



George Washington Chapter Newsletter

Alexandria, Virginia

Volume 24, Issue 1

Visit us online at www.gwsar.org

January, 2022

December GW Chapter Meeting



VASSAR 2nd VP and past Chapter President Ernie Coggins installing new GW Chapter officers Richard Rankin as President, Bill Wilson as Treasurer, and Scott Walker as Secretary for 2022. Rand Pixa as Vice President was sworn in virtually.



New President Richard Rankin and outgoing President Tom Roth. (Con't on Page 3)

President's Corner

Compatriots:

It was a great honor to be inducted as the President of the George Washington Chapter by VASSAR 2nd Vice President, Ernie

Coggins, at our December Chapter meeting, and to don the ceremonial neck ribbon worn by all Chapter Presidents. As President, I am committed to working with all of you to ensure that the George Washington Chapter continues to be at the forefront of the pursuit of the historical, educational and patriotic objectives of the National Society.

In addition, I look forward to working with your other new officers—Rand Pixa (Vice President), Bill Wilson (Treasurer) and Scott Walker (Secretary)—as we move into the new year of 2022. Most importantly, I wish to thank outgoing President Tom Roth for his leadership and dedication to the Chapter. Tom will be continuing in a Chapter leadership role, joining the Board of Managers as a Manager-at-Large (Class of 2024).

As part of our planning for the Chapter programs in the new year—including Youth Awards, Public Safety Awards, ROTC/JROTC Awards, a bigger Patriot Research System footprint, C.A.R. support, Grave Markings and other activities—the support and participation of many Chapter members will be required. In this regard, we will convene in late January a virtual Winter Planning Workshop. More information on this important meeting will be forthcoming, but I encourage all members to plan to participate. Past Winter Meetings have been a great opportunity for newer members to learn more about the activities of our Chapter and where your skill set may help our Chapter efforts.

For those of us who love all things Washington, February 2022 will be the Super Bowl. The George Washington



Parade returns to Alexandria on February 21 (Monday). Prior to the parade, we will be laying a wreath at Tomb of the Unknown Revolutionary Soldier at the iconic Old Presbyterian Meeting House. The next day, February 22 (Tuesday) is the 290th Birthday of Washington. We will be laying a wreath at Washington's Tomb on the Mt. Vernon estate.

Many thanks to all for your continued support of the George Washington Chapter. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me or any Chapter officer during the upcoming year as to your suggestions, questions or concerns. Please visit our chapter website at www.gwsar.org for more information about upcoming events, payment options for luncheons, annual dues and donations.

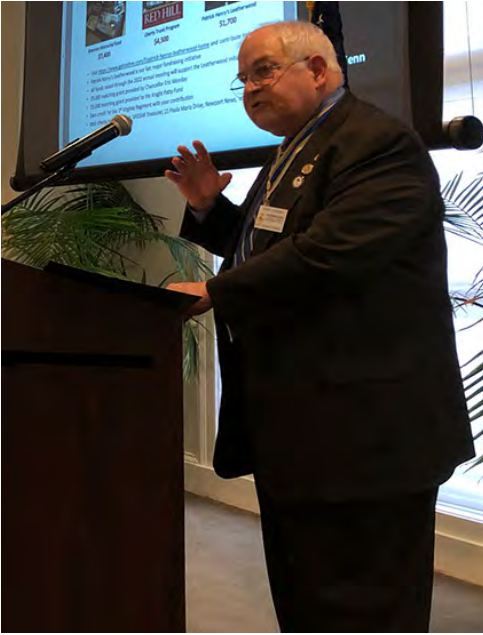
Happy New Year to you
and your family,

Richard E. Rankin
President

George Washington Chapter, SAR



December GW Chapter Meeting (from Page 1)



Left: Ernie Coggins served as our featured speaker, discussing the histories of George Washington, George Mason, and Daniel Morgan, before installing our new chapter officers for 2022. Right: Ernie receives the Houdon bust of General Washington from VP Richard Rankin, who later would become GW President.



