



LAFAYETTE CHAPTER NEWS

Sons of the American Revolution

"It is the pride of my heart to have been one of the earliest adopted sons of America." - Marquis de Lafayette



President's Point of View

Dale Henley, Chapter President



Greetings to the Compatriots of the Lafayette Chapter,

Summer is in full swing, and Chapter members are involved in promoting the SAR in a variety of ways including color guard participation, grave markings and one very special event - the Welcome Home at Bluegrass Field for the first all-female Honor Flight from Kentucky. The June Dinner Meeting was well attended with highlights including the Rosette Pinnings of two members, the introduction of two new affiliates to our Chapter, the introduction of Blake Poynter from Eubank, Kentucky who spoke on Dr. Benjamin Rush which topic garnered him the First Place Award in the Kentucky Knight Essay Contest, and the unmasking of the mystery guest who turned out to be "George Washington's brother" (George Pennington) who shared interesting insights into the First President's masonic affiliation and its importance to him.

I close wishing each of you and your families a very safe, happy and patriotic Fourth of July.

Dale

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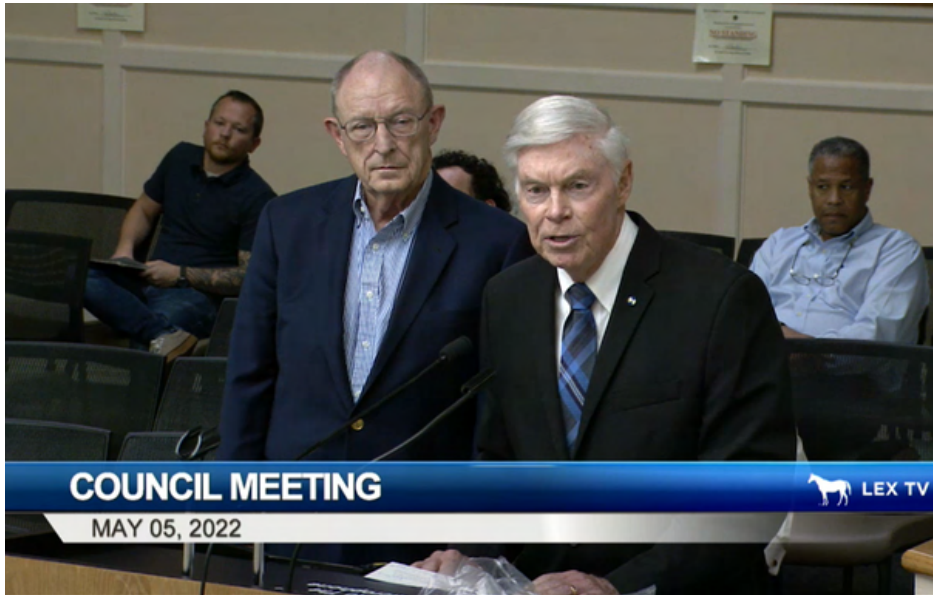
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Lafayette Day Proclamation

On May 5th, the Lexington-Fayette County Urban County Council, as part of their regular monthly meeting, unanimously passed a proclamation declaring May 16th as Marquis de Lafayette Day in Fayette County.

The proclamation was sponsored and read aloud by Vice-Mayor Steve Kay. Chapter President Dale Henley, joined by former Chapter President Dr. Emery Wilson, offered remarks to the Council regarding the importance of General Lafayette. He specifically noted that the Council's chambers are located in a building that once housed the Lafayette Hotel.



A copy of the proclamation which was given to our chapter.

Chapter President Dale Henley, joined by former Chapter President Dr. Emery Wilson, offering comments regarding General Lafayette to the Lexington-Fayette County Urban Council.

Front L-R: President Dale Henley, Vice-Mayor Steve Kay, a portrait of General Lafayette, Dr. Emery Wilson
Back: Members of the Lexington-Fayette County Urban Council



Chapter President Dale Henley offering a viewing of the portrait of General Lafayette to Council members.



"As a fourth generation Lexingtonian, I have a deep understanding and appreciation for this community and its heritage. General Lafayette, though French, fought for the cause of liberty and freedom in support of American's War for Independence. We owe him a debt of gratitude and rightly honor him. I'm a proud Lafayette High School General."

- City Councilmember Amanda Mays Bledsoe

The Declaration and Kentucky



In 1776, Philadelphia and Kentucky were separated by more than the 530 miles between them. With few paths through the Appalachian Mountains, the future commonwealth truly was a sparsely populated frontier where news traveled slowly. At that point, barely 200 settlers were in Kentucky's borders. The Kentucky Gazette, our first newspaper, would not even be established for more than a decade to come. Culturally, our first settlers were far removed from the urbane lifestyle of the more civilized City of Brotherly Love.

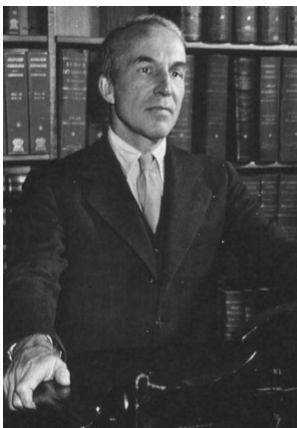
With that in mind, it's not surprising we do not have many strong connections to the Declaration of Independence of the Second Continental Congress from whence it came. As a part of Virginia, we were represented by its delegation, some of whom would have descendants who migrated to Kentucky.

However, as we all know, the Declaration has survived much longer than that fateful day of July 4, 1776, both in spirit and body. For those of you who have seen an original copy in the National Archives Building, you may be surprised to learn of Kentucky's role in protecting that document, and others. Here is that story.



On December 7, 1941, the world changed for Americans. While we had watched the rise of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan with keen interest, both were still seen as regimes in faraway places. The average citizen did not see the danger confronting us. The bombing of Pearl Harbor was the first attack on American soil by a foreign government since the Mexican-American War, nearly a century prior.

