. Please help and sign up for a five-hour shift.

June 16: Regular Meeting
Mayor Bob Archuletta of Pico Rivera mayor Bob Archuletta is a former combat veteran and paratrooper with the 82nd Airborne Division

July 7-11: SAR National Congress
The Arizona and New Mexico Societies will host the 122nd Annual Congress in Phoenix, Arizona, from July 7-11, 2012.