Left: General View of the meeting with the two immediate past Presidents of the George Mason Chapter, Pete Davenport and Ken Morris, in the foreground.



Right: VASSAR 2nd VP and past Chapter President Ernie Coggins was joined after the meeting by New Chapter President Rankin (sporting his new neckwear) and past George Mason Chapter President, Ken Morris, to celebrate Ernie's receipt of the Houdon bust.



Wreaths Across America

GW Chapter compatriots participated in the Wreaths Across America ceremony at Alexandria National Cemetery. Because of COVID-19 precautions, we waited in a long queue outside the gates of the cemetery. Once the gates were opened, groups of volunteers were allowed to enter in sequence, with more people entering once the previous groups were finished. Each volunteer was to lay two wreaths at gravestones, and eventually all the volunteers from various patriotic organizations were to lay about 3,000 wreaths on the 4,229 gravestones there.--*Jack Coulter*



Left: Jack Coulter, John Brigden, Tom Roth GW President.



Right: John Brigden and Richard Rankin in the process of placing wreaths.



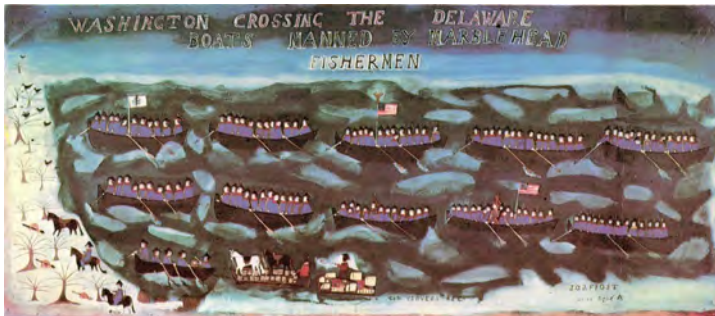
Tom Roth, Jack Coulter (WAA Leader), John Brigden, Bill Wilson, Jamie Callender, and Richard Rankin.

(Con't on Page 6)

January GW Chapter Guest Speaker

Christmas Night 1776: How Did They Cross the Delaware

William Welsch



When the two columns of the Continental Army slammed into Trenton at 8 am on Thursday, December 26, surrounding and capturing most of the Hessian garrison, new life was breathed into the faltering revolution.

But how did they get there?

The speaker will explore the mechanics of the Delaware River crossing, looking at the weather, the river, the boats, the troops and the Patriot leaders.

Who was responsible for this amphibious operation?

What did the soldiers write about their experiences?

How did public perceptions match up with the actual facts.



"A citizen, first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen."-Henry "Light Horse Harry" Lee, December 26, 1799.

"America has furnished to the world the character of Washington. And if our American institutions had done nothing else, that alone would have entitled them to the respect of mankind."--Daniel Webster

President	Richard Rankin: 703-538-5805
Vice President	Rand Pixa: 703-622-7001
Treasurer	Bill Wilson: 301-523-2690
Secretary	Scott Walker: 703-216-4798
Registrar	Richard Sherman: 301-654-6319

The George Washington Chapter was chartered in its present form on April 2, 1954. With over 250 members, it is Virginia's largest SAR chapter. Meetings customarily are held at 11:30 a.m. on the second Saturday of each month (June, July & August excepted) at the Belle Haven Country Club, 6023 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria, Virginia.

Immediate Past President:
Tom Roth: 703-739-8811

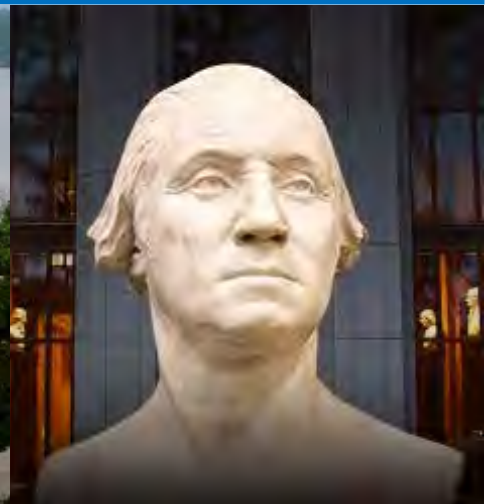
Ride Share: Members in need of a ride to a Chapter meeting or a Chapter-sponsored event may contact the Amenities Committee Chairman, Don Reynolds, at (703) 765-4947.