The fear of an attack on Washington, D.C. was now well-placed. And as the nation prepared for war, the Library of Congress began making preparations of another sort. Archibald MacLeish, the Librarian of Congress, knew the historical and symbolic value of many documents in the Library's possession, including such as the original copy of the Declaration, the original copy of the U.S. Constitution, the Gettysburg Address, and many more. Rightfully so, he knew those documents had to be preserved and they were in danger if they stayed in Washington during the war.



Archibald MacLeish,
Librarian of Congress

For over a year prior, MacLeish had his staff compiling a list of what documents were of the most historical importance and would be, in his words, "utterly irreplaceable" were they to be destroyed. Now, with our nation's entry into the war, the librarian's foresight had paid off.

On December 26th, a plan was set into motion to protect the most historical of American documents. Secret Service Agent Harry Neal oversaw the transport of four cases of documents by armored truck to Washington's Union Station, where they were then loaded onto a train bound for a secure and undisclosed location.

The location was into the heart of Kentucky and into the recently constructed gold bullion depository at Fort Knox. At the time, the depository was considered to be the strongest building in our nation, making it the most impervious to bombing. Additionally, an inland location in a rural part of the nation was not thought to be high on a target list for the Axis powers.

(cont.)

The Jefferson Memorial was completed in 1943 and dedicated by President Roosevelt that April. For the week of the dedication, the Declaration was once again on public display in Washington, albeit under 24 hour guard by the U.S. Marines. With that one week exception, the Declaration and many other historical and "utterly irreplaceable" documents remained protected at Fort Knox until September 19, 1944.

While the war would rage on for close to another year, the Joint Chiefs had determined that our nation's mainland was no longer under immediate threat of bombing. Just as when the documents had secretly left Washington, there was no announcement of their return. However, MacLeish quickly ensured they were back on display for the public.

In 1952, the original Declaration and Constitution were moved to the National Archives Building, where they remain on display to this day.

It would be years before records were released which documented the forethought and activities of MacLeish, his fellow librarians, the Secret Service, and the men stationed at Fort Knox who protected our nation's greatest historical treasures. When visiting the Marines on guard, Archibald MacLeish, a truly unsung hero of our great nation, had this to say:

"Our nation differs from all others in this - that it was not created by geographic or racial accident, but by the free choice of the human spirit, conceived and founded by men who chose to live under one form of government rather than under another. The sheets of vellum and the leaves of ancient paper in those cases which you guard are the very sheets and leaves on which [our] form of government [was] brought to being. Nothing that men have ever made surpasses them."



Artistic rendition of the Fort Knox Depository in 1941, five years after its construction was completed.

New Kentucky Society Genealogist



Congratulations to Steve Gahafer, our chapter Vice-President, on being elected Genealogist for the Kentucky Society. In this capacity, Steve will assist the state registrar, as well as local chapters, in the examination and evaluation of applications for membership as requested.

The Lafayette Chapter is well-represented within the Kentucky Society as Steve now joins three of our other chapter compatriots who serve as state officers. Those are Tim Brown (President-Elect), Mike Sullivan (Registrar), and Dr. Emery Wilson (Surgeon).

June Chapter Meeting

The Lafayette Chapter gathered for its summer meeting on June 20th at the Embassy Suites in Lexington. The meeting was well-attended with over forty compatriots and guests present.

The meeting began by welcoming Bob Weekley and Howard Miller, two gentlemen who have recently moved to Kentucky from Virginia and will be transferring their membership to the Lafayette Chapter.

Following pleasantries, Chapter President Dale Henley introduced the first of our two featured guests, Blake Poynter. Blake is the 2022 state winner of the George S. and Stella M. Knight Essay Contest, sponsored by the National SAR. President Henley serves as the State Chairman of the Knight Essay committee and shared how the judges were thoroughly impressed with Blake's essay on the life and patriotic activities of Dr. Benjamin Rush. Blake came forward and read his essay to the chapter, a copy of which is reprinted on page 7 of this newsletter.

Shortly after, as lights were dimmed, we were greeted by George Pennington, complete with period attire and lantern. Mr. Pennington, a Freemason, offered a presentation while in character as to General George Washington's masonic activities and the influence the organization had in his life.

As part of the presentation, Mr. Pennington offered he believes there were many factors that led to the success of our forefathers in their quest for freedom from England. However, he asserted the most important of those was the membership and influence of secret societies such as the Freemasons, as they had taught the importance of confidentiality.

He also made the claim that General Washington put a high value on trustworthiness and only willingly promoted fellow Freemasons to major officer positions in the Continental Army.



George Pennington speaks of General Washington's involvement with Freemasonry.

Compatriot Mann, comes by virtue of his descent from Green Clay, who served in the American Revolution and later as a General in the War of 1812. He was pinned by his wife, Sandy.

Compatriot Hay, is a descendant of Samuel Hay, who served as Lieutenant Colonel in the Pennsylvania Regiment and was a founding member of The Society of the Cincinnati. He was pinned by his wife, Melba.



Far left: Hugh Mann receives his pin from his wife Sandy.

Immediate left: Charles Hay receives his pin from his wife, Melba.



Chapter President Dale Henley presents Blake Poynter with a certificate, medal and check for winning the Knight Essay contest.

Following these presentations, the chapter enjoyed a period of dinner and fellowship prior to the business section of the meeting.

Mike Sullivan spoke of our compatriot Jesse Rathbun, who spent his career in the U.S. Navy, during part of which he served as a Navy corpsman in Vietnam. It was during that service that Jesse was in contact with Agent Orange, which would lead him experiencing health problems years later. It was in recognition of the sacrifices he made to our country, both on and off the battlefield, that he was presented with the Wounded Warrior Coin.

