

M I N N E S O T A

SAR Salute



THE MINNESOTA SOCIETY SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION NEWSLETTER • www.MinnesotaSAR.org • SPRING 2019



MNSAR Members Who Served in the Military

Past President COL Ronald McRoberts had coordinated the presentation of NSSAR War Service Medals and NSSAR Military Service Medals during the Washington Observance and Luncheon Meeting. 17 of the 22 recipients were present: The War Service Medal and certificate was awarded to Allen Dean Shepersky. The Military Service Medal and Certificate were awarded to Geoffrey Bodeau, Arthur Finnell, David Foster, Jay Franklin, Wayne Halvorson, David Hawley, Marvin Jansma, William Langston, Ronald McRoberts, Robert Neese, Randall Nelson, Thomas Scherer, Larry Sisk, Rehn Smith, Thomas Sneed, and Craig Whiting. The other five will be mailed: War Service to Michael Huttner; and Military Service to Bruce Humrickhouse, Ethan Read, Douglas Stewart, and Leland Swanson. The assemblage rose with applause for all these fine gentlemen for service to our country.

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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FREEMASONRY AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Minneapolis, Minnesota – 42 members of the Minnesota Society SAR, along with spouses, guests, and members of the Society of the Sons of the Revolution in the State of Minnesota, gathered for the Annual Washington Day Luncheon. The total attendance was 82. Jax Café had prepared their signature walleye pike for the group, with a vegetarian alternative for those desiring such, and a delightful white chocolate raspberry mousse dessert.

Kevin Everett Sullivan, Vice President of the Minneapolis Chapter and member of the MNSAR Color Guard, as well as a member of numerous Masonic organizations, gave an outstanding illustrated address on “Freemasonry and its Influence on the American Revolution.”

Freemasonry is the world’s oldest fraternity having started in England in 1717. They trace their origins to the local fraternities of stonemasons, which from the end of the fourteenth century regulated the qualifications of stonemasons and their interaction with authorities and clients. The degrees of Freemasonry retain the three grades of medieval craft guilds, those of Apprentice, Journeyman or fellow (now called Fellowcraft), and Master Mason.

Freemasonry describes itself as a “beautiful system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols”. The symbolism is mainly, but not

exclusively, drawn from the manual tools of stonemasons – the square and compasses, the level and plumb rule, the trowel, among others. A moral lesson is attached to each of these tools, although the assignment is by no means consistent. The meaning of the symbolism is taught and explored through ritual.

Many colonial mayors and politicians were Freemasons. Each of the original thirteen colonies had Masonic Lodges. 41 percent of General Washington’s staff were Freemasons, as was George Washington.

It can easily be shown that in many ways the revolutionary ideals of equality, freedom, and democracy were espoused by the Masonic fraternity long before the American colonies began to complain about the injustices of British taxation. The revolutionary ideals expressed in the Bill of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, and the writings of Thomas Paine, were ideals that had come to fruition over a century before in the early speculative lodges of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, where men sat as equals, governed themselves by a Constitution, and elected their own leaders from their midst. In many ways, the self-governing Masonic Lodges of the previous centuries had been learning laboratories for the concept of self-government.

It is clear that Freemasonry played a large role in Washing-



Minnesota SAR Color Guard, honored guests from Masonic affiliations and George Washington’s sword – a gift from Lafayette.

ton’s presidency. George Washington was inaugurated as President of the United States with a Bible from St. John’s Lodge, administered by Chancellor and Grand Master of New York, Robert R. Livingston. The dollar bill, boasting Washington’s face, is known to display Masonic symbols, such as the all-seeing eye and scroll.

On September 18, 1793, President George Washington, dressed in his Masonic apron, leveled the cornerstone of the United States Capitol with the traditional Masonic ceremony.

George Washington passed away in 1799 at the age of 67. He was honored with a Masonic funeral ceremony, and buried with his apron. In the midst of Washington’s death, Martha Washington sent a lock of the president’s hair to the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts. It has been kept in an urn made by

Paul Revere from the year 1800 and remains in their collection to this day.

Sullivan introduced eight guests from Masonic affiliations including the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry. They brought with them a Sword given to George Washington from the Marquis de Lafayette.

Sullivan ended his dissertation with the Closing Charge of Freemasons performed by one of his guests.

Next Meeting

The Minnesota SAR’s annual Constitution Day Luncheon will be held at Jax Cafe on Saturday, October 19, 2019.

Minnesota author Alan Lathrop will present a history from his book, “A Surgeon with Stillwell” – about Dr. John Grindlay and combat medicine in the China-Burma-India Theater during WWII.