This newsletter is **temporarily** edited by **Pete Farley**. Inputs from Chapter officers, committee chairmen, and fellow Compatriots are always needed. Please send your inputs and comments to nyyno7@cox.net or call 703-585-3163.

Wreaths Across America (from Page 4)



Despite attendance limitations due to COVID-19, the crowd of volunteers lined up on Wilkes Street waiting for their turn as wreath layers—Jack Coulter.



January through the years with George Washington

- 1759** on the 6th--Washington marries Martha Dandridge Custis.
- 1777** on the 3rd--Victory at the Battle of Princeton.
- 1788** on the 16th--Washington is named chancellor of the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia.
- 1801** on the 1st--George Washington's enslaved people are freed by his widow, Martha.

The Last Hours of George Washington

George Washington, following a very short illness, died on December 14, 1799

Following is an eyewitness account by his adopted son, George Washington Parke Custis

Twenty-eight years have passed since an interesting group were assembled in the death room, and witnessed the last hours of Washington. So keen and unsparing hath been the scythe of time, that of all those who watched over the patriarch's couch, on the thirteenth and fourteenth of December, 1799, but a single person age survives.

On the morning of the thirteenth, the general was engaged in making some improvements in the front of Mount Vernon. As was usual with him, he carried his own compass, noted his observations, and marked out the ground. The day became rainy, with sleet, and the improver remained so long exposed to the inclemency of the weather as to be considerably wetted before his return to the house. About one o'clock he was seized with chilliness and nausea, but having changed his clothes, he sat down to his indoor work - there being no moment of his time for which he had not provided an appropriate employment.

At night on joining his family circle, the general complained of a slight indisposition, and after a single cup of tea, repaired to his library, where he remained writing until between eleven and twelve o'clock. Mrs. Washington retired about the usual family hour, but becoming alarmed at not hearing the accustomed sound of the library door as it closed for the night, and gave signal for rest in the well-regulated mansion, she rose again, and continued sitting up, in much anxiety and suspense. At length the well-known step was heard on the stair, and upon the general's entering his chamber, the lady chided him for staying up so late, knowing him to be

Right: The last portrait ever made of General Washington--drawn by the French artist Charles St. Memin--in 1798 at Mt Vernon.



Life of George Washington The Christian Death, Junius Brutus Stearns; lithograph by Claude Regnier (LOC)

As he lay dying from a virulent infection of the epiglottis, Washington could barely speak. His statements during this time were largely limited to last-minute instructions about his will and burial, as well as his thankfulness for those who were taking care of him.

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The Last Hours (from previous Page)

unwell, to which Washington made this memorably reply: *"I came so soon as my business was accomplished. You well know that through a long life, it has been my unvaried rule, never to put off till the morrow the duties which should be performed to-day."*

Having first covered the fire with care, the man of mighty labors sought repose; but it came not, as it long had been wont to do, to comfort and restore after the many and earnest occupations of the well-spent day. The night was passed in feverish restlessness and pain. *"Tired nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep,"* was destined no more to visit his couch; yet the manly sufferer uttered no complaint, would permit no one to be disturbed in their rest, on his account, and it was only at daybreak he would consent that the overseer might be called in, and bleeding resorted to. A vein was opened, but no relief afforded. Couriers were despatched to Dr. Craik, the family, and Drs. Dick and Brown, the consulting physicians, all of whom came with speed. The proper remedies were administered, but without producing their healing effects; while the patient, yielding to the anxious looks of all around him, waived his usual objections to medicines, and took those which were prescribed without hesitation or remark. The medical gentlemen spared not their skill, and all the resources of their art were exhausted in unwearied endeavors to preserve this noblest work of nature.