Next, two gentlemen, Hugh Mann of Huntington Beach, California and Charles Hay of Richmond, Kentucky were welcomed to our chapter as new members and received their rosette pins.



Mike Sullivan presenting the Wounded Warrior Coin to Jesse Rathbun.

June Chapter Meeting

As the business portion of the meeting progressed, we heard reports from our chapter officers.

President-Elect Patrick Wesolosky spoke of continued activities of the chapter color guard, as well as the good work being done of repair and maintenance of patriot graves. He presented the chapter with a ribbon to adorn our flag that was presented to the color guard for their participation at the General George Rogers Clark Memorial ceremony in Vincennes, Indiana last month.

Vice-President Steve Gahafer offered information regarding the chapter's participation in the upcoming Independence Day parade in Lexington. He specifically noted that with the anniversaries of both Lexington and the American Revolution coming soon, it would be good to have a strong presence at events such as this. He also encouraged members to go the national SAR's website and complete the Youth Protection Service training.

Dr. Jamie Akin, our chapter Surgeon General, gave a brief update regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. While he is of the belief we will long live with the virus, he does have optimism that it is getting weaker and will have a lessening effect on people as we move forward.

Registrar Joe Clancy provided a membership update. Our chapter has recently approved ten new members, bringing us to a total number of 143.

President-Elect Patrick Wesolosky then approached the chapter about a new memorial that will be placed at Veterans Park in Lexington to honor those who have attained the Purple Heart. The memorial would be a teardrop shape, consistent with other memorials in the nation, and would be funded jointly by our chapter, the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Sons of the Revolution. Those in attendance unanimously voiced support for our participation.

It was also mentioned that on July 1st, beginning at 1:30 pm, President-Elect Wesolosky will be leading a walkthrough at the Lexington Cemetery to point out the patriot graves located there. As is tradition, the group will place flags and flowers the men and women who sacrificed so that our nation could be formed.

With that, the meeting was adjourned with notice that our next meeting will be September 19th at the Embassy Suites in Lexington.



A Purple Heart memorial at Blue Licks Battlefield which is similar to the one to be placed at Veterans Park.

Paxton & Ramsey Grave Marking Ceremony

On May 7, members of the Lafayette Chapter traveled to Loveland, Ohio for a grave marking ceremony honoring patriots Thomas Paxton (1739-1813) and John Ramsey (1765-1849). Compatriots Steve Gahafer, Patrick Wesolosky and Tim Wisner participated in the ceremony.



Right: SAR compatriots from the Kentucky and Ohio Societies pose at the gravesites.



Far Left: Tim Wisner, with flag, and Patrick Wesolosky.

Immediate Left: Steve Gahafer with flintlock, as Tim and Patrick look on from behind.

Knight Essay Winner

Each year, the Sons of the American Revolution sponsors the George S. and Stella M. Knight Essay Contest. The contest is open to all high school students. Essays are based on an event, person, philosophy or ideal associated with the American Revolution, Declaration of Independence, or the framing of the United States Constitution. Each student's essay is judged based upon its historical accuracy, clarity, organization, grammar and spelling, and documentation.

Mr. Blake Poynter, of Eubank, Kentucky, won this year's state level contest with his essay *The Revolution's Philosopher*, based on the life of Dr. Benjamin Rush. He will now represent the Kentucky Society as he moves into the national competition.

Blake is a rising sophomore at Somerset High School and is the son of Chris and Chrystal Poynter. With permission, his essay is printed below for those who were unable to hear Blake present it in person.



The Revolution's Philosopher

Dr. Benjamin Rush was born to John and Susanna Hall Rush on December 24th, 1745 in Byberry, Pennsylvania. From a young age, Rush was curious about everything—He wanted to learn more about scripture, science, and generally what made the world turn. Because of this, he would come off as a nosy child, but later in life, his habit of questioning would turn him into the Philosopher of the American Revolution. As a teen, Ben, as he was lovingly called by his mother, was sent off to attend the West Nottingham academy in Maryland. Here, his instructor was John Finley, a strict disciplinarian who also served as the students' reverend. Rush excelled at West Nottingham, and soon Finley believed Rush was ready for college. At thirteen, Benjamin applied for the College of New Jersey, which is Princeton today, and tested so highly on the entrance exam, that he was admitted as a junior, not a freshman. Ben would use his time studying at Princeton and abroad amassing degrees in medicine and various sciences. Once Ben finished college and started his career as a physician, he would soon join the patriot fight. Rush served as Washington's Surgeon General, signed the Declaration of Independence and Constitution, and edited, titled, and published Thomas Paine's "Common Sense" (Lambert 444). Rush put his quill to virtually every page of the American Revolution.

After studying abroad in England, Benjamin began to analyze the royal crown and its relationship with the colonies. He would soon conclude that English corruption would destroy American virtue if independence were not achieved. He came to believe this because of some of the people who influenced him while studying in Edinburgh. One of these people, John Bostock, would instill in him the belief of republicanism, of which opinions he would hold and promote for the remainder of his life. Of the royal crown, Rush said: "Never before had I heard the authority of Kings called into question...I now exercised my reason upon the subject of Government" (Fried 46). He was also influenced by the radical republican Catherine Macaulay. She disdained hereditary monarchy and their titles, advocated for annual parliament, and proposed equal electoral districts. By 1769, Rush said he held an "Exalted opinion" of her.