AMERICAN EAGLE

News of Yesterday Reported Today

Thursday November 12, 1778

CHERRY VALLEY MASSACRE

Cherry Valley, New York – Yesterday a combined Loyalist/Indian Force under Captain Walter Butler and Chief Joseph Brant ravaged the American Settlement at Cherry Valley, New York. They attacked under the cover of a rainstorm and surprised the garrison under Colonel Ichabod Alden, who was killed along with over 40 soldiers and settlers.

The Seneca Indians were angered by accusations that they had committed atrocities during the July Battle at Wyoming Valley, Pennsylvania, led by Colonel John Butler of Butler's Rangers. The lurid propaganda associated with the accusations against the Seneca in particular angered them, as did the colonists' destruction of Unadilla, Onaquaga, and Tioga. The Wyoming Valley attack, even though Chief Joseph Brant was not present, fueled among his opponents the view of him as a particularly brutal opponent.

Brant then joined forces with Captain Walter Butler (the son of Colonel John Butler), leading two companies of Butler's Rangers commanded by Captains John McDonell and William Caldwell for an attack on the major Schoharie Creek settlement of Cherry Valley. Butler's forces also included 300 Senecas, probably led by either Cornplanter or Sayenqueraghta, and 50 British Army soldiers from the 8th Regiment of Foot.

Cherry Valley had a palisaded fort (constructed after Brant's raid on Cobleskill) that

surrounded the village meeting house. It was garrisoned by 300 soldiers of the 7th Massachusetts Regiment of the Continental Army, commanded by Colonel Ichabod Alden.

As October wound down, Alden became convinced there would be no concentrated attack on Cherry Valley until possibly the following spring.

On November 8, Alden received a hastily written message from Fort Schuyler, warning that Tories and Indians would attack his post.

As it was late in the season, settlers who brought their belongings to the fort for protection that summer had already taken them back to their homes. Now, with the warning, when they asked Alden for permission to bring their valuables back to the fort, Alden scoffed at the warning, calling it an "idle Indian rumor" and turned them down. He assured the settlers he would; "...post vigilant scouts and be at all times prepared to warn them of any approaching danger."

On November 9, Alden sent scouts in various directions. Those who traveled down the Susquehanna unknowingly walked directly into the face of the enemy. On their third night out, one group of 10 men made a serious mistake. Sergeant Adam Hunter also didn't believe there would be an attack this late in the season, and was tired of cold, fireless nights. He told his men to build a large fire and they all slept beside it for warmth. They woke up the next morning as prisoners.

Adam Hunter woke up looking into a ring of Tories and Indian faces. Walter Butler recognized the sergeant. Hunter realized in fear that he was looking into the face of the man he once guarded in an Albany home who had escaped and very nearly caused his demotion.

After grilling Hunter and the prisoners for about an hour they got all the information about the settlement they needed, Butler and Brant moved toward the valley. They camped on top of a thickly evergreened hill about a mile southwest of the village. Snow fell that night, turning to rain by morning. The valley was covered with thick mist and fog. The attackers moved quickly and silently toward the village.

Officers of the garrison were lodged with families near the fort. And, with continued assurances by Colonel Alden that it was too late in the season for an attack, everyone relaxed. Alden and Lt. Colonel Stacy stayed with Robert Wells, a respected judge of the county, who was a close friend of Colonel John Butler, (Walter's father). About 20 regular soldiers also stayed at the Wells farm. Knowing where all the officers were staying, the attackers started to infiltrate the village, intending to creep up on the officer's billets. However, on the outskirts of town, an Indian fired at two men, killing one and wounding the other. Although seriously wounded, the survivor rode to the Wells house warning Colonel Alden and sounded the

alarm in the village.

Continuing to evidence his arrogance and ignorance, Alden still did not believe it was an attack of force. He insisted it was likely the work of a lone straggler. Before he could call in his scouts or organize a defense, the Indians were upon them.

Unfortunately for the settlers, before entering the village, Butler halted his rangers so they could check their firearms. Their powder was wet. Some reports claim the pause was intentional, allowing the Senecas, the most ferocious of the Six Nations, into the vanguard of the attack. The rangers might have been able to curb some of the Seneca thirst for blood. The evening before Butler had cautioned his men against unwarranted cruelty. Instead, the Senecas immediately surrounded the Wells house, and, with several Tories, slaughtered the entire family. They killed Robert Wells, his wife, his brother and sister, John and Jane, three of his sons, Samuel, Robert, and William and his daughter Eleanor. The only survivor of the family was a son John who was at school in Schenectady. Ironically, Robert Wells had taken his entire family to safety in Schenectady some months before, but returned home when the danger of attack appeared over.

Alden attempted to escape from the Wells house. He was chased down a road for some distance by an Indian. Brant repeatedly shouted for his surrender. Alden refused, making a fatal mistake by stopping,

turning and firing his pistol repeatedly at Brant. His powder was wet, and the pistol misfired each time. Finally, the Mohawk chief hurled his tomahawk hitting Alden in the head, killing him instantly. Brant tore his scalp from him before he hit the ground.