The night approached—the last night of Washington. The weather became severely cold while the group gathered nearer to the couch of the sufferer, watching with intense anxiety for the slightest dawning of hope. He spoke but little. To the respectful and affectionate inquiries of an old family servant, as she smoothed down his pillow, how he felt himself, he answered, *"I am very ill."* To Dr. Craik, his earliest companion-in-arms, longest tried and bosom friend, he observed, *"I am dying, sir - but am not afraid to die."* To Mrs. Washington he said, *"Go to my desk, and in the private drawer you will find*

two papers - bring them to me." They were brought. He continued - *"These are my Wills - preserve this one and burn the other,"* which was accordingly done. Calling to Colonel Lear, he directed - *"Let my corpse be kept for the usual period of three days."*

The patient bore his acute sufferings with fortitude and perfect resignation to the Divine will, while as the night advanced it became evident that he was sinking, and he seemed fully aware that *"his hour was nigh."* He inquired the time, and was answered a few minutes to ten. He spoke no more - the hand of death was upon him, and he was conscious that *"his hour was come."* With surprising self-possession he prepared to die. Composing his form at length, and folding his arms on his bosom, without a sigh, without a groan, the Father of his Country died. No pang or struggle told when the noble spirit took its noiseless flight; while so tranquil appeared the manly features in the repose of death, that some moments had passed ere those around could believe that the patriarch was no more.

Close to the couch of the sufferer, resting her head upon that ancient book, with which she had been wont to hold pious communion a portion of every day, for more than half a century, was the venerable consort, absorbed in silent prayer, and from which she only arose when the mourning group prepared to lead her from the chamber of the dead. **Such were the last hours of Washington.**

Recollections and Private Memoirs of Washington, George Washington Parke Custis



Upcoming Events

January 8, 2022–Saturday: 11:30 am
George Washington Chapter Hybrid
Zoom Meeting

Belle Haven Country Club
Alexandria, VA

Speaker: Bill Welsch

“Christmas Night 1776: How Did They Cross the Delaware” (please confirm attendance on Chapter Website under Events tab; On-line luncheon payment option available on Chapter Website).

January 15, 2022–Saturday:

Time to be advised.

241st Anniversary of the Battle of Cowpens

Cowpens National Battlefield
4001 Chesnee Highway,
Gaffney, South Carolina

Details forthcoming

January 22, 2022–Saturday:-1:00 PM

Rev. Peter Muhlenburg’s

“Time for War” Sermon

Woodstock, VA

A VASSAR State Level Event

February 5, 2022–Saturday: 11:30 am

George Washington Chapter Hybrid
Zoom Meeting

Belle Haven Country Club
Alexandria, VA

Speaker: Doug Bradburn, *President & CEO of Mt. Vernon* (please confirm attendance on Chapter Website under Events tab; On-line luncheon payment option available on Chapter Website).

February 5, 2022–Saturday 3:30 pm

Memorial Service for Patriot William Lee

(George Washington’s manservant)

Slave Cemetery

Mt. Vernon Estate

For more information: please contact Paul Walden at paulwalden@live.com



February 11-12, 2022–Friday & Saturday:
2022 Virginia SAR Annual Meeting Omni
Hotel

Richmond, Virginia

Further details forthcoming.

February 19, 2022–Saturday:

241st Anniversary of the Crossing of the Dan

South Boston, VA

Further details forthcoming.

February 21, 2022 –Monday: 11:00 am

Wreath Laying at the Old Presbyterian Meeting House for Unknown

Revolutionary Soldiers

Joint SAR/DAR ceremony.

February 21, 2022–Monday: 1:00 pm

Alexandria’s George Washington Parade

Details for both Monday, February 21 events will be forthcoming in January

February 22, 2022–Tuesday: 9:00 am

George Washington’s 290th Birthday
Wreath Laying

Washington’s Tomb

Mt. Vernon Estate.