By the time Rush had returned to Philadelphia, his educational and religious experiences abroad had developed an antipathy toward Great Britain. A fellow Philadelphian by the name of Benjamin Franklin saw Rush's promise in aiding the fight for independence. He took Rush under his wing and introduced him to many prominent politicians, such as future presidents John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. And so Rush's foray into politics began. His first real impact was a string of passionate letters that condemned the Stamp Act of 1765. He would say upon visiting the British House of Commons in 1766: "This...is the place where the infernal scheme for enslaving America was first broached. Here the usurping Commons first endeavored to rob the King of his supremacy over the Colonies and divide it among themselves. O! Cursed haunt of venality, bribery, and corruption!" (Lambert 447)

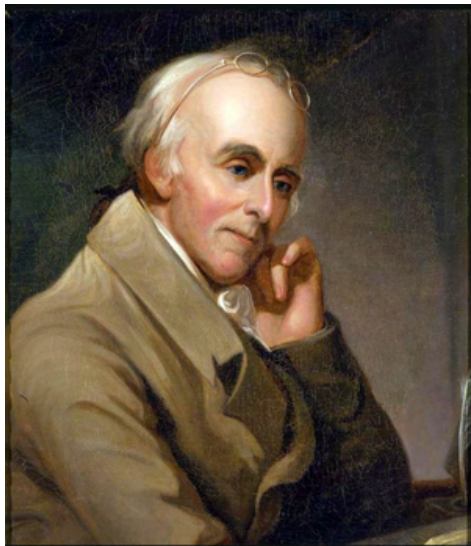
Knight Essay Winner (cont.)

It is clear that Rush believed that all of Parliament, not just the King, was to blame for the misfortunes of America. Rush promoted American Independence as early as 1768 through American enterprises. He was convinced that a china factory could be set up in Philadelphia, and the possibility of silk production in Pennsylvania. Because of this, Rush became the president of the United Company of Philadelphia for Promoting American Manufacturers when it was formed in 1775. In 1769, Rush became associated with men who believed in the same republican principles as he. This group included many prominent Republicans such as David Rittenhouse, Owen Biddle, and—after 1773—John and Samuel Adams, as well as John Hancock. These men would widely influence the way Americans thought throughout the 18th and 19th centuries.

One major way Rush influenced the American people was through his work as a propagandist. In his autobiography, he claimed that he took “an early but obscure” part in swaying public opinion toward independence. By 1773, Rush had written several pieces “In defense of Patriotism” that were published under the pen name “Hamden” in many Philadelphia newspapers (Butterfield 28). In writing under this pen name, Rush made people believe that there were more in favor of liberty than there actually were. Also in 1773, Rush had opposed the tea act in the Philadelphia press, arguing passionately that it must not enter the city: “Should it be landed...then farewell to American liberty...” (Butterfield 30).

His activities in opposition to the Tea Act did not stop with his pen however. He had been among the men who met at Colonel William Bradford’s house in October to plant resistance to the tea’s disembarkment. The most significant of Rush’s endeavors on behalf of Independence would be his role in publishing Common Sense. Rush met Paine in a Philadelphia bookstore, and told him that he had been preparing an essay espousing Independence, and learned that Paine’s beliefs were similar to his own. Rush had hesitated to publish the work in fear that it “would not be well received.” He proposed that Paine write the pamphlet, and he agreed. After finishing every chapter, Paine would come to Benjamin’s house and read it to him. Rush would make suggestions on how to make the essay better. When finished, Paine suggested the essay be titled Plain Truth. Rush suggested that the title be changed to Common Sense, and Paine liked this title more (Lambert 453). Rush found a patriot named Robert Bell who was willing to publish the treasonous act. Ben had played a prominent role in the movement for Independence because he anticipated the United States, free from British rule, could enter into an age in which there would be no end to its commerce, freedom, and happiness.

Throughout his life we see Benjamin Rush’s curiosity displayed. This questioning of the temporal world is why we call him a “philosopher.” But a better word may be an agitator. He picked apart the British crown in his “fiery” writings, speeches, and actions to persuade Americans to join the patriot fight, and no doubt infuriated his enemies with this gift of persuasion (qtd. in Runes and Altschuler). On the battlefield Rush helped heal his countrymen as Surgeon General, and even was captured for a brief period of time. He however escaped, and soon left the army. Later in life, after the revolution was won by the United States, Rush surveyed American life and culture. He would soon conclude that the revolution was not over, and there were many ailments left to fix in American society. Of these, he most vigorously protested slavery, and the idea that African Americans were inferior due to their skin color. He also fought for bettering education for women. Like all great men of history, Rush will be remembered because of his services to others. As he said, “I am resolved to devote my head, my heart, and my pen entirely to the service of America” (Lambert 454).



Portrait of Dr. Benjamin Rush, by Charles Wilson Peale, circa 1818.



Congratulations to Blake and his wonderful research regarding Dr. Benjamin Rush. We appreciate his effort in helping us remember all the men and women who contributed so much to the founding of our nation.

We wish him the best of luck as he moves forward to the national level of the Knight Essay Contest!



Above: Dickinson College, located in Carlisle, Pennsylvania and named for Patriot John Dickinson, was founded by Dr. Benjamin Rush.

Left: State Knight Essay Medal

Lafayette Trail

As the 50th anniversary of our nation neared, President James Monroe sought to find ways to instill the "Spirit of '76" in the next generation of Americans. With that in mind, he invited Gilbert du Motier, the Marquis de Lafayette, to come take a grand tour of the United States. Lafayette has recently retired from the French legislature and, at that point, was the last surviving major general of the American Revolution. General Lafayette graciously agreed and from August 16, 1824 to September 7, 1825, he visited each of the then 24 states within our union, surveying the development of the nation that he had helped form.

Over the course of those 14 months, General Lafayette, accompanied by his son George Washington Lafayette and social reformer Frances Wright, traveled over 6,000 miles. They traveled by horseback, stagecoach, barge and steamboat.

Lafayette received a hero's welcome at nearly every stop. He dined with men of prominence, greeted veterans of the war, and spoke with schoolchildren. Parades were held in his honor. And, to this day, many communities across our nation tout having been visited by General Lafayette nearly 200 years ago.

Among his stops were several in Kentucky, including Louisville, Frankfort, Great Crossing, Georgetown, Lexington and Maysville.