The massacre of the Wells family was particularly barbaric. One story claims one of the Tories boasting he killed the unarmed Mr. Wells as he prayed. A better source states that Butler killed Wells, which is more likely.

As the Indians broke into the house, Wells's sister, Eleanor, tried to hide in a woodpile. She was intercepted by Little Beard who grabbed her, took his tomahawk from his belt, and aimed his tomahawk at her head. A Tory, ranger Peter Smith, once a servant in the Wells house, jumped in front of the Indian to stop him, claiming she was his sister. Eleanor knew some words of the Mohawk language and begged the Indian for mercy. With one hand, the Iroquois pushed the Tory away from the girl and with the other, buried

his weapon in her temple.

The garrison was under daylong assault by Tories and Butler's rangers. The Indians avoided the fort, always fearful of cannon shot, especially grapeshot. They preferred killing, plundering and laying waste to the village and outskirts. They had no opposition, since they outnumbered the garrison force more than two to one. Those inside the fort saw the futility in venturing out to try and stop them.

Other Cherry Valley families who suffered the Indians, and equally vicious Tories, included the Rev. Samuel Dunlop and a Mr. Mitchell. Mrs. Dunlop was killed outright, sharing the fate of her sister, Mrs. Wells. Mr. Dunlop and another daughter would have been murdered but for Little Aaron, a chief of the Oghkwaga branch of Mohawks. Little Aaron led the aged, infirm old man to a doorway, where he stood beside him for protection. Indians tried to take his clothes, but the sachem stopped them.

Mr. Mitchell's situation was even more tragic. In the

field working when he spotted the Indians, he realized he was cut off from the house. He headed into the woods, hiding until the attackers moved on. When he returned, his house was on fire, and he found his wife and three of their children inside, murdered. His fourth, a girl of ten years old, although mangled and left for dead, was still alive. After putting out the small house fire, he carried his girl to the doorway, tending her wounds. He noticed a straggling party of attackers approaching. He just had time to hide, when a Tory sergeant named Newberry ran up to the door, and with a shout, drove his hatchet into the head of the little girl.

Several other families were cut off by the Indians, and in all, 32 settlers of Cherry Valley – mostly women and children – were killed. In addition, 16 soldiers died. Some of the inhabitants escaped, but many were wounded and/or taken prisoner.

Mrs. Clyde, the wife of Colonel Clyde, who was not in the area at the time, reached the deep woods with all her children except her oldest daughter,

Abigail, who wasn't to be found. Although the Indians prowled the woods around her, she and the children remained hidden until the next day. Abigail had escaped also, but as she was trying to rejoin her mother the next day, she was intercepted and did not survive. Col. Colin Campbell was away from the village when the attack started, but hurried home when he heard the alarm gun from the Fort. He arrived to find his property destroyed, a member of his household killed and his wife and four children carried away as prisoners.

Sources:

Revolutionary War Almanac, by John C. Fredriksen, Infobase Publishing, 2006

<https://revolutionarywar.us/year-1778/battle-cherry-valley-massacre/>

<https://www.myrevolutionarywar.com/battles/781111-cherry-valley>

A SPLASH OF COLOR

A Message from the MNSAR Color Guard

Color Guard Commander Steven Hyde presented a report promoting the MNSAR Color Guard. He reported on the Color Guard's activity during 2018 including the annual Wayzata Chapter C.A.R. "flying pancake" Independence Day event.

He ended by saying, "at the end of the day, you can rest assured that..."

WE THE PEOPLE of the United States,
in Order to form a more perfect Union,
establish Justice,
insure domestic Tranquility,
provide for the common defence,
promote the general Welfare,
and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity,
(as we) do ordain and establish (the) Constitution for the United States of America!

Share with family, friends, coworkers, and neighbors, the challenge of the preamble and getting involved in this Society."

MNSAR MEMBERSHIP REPORT

New Members were welcomed during the Washington Day Observance and Luncheon. SAR Secretary-Treasurer John Hallberg Jones presented the certificate and rosette to new member Harry Hust. Other new member certificates will be mailed. Robert Allison was presented the certificate and star for another approved supplemental application. MAJ Geoffrey R. Bodeau, M.D., was presented with the certificate and insignia for 25 years of membership.

New Members:

Name	Patriot
Michael W. F. Huffner	Thomas Eldredge
Harry Agar Hust	Enos Day
Michael Dennis Kalos	Anthony Hoffman
Tristan Alexander Kalos	Anthony Hoffman
John Spencer Kalos	Anthony Hoffiman
Mark David Nelson	John T. Headley

Supplemental Application Approved:

Robert W. G. H. Allison..... William Gwin, Sr.