Ceremony will end at 9:30 am

Please register your attendance on our Chapter Website



Compatriot John Edwards & Family

Visit Valley Forge

During our visit to Valley Forge National Park, we were surprised at the amount of non-combat related casualties at the time. Among the Continental regulars in the American Revolution, 90 percent of deaths were caused by disease, and Variola, the smallpox virus, was the most vicious of them all. On January 6th, 1777, George Washington issues an order stating all forces coming through Philadelphia must be vaccinated. *"Necessity not only authorizes but seems to require the measure, for should the disorder infect the Army . . . we should have more to dread from it, than from the Sword of the Enemy."*

His troops were becoming infected fast, with camps turning into hospitals full of the sick. Both Benedict Arnold and Benjamin Franklin, after surveying the havoc wreaked by Variola in the Canadian campaign, expressed fears that the virus would be the army's ultimate downfall. It is interesting to note that most British troops were immune to Variola, giving them a huge advantage.

At the time, the practice of infecting the individual with a less-deadly form of the

Right: A re-enactment volunteer demonstrates how to load and fire the muskets they were issued. A well-trained soldier took approximately 25 seconds to shoot and reload.

Below: Washington's elite & exclusive security forces lived in cabins behind his Headquarters.



disease was widespread throughout Europe. Conversely, the history of inoculation in America was hindered by the fear of the contamination potential of the process. Such fears led the Continental Congress to issue a proclamation in 1776 prohibiting Surgeons of the Army to inoculate. Yet, Washington believed the only choice was inoculation.

Weighing the risks, on February 5th of 1777, Washington finally committed to the unpopular policy of mass inoculation by writing to inform Congress of his plan. Throughout February, Washington, with no precedent for the operation he was about to undertake, covertly communicated to his commanding officers orders to oversee mass inoculations of their troops in the model of Morristown and Philadelphia.

Given the current Pandemic, we found this story to be very interesting. While there are similarities and differences, we recognized the difficult choice made by General Washington, given the knowledge base of the time, the experimental nature of vaccines, the generally unsanitary environment, and the potential loss rate. Washington did what he thought was best for the immediate area and situation. It was a tough decision indeed.--*Anna-Claire Edwards*



Above: John Edwards stands outside George Washington's Valley Forge headquarters. General Washington and his closest aides stayed in this house.

New GW SAR Member Biography

Walter Thayer Long, Jr.

was born in Bryn Mawr, PA in 1975, and grew up in nearby Villanova, PA. He attended Radnor High School and graduated with an English degree from Davidson College, in North Carolina. He played rugby for the school and was named team captain.

Thayer moved to the Washington, DC area (Arlington) after graduation and began a career in publishing, but then pursued a career in association management. He has served as CEO for multiple trade groups, and now also serves as a VP for Innovatis Group, a Nashville based company with offices in Chicago and DC that manages associations and tech-based user groups.

He is married to Lindsay Patterson (a librarian) with a son (Philip) who is in 7th grade at St. Stephens St. Agnes School. When not spending time with family or coaching youth baseball, Thayer can be

found in the garden. He is now completing his Master Gardener designation. He also dabbles in music and is learning to play guitar.

Thayer is an avid history buff, particularly American. One of his ancestors, Captain Abraham Markoe, founded the Philadelphia Light Horse, now known as the First City Troop. And his great-grandfather, George Chapman Thayer served as Captain of the Troop in the early 20th century. Thayer's interest in the SAR developed through his late great-uncle, Paul Marshall Long who was a member of the Maryland Society. Thayer's ancestor, John Maull, born in 1742 in Lewes, Delaware, was a river pilot on a dispatch boat. It is believed he was captured by a British ship and then ordered to pilot the ship to Philadelphia. Instead, he proceeded to run the ship aground in the dark and then escaped by jumping overboard.

Thanks for the memories . . .