Frankfort held a ball in his honor. At Great Crossing, he visited the home of Vice-President Richard Mentor Johnson. And in Lexington he spoke to both Transylvania University and the Lexington Female Academy.

As a way to commemorate the 200th anniversary of this grand tour, and spark patriotism as we quickly approach our nation's Semiquincentennial, The Lafayette Trail was formed. The Trail aims to educate the public about the national significance of Lafayette's Tour and to promote a broader understanding of Lafayette's contributions to American independence and national coherence.



Marker at Liberty Hall in Frankfort.



Central Kentucky Color Guard Brigade including compatriots Mike Sullivan, Patrick Wesolosky, Tim Wisner, and Joe Clancy at Great Crossing Baptist Church.

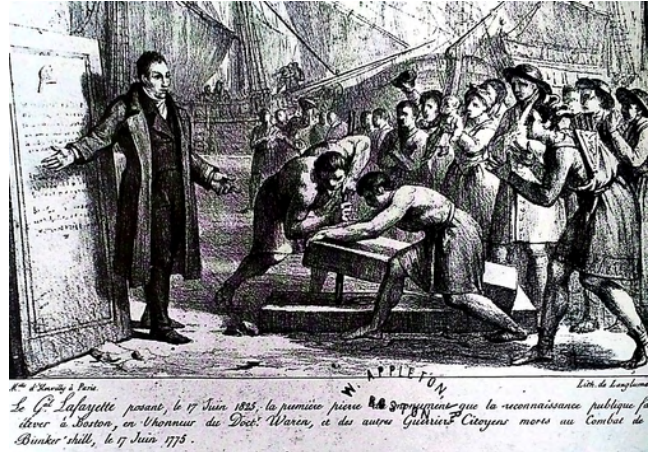
This past May, markers were erected at Liberty Hall in Frankfort and Great Crossing Baptist Church in Scott County. Good crowds were at both ceremonies, where members of our chapter participated in the formal programs.

Top Right: Compatriots Steve Gahafer, Mike Sullivan and Patrick Wesolosky with the Central Kentucky Brigade Color Guard.

Bottom Right: Mike Sullivan commands the Central Kentucky Brigade Color Guard as Lt. Governor Jacqueline Coleman looks on.



A Lafayette Cockade made by members of the Colonial Dames of Kentucky. The Cockades were presented to the Color Guard.



General Lafayette assisting the laying of the cornerstone at the Bunker Hill Monument in Boston on June 17, 1825.



Operation HERoes Honor Flight



Chapter members with General Lori Robinson, USAF (Ret.) and her husband Major General David Robinson. Gen. Robinson is the highest-ranking woman in U.S. military history.



Tim and Amelia Wisner, along with the UK Wildcat.



Compatriots Gahafer and Wesolosky with their friend Barb, a HERoes Honor Flight Veteran.



In 2005 by Jeff Miller and Earl Morse founded Honor Flight with a mission of honoring our nation's veterans by bringing them to Washington, DC to visit the memorials and monuments dedicated to their service and sacrifice. While originally focused on honoring our nation's World War II veterans, the Honor Flight Network now also honors those who served in the Korean War, Vietnam War, intermediary operations, and in special cases of terminal illness or injury, veterans from more recent service eras. Since its formation in 2005, the Honor Flight Network has taken more than 245,000 veterans to Washington D.C. Today, the Honor Flight Network is currently comprised of over 128 hubs throughout the country dedicated to carrying out the Honor Flight mission and the Network, as a whole, serves over 22,000 veterans each year.

According to the Defense Department, women now make up approximately 16% of the current veteran population, the fastest-growing demographic, and one which faces its own unique challenges. This inspired the vision to conduct a special mission for these unique heroes. On June 11, 130 female veterans flew to DC and returned to a crowd of over 1500 at Blue Grass Airport. Members of our chapter were a part of the crowd who expressed our nation's gratitude as these veterans were honored.



Vice President Steve Gahafer with Ashley Bruggeman, Operation HERoes Honor Flight Director, and Judy Sullivan.



Compatriots Skip Redmond and John Buckler with members of the Lexington Chapter DAR.



Mike and Judy Sullivan

Gwathmey Grave Marking Ceremony



Portrait of Owen Gwathmey

On June 2nd, members of the Lafayette Chapter participated in a grave marking ceremony for Owen Gwathmey. A native of King and Queen County, Virginia, Gwathmey served in the Virginia Militia, as well as provided supplies to the American military effort. In 1773 he married Ann Rogers Clark, sister to General George Rogers Clark. Shortly thereafter they relocated to Kentucky, settling in present day Jefferson County.

Owen ran a successful mercantile business, as well as served as an officer in the Bank of Kentucky. He and his wife had twelve children. He passed away on December 1, 1830 and is buried in Cave Hill Cemetery in Louisville.

His grave now bears markers from both the SAR and DAR, forever honoring his patriotic efforts.



John Doss of the General Isaac Shelby Chapter joins with Lafayette Chapter members Patrick Wesolosky, Steve Gahafer and Tim Wisner firing their flintlocks during military tribute.



Steve Gahafer and Chris Canine, Registrar of the Governor Isaac Shelby Chapter



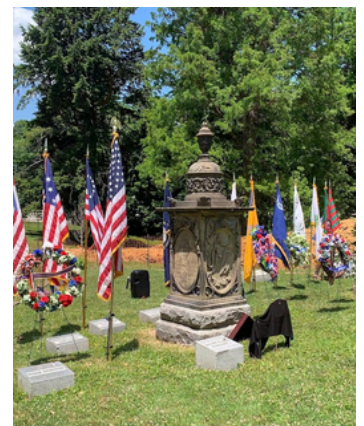
Tim Wisner escorting his wife, Amelia of the Lexington Chapter DAR, during the floral tribute.



Lafayette Compatriots William "Skip" Redmond and Tim Wisner.



The Rifle Detail



Patriot Owen Gwathmey's final resting place

"Honor to the soldier and sailor everywhere, who bravely bears his country's cause. Honor, also, to the citizen who cares for his brother in the field and serves, as he best can, the same cause." - Abraham Lincoln

Stories Behind the Stars

Reprinted Courier-Journal article from May 27, 2022.

How close World War II soldiers William Blaine and Albert Ross Jr. were in life is unknown, but they've been intertwined since their deaths in 1944. Though neither is from Kentucky, they share a headstone in Louisville's Zachary Taylor National Cemetery – their resting place selected based off its proximity to both of their hometowns, according to the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs' policy then.

Until recently, little was known about the men beyond the circumstances of their deaths. But thanks to Don Milne of Louisville and the hundreds of volunteers he's enlisted, the individual stories of each of the more than 400,000 Americans who died in the war will be attached to their graves online. So far, Milne and his volunteers have uncovered 16,000 such stories – which includes Blaine's, but not yet Ross' – as part of the Stories Behind the Stars project.

"I'm really appreciative of the sacrifices these people made," Milne said while walking near Ross and Blaine's grave days ahead of Memorial Day. "These people gave everything for this country." Pointing to the holiday, Milne wants each individual soldier's story to be told because, "The freedoms we have, like enjoying a BBQ this weekend, came at a cost."

Milne's initial goal when he started the Stories Behind the Stars project wasn't quite so lofty. He didn't plan to uncover the stories of all Americans who died in World War II – America's deadliest foreign conflict – he was just hoping to pass some time writing one mini-biography a day. A self-proclaimed history buff, the war's time period (1941-45) marked somewhat of a bittersweet spot for him – not too far back that information couldn't still be gathered but far enough that the research hadn't been comprehensively recorded.

He remembered hearing on the 75th anniversary of Pearl Harbor in 2016 that the real heroes were the people who didn't make it back. So he wanted to put more emphasis on their sacrifice.

Almost six years later, the stories of all the soldiers and sailors who died on D-Day and Pearl Harbor have been documented, an app to compile all of the stories has been created, and 20 volunteers have become directors in charge of getting their states' stories done. While the overall goal is to get through all of the dead's stories, Milne's current focus is getting through those buried at Arlington Cemetery in Virginia.

The app that holds all of the stories, called "Find a Grave," allows people to look up each soldiers' story using their name and date of death. Milne's hope is that with the technology, cemeteries can be explored more like a museum. He'd love to see teachers organize field trips for students, who can use their smart phones to learn more about those who didn't make it home.

The first and only state to complete the stories for all of their World War II dead is Utah – but Milne expects more to reach that achievement. It'd just take 2,000 volunteers to do one story per week to finish all of the more than 400,000 remaining names by the 80th anniversary of the end of the war in September 2025, Milne explained.

"Instead of watching 'Saving Private Ryan' for the third time, let's save someone's name," he often says.

Heather Ritts is one of those volunteers that has dedicated herself to telling the soldiers' stories. She's from the same small town in Pennsylvania as Blaine, who was a second lieutenant. She grew up miles from a memorial that bears his name and those of 57 others from the area who died in that war. Hearing about Milne's initiative couldn't have come along at a better time. "It was really a blessing that I found it because at the time, my son was just deployed and I was just kind of a nervous wreck," she said.

The research helped pass the time, and she felt she was making a contribution to the military. She decided she wanted to give the 58 men memorialized in the town square a story.



Don Milne at Arlington National Cemetery

(cont.)

Who was William Blaine?

According to Ritts' research, Blaine was 19 when he enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Force. About a year later he was promoted to second lieutenant, and less than a year after that he was killed during his fifth mission of the war. He was a co-pilot on that flight. He was one of three sons that Bessie Bowman Blane had and was awarded the Air Medal and Purple Heart after dying near Mostar, Yugoslavia, alongside Ross.



Gravesite of Blaine and Ross located at the Zachary Taylor National Cemetery in Louisville.

Little is known about Ross because his story has yet to be told through the project. Find a Grave shows Ross was from Indiana and died at age 28 as a second lieutenant. But without looking at Blaine's completed story, one wouldn't know that Ross was serving as the plane's pilot when they were attacked. The pair share a grave because at the time of their deaths, when military personnel were killed in close proximity and they could not be identified separately, their remains were interred together.

Their resting place is one of several shared graves in Zachary Taylor and hundreds across the country. Group burials were common in the war, particularly for crews of severely damaged planes, ships and tanks, according to the VA's National Cemetery Administration.

Ritts' initial plan was to tell Blaine's and the other locals' stories, but once she was finished with those her town's memorial took on a new meaning. "I look at the whole Memorial Point different now," she said. "It's more than just a place with a bunch of markers there. To me, there's people there now." Now, she's Pennsylvania's project director and in charge of onboarding new volunteers.

"I'm addicted — I have to stick with it until its done," Ritts said. Her hope is that more people will decide to contribute. "I am just in awe at how Don took something he wanted to do and made it become so big," she said. "It's impressive. The amount of work he puts into it is amazing. I think it's a great project and I would love to see other people take interest. It's a huge effort."

For more information about the project, visit www.storiesbehindthestars.org.

George Rogers Clark Wreath Laying Service

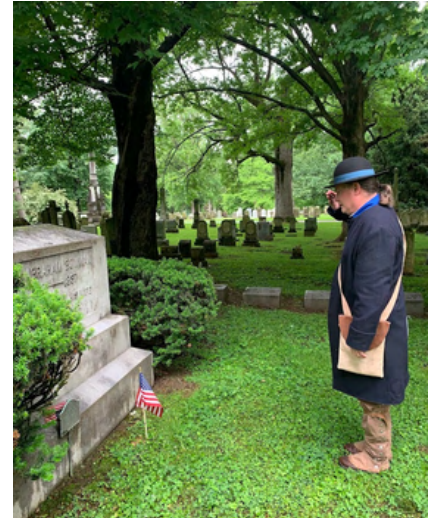
On May 28th, seven compatriots from Kentucky traveled to Vincennes, Indiana to participate in the annual George Rogers Clark Wreath Laying Service. General Clark, who first arrived in Kentucky in 1772, was the hero of the celebrated Illinois Campaign during the American Revolution.

Kentucky was represented by the Lafayette, Col. Daniel Boone, Col. Stephen Trigg, and Governor Isaac Shelby chapters. President-Elect Patrick Wesolosky presented a wreath from the Lafayette chapter.



Memorial Day Flags

On May 27th, President-Elect Patrick Wesolosky and Vice-President Steve Gahafer visited both the Lexington Cemetery and Versailles Cemetery. In total, they placed 25 American flags at gravesites. These flags helped draw attention to and honor the patriots buried at these cemeteries in advance of the Memorial Day weekend.



Zachary Taylor National Cemetery Service

The Lafayette Chapter was represented by President-Elect Patrick Wesolosky and Vice-President Steve Gahafer at the Memorial Day Service at the Zachary Taylor National Cemetery in Louisville.



Battle of Fort San Carlos Anniversary Service

The Battle of Fort San Carlos was the western most conflict during the American Revolution, taking place on May 26, 1780 in St. Louis, then a French settlement in Spanish territory. Emanuel Hesse, a former British militia commander led a force primarily of Indians and attacked the settlement. Fernando de Leyba, the Lieutenant Governor of Spanish Louisiana, led the local militia to fortify the town as best as they could and successfully withstood the attack.

On May 29, President-Elect Patrick Wesolosky and his wife, Marika, attended the anniversary ceremony held at Ste. Genevieve National Historical Park.



Boy Scouts Honor Bestowed on Brown



A native of Covington, Kentucky, Daniel Carter Beard grew up hearing stories about the exploits of such pioneers as Daniel Boone, Simon Kenton and others. It was these type of stories that inspired him to form the Boy Scouts of America, an organization who has always utilized the natural inclinations of boys to fulfill its mission of preparing young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes.

Now a historic organization in its own right, the Boy Scouts of America has developed character in young people for well over a century. From the very beginning, however, Uncle Dan Beard knew that the organization would have to rely on adult volunteers at every level.

These men and women, who dedicate their time and energy to fostering the next generation are to be commended.

As a way to show gratitude and honor those whose volunteer efforts are beyond compare, the Boy Scouts of America created three awards: Silver Buffalo (national level), Silver Antelope (territory level) and the Silver Beaver (council level).

Among this years honorees is our past chapter president, and President-Elect of the Kentucky Society, Tim Brown. Tim was chosen to receive the prestigious Silver Antelope award. He becomes one of only eleven from the Blue Grass Council to ever have received this award, and the first since Governor Paul Patton in 1999. Five of those eleven have served the highest office in the Commonwealth: Governors Weatherby, Breathitt, Ford, Carroll and Patton.

Tim first became a member of the Boy Scouts of America when he was eight years old, becoming a Cub Scout in 1967. While a student, he would go on to earn Eagle Scout status in 1976. He currently serves as the National Chair for Council Support and on the Boy Scouts of America Alumni Association National Committee, as well as as National Committee Task Force member for the National Scouting Museum.

Previously, Tim was awarded with the Silver Beaver Award, the District Award of Merit, the Council Alumnus of the Year, the Territories Alumnus of the Year, the William T. Hornaday Gold Badge, the NESAs Outstanding Eagle Scout Award, and the Order of the Arrow Distinguished Service Award.

Outside of his scouting activities, Tim is the past Deputy Director of the Kentucky Select Soccer League. He currently serves as Chairman of the Kentucky SAR Eagle Scout Committee, and as the Boy Scouts of America National Events Liaison on the SAR Eagle Scout Committee.

In his professional life, Tim has over thirty years of executive management experience in both the public and private sectors. He currently serves as Senior Environmental Scientist for the Kentucky Division of Forestry.

Tim and his wife Tami reside in Nicholasville and are the proud parents of Chelsea (Cooley) and Zachary, who earned Eagle Scout distinction as well. They are the proud grandparents of Rhett Walker, Riggs Carter and Collins Rae Cooley.

Congratulations to Tim Brown, our friend and compatriot, on this prestigious designation!



In Memoriam

The last surviving Medal of Honor recipient from World War II has passed on from this life at 98 years old. Marine veteran Hershel “Woody” Williams died June 29th at the Huntington, West Virginia Veterans Affairs hospital named after him, according to a statement from his foundation.

“Woody peacefully joined his beloved wife Ruby while surrounded by his family at the VA Medical Center which bears his name,” according to the statement “Woody’s family would like to express their sincere gratitude for all the love and support.”

Born in 1923 on a dairy farm in Quiet Dell, West Virginia, Williams was the youngest of 11 children. Initially disqualified for being too short, Williams enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1943. The demolition sergeant landed on Iwo Jima on Feb. 21, 1945, with 1st Battalion, 21st Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division.

Two days later, on Feb. 23, 1945, he famously destroyed enemy emplacements with a flamethrower, going forward alone into machinegun fire, covered only by four riflemen.

His citation states, “he fought desperately for 4 hours under terrific enemy small-arms fire and repeatedly returned to his own lines to prepare demolition charges and obtain serviced flamethrowers,” before wiping out one enemy position after another. On one occasion, he “daringly mounted a pillbox to insert the nozzle of his flamethrower through the air vent,” which killed all enemy occupants and silenced its gun.

Williams received the Medal of Honor from President Harry S. Truman at the White House in October 1945 for “conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty.”

He retired after serving 20 years in the Corps and reserves. Following World War II, he worked for the VA for 33 years as a veterans service representative. He had a special place in his heart for supporting Gold Star Families, an affinity which started at the beginning of World War II. While he was delivering Western Union telegrams containing the news of the loss of a loved one, he developed a deep understanding of the sacrifice of “those lost serving in the military for their country.” With his foundation, Williams established more than 100 Gold Star Families memorial monuments across the United States, with 72 more on the way.

In 2015, Williams was asked to speak at an SAR meeting in West Virginia. As a gift, the chapter presented him with information that he too had a patriot ancestor, Jacob Helsey, an infantryman who hailed from Shenandoah County, Virginia. Williams immediately sought to join the SAR as well.

We mourn the passing of such a hero who dedicated his life to our nation and those who fought to preserve it.



Mike and Judy Sullivan with Williams at Kentucky's memorial dedication ceremony.



Kentucky's Gold Star Families Memorial Monument, located on the Capitol grounds in Frankfort.



Williams, center, on being initiated into the SAR.



Lecture Series

Fort Boonesborough State Park is hosting a "Cool History on Hot Days" educational series each Saturday between July 9th and August 27th.

The talks will take place in one of the air-conditioned blockhouses.

Dates and topics for the month of July are:

- July 9 - The Historic Elk Antler
- July 16 - Revolutionary War Strategy and Tactics on the Frontier
- July 23 - Simon Girty, Loyalist
- July 30 - Blacksmithing

Recommended Reading

From celebrated historian John Ferling, the underexplored history of the second half of the Revolutionary War, when, after years of fighting, American independence often seemed beyond reach.

Winning Independence is the dramatic story of how and why Great Britain—so close to regaining several southern colonies and rendering the postwar United States a fatally weak nation ultimately failed to win the war. The book explores the decisions made by American commanders that ultimately led the French and American allies to clinch the pivotal victory at Yorktown that at long last secured American independence.

Winning Independence: The Decisive Years of the Revolutionary War, 1778-1781 is available at Joseph-Beth, Barnes & Noble or on Amazon.



Did you know?

Kentucky had more Revolutionary War soldiers serve as Governor than any other state which entered the union after the ratification of the U.S. Constitution.

In fact, of the thirteen original states, only three had more Revolutionary War veterans to serve as their chief executive. Those are North Carolina, Virginia and Maryland. And, unlike Kentucky, none of those three had four-year terms for governors during their first decades of existence.

Kentucky's governors who served were:

- Governor Isaac Shelby
- Governor James Garrard
- Governor Christopher Greenup
- Governor Charles Scott
- Governor George Madison
- Governor John Adair



From the Archives



"On behalf of the Lafayette Chapter, James Francis Miller, president, (now vice president general for the Central District, presented R.O.T.C. medals on April 30 and May 7 at Army and Air Force respective honor day reviews."

Source: The Sons of the American Revolution Magazine, Vol. LV, No. 1 (July, 1960)

James Francis Miller, an attorney and farmer from Versailles, served as the first president of the Lafayette Chapter, being elected to the position on March 25, 1960.

Miller would go on to serve as National Vice-President of the SAR.

A native of Pikeville, Kentucky, Miller was a graduate of the Pikeville Academy, Centre College and the University of Kentucky School of Law. He was an active member of St. Andrew's Orthodox Church in Lexington.

Husband of the late Vivian Coleman Miller, with whom he had three children, James Francis Miller passed away in 2004 at the age of 80.

Calendar of Events

July 1

Patriot Grave Tour & Flag Placement
1:00 PM
Lexington Cemetery
833 West Main Street
Lexington, Kentucky

July 4

Independence Day Parade
11:30 AM
Downtown Lexington
Participants to meet at Midland Avenue
Lexington, Kentucky

July 10-15

132nd SAR National Congress
Varied Times
Hyatt Regency Hotel
2 West Bay Street
Savannah, Georgia

August 20

Battle of Blue Licks Memorial Service
10:00 AM
Blue Licks Battlefield State Park
10299 Maysville Road
Carlisle, Kentucky

August 20

Kentucky Society Summer Meeting & Lunch
1:00 PM
Blue Licks Battlefield State Park
10299 Maysville Road
Carlisle, Kentucky

September 19

Lafayette Chapter Meeting
5:30 PM
Embassy Suites
1801 Newtown Pike
Lexington, Kentucky

September 24

Larkin Sandidge Grave Marking Ceremony
1:00 PM
455 Sierra Circle
Stanford, Kentucky

September 25

Joseph Penn Grave Marking Ceremony
1:00 PM
Bethlehem Pike Farm Cemetery
947 Bethlehem Road
Paris, Kentucky

September 30 - October 1

Fall Leadership Meeting
8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Brown Hotel
335 West Broadway
Louisville, Kentucky

October 15

Central District Meeting
Time TBA
Location TBA
Address TBA
Charleston, West Virginia

November 19

Kentucky Society Fall Meeting
9:30 AM
SAR Headquarters
809 West Main Street
Louisville, Kentucky

December 3

Lafayette Chapter Meeting
5:30 PM
Embassy Suites
1801 Newtown Pike
Lexington, Kentucky

132nd Annual
NSSAR Congress
July 9th -15th, 2022

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PHONE: 800-233-1234

Battle of Blue Licks
Memorial Ceremony

The Kentucky Society
Sons of the American Revolution
invites you to attend the Memorial Service for the
240th Anniversary of the Battle of Blue Licks

Saturday, 20 August, 2022 @ 10 a.m. EST
Blue Licks Battlefield State Park
10299 Maysville Road, Carlisle, KY
(Color Guard muster at 9:00 a.m.)

Join us in this National Color Guard
event by presenting a wreath,
carrying your state flag or
participating in the flintlock gun
salute.

Contact Scott Giltner - stgilt@earthlink.net to register.

Afterwards:
Join us in the park lodge for a lunch buffet and
the Kentucky State Society Summer Meeting