

M I N N E S O T A

# SAR Salute



THE MINNESOTA SOCIETY SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION NEWSLETTER • [www.sar.org/mnssar](http://www.sar.org/mnssar) • AUTUMN 2009



## Constitution Day Luncheon Report

Twenty-seven 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 on September 19, 2009 at Jax Cafe for the Annual Constitution Day Luncheon. The chefs, using a colonial-era theme, had created a special meal. The total attendance was fifty. COL Ronald McRoberts, Vice President of the MNSSAR presented the program of the day. He detailed the life and service of Stephen Taylor, the only known Revolutionary Soldier buried in Minnesota.

Earlier this year compatriots Jim Foster, Marvin Stonecipher and Ronald McRoberts visited Stephen Taylor's monument.

**INSIDE THE  
MNSSAR SALUTE...**

A Very Special Constitution Day  
Luncheon Held at Jax Cafe

Now & Then:  
Thomas Truxtun Morrison  
American Eagle:  
Major General Charles Lee  
Captured

Don't Forget to Pay Your  
2010 Dues

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Minnesota Society  
Sons of the American Revolution  
2700 East Minnehaha Parkway  
Minneapolis, MN 55406-3743



M I N N E S O T A

# SAR Salute



## A VERY SPECIAL CONSTITUTION DAY LUNCHEON

Minnesota Society SAR Secretary-Treasurer John Hallberg Jones called the assemblage to order at twelve o'clock noon and welcomed those in attendance. James Foster, MNSSAR and SR President, as a member of the SAR Color Guard, participated in the flag presentations. Vice-President COL Ronald McRoberts led the Pledge to the U.S. Flag and the Pledge to the SAR, and the MNSSAR Chaplain Rev. Richard Vork gave the invocation.

The chefs at Jax Cafe created a special menu using a colonial-era theme. Everyone was served a delicious asparagus and artichoke salad. Guests were given a choice of three menu dishes: New England boiled pot roast consisting of a generous portion of vegetables, potatoes and beef; Virginia Ham served with new potatoes and applesauce; and roast game hen – a whole bird stuffed with green beans. Pound cake served with fresh berries and whipped cream was a special treat for dessert.

Secretary-Treasurer Jones introduced Executive Chef Bob Foster and Sous Chef Jeff King who had prepared this special menu.

They were greeted with a large round of applause.

Compatriot Jones introduced several special guests, some of whom brought greetings: COL William Lees, Vice President General, North Central District NSSAR; Faye Vork, Vice President General NSDAR; Frances Stachour, Regent, Minnesota DAR; and Adrienne Morrison, Founder of the Lake Minnetonka Society CAR.

Secretary-Treasurer Jones presented new members with certificates and rosettes. Present were David Andrew Johnson and John David McCallum.

It was reported that Compatriots John H. Jones and Arthur Louis Finnell had been awarded the Liberty Medal at the recent NSSAR Congress. The MNSSAR will award an oak leaf cluster to Timothy Harris for his Patriot Medal, in recognition of his outstanding continued service to the society. He was unable to attend the Constitution Luncheon as he was on his honeymoon. It will be presented at the next meeting.

COL Ronald McRoberts, Vice President of the MNSSAR, presented the program of the day.

After a brief "infomercial" on the U.S. Forest Service describing their work, he detailed the life and service of Stephen Taylor, the only known Revolutionary Soldier buried in Minnesota.

Stephen Taylor served in the Berkshire Massachusetts Militia for 26 days in Capt. John Strong's Company, Col. John Brown's Regiment in September 1777. He served in the same militia for six months service in Brigadier General Paterson's Brigade in 1780. He was at Camp Totoway, NJ during the time of Benedict Arnold's treason at West Point. From 1781-1783 Stephen Taylor served as a private in the companies of Captain John Williams and Thomas Cushing in Col. Joseph Vose's First Massachusetts Regiment. He was attached to the French-American forces under the Marquis de Lafayette. He was present at the British surrender at Yorktown, VA.

After the Revolutionary War, Stephen Taylor moved to Ontario and then Allegany Counties New York. He moved to Winona County Minnesota in 1856. Mr. Taylor died in 1857. In 1865 his remains were moved to Woodlawn Cemetery in

Winona. His remains were again moved to its present location and a monument was installed in the same cemetery in 1933. The monument was not intended to depict Fort Ticonderoga. The monument, which was used by the New York company elsewhere, was intended to depict a colonial stockade with corner lookout towers.

The monument asserts that Mr. Taylor served at Ticonderoga with Ethan Allen and his Green Mountain Boys. The general current understanding is that he was not at Fort Ticonderoga at that time. COL McRoberts presented a history of Fort Ticonderoga and its role during the Revolutionary War.

Compatriot McRoberts presented a very detailed report on Stephen Taylor citing a great deal of research utilizing pension, census and military records. He reported on Stephen Taylor's lineage as well as his descendants.

All agreed that it was an outstanding program. President Foster presented COL McRoberts the SAR Certificate of Appreciation.



# NOW & THEN

Thomas Truxtun Morrison (Truck), a native of Pleasantville, New York is currently on the Board of Managers of the MNSSAR. He joined the Minnesota Society because of his interest in family history. Truck is also a member of the Colonial Order of New England, Order of Americans of Armorial Ancestry, Descendants of Colonial Clergy, Colonial and Antebellum Bench & Bar, S.R., Society of the War of 1812, Sons and Daughters of Antebellum Planters, Order of the Crown of Charlemagne, Baronial Order of Magna Charta and the Order of the Merovingian Dynasty.

Truck attended Dartmouth College, served in the U.S. Marine Corps and is a retired C.O.O. of ConAgra, Inc.

He met his wife Adrienne while skiing in Aspen, Colorado. They have a daughter, Mary Margaret (Mimi) and son, Thomas Truxtun Morrison, Jr., and five grandchildren.

Truck has three ancestors who served in the

American Revolution – Alexander Henderson, Philip Heffelfinger and most notably, his namesake, Thomas Truxtun.

Commodore Thomas Truxtun (1755-1822) embarked upon his seafaring career at age 12. By the age of 16, he was pressed into service in the Royal Navy. In his early twenties, during the American Revolution, he commanded privateer ships. He had risen to command of Andrew Caldwell, bringing large quantities of gunpowder into Philadelphia in 1775.

He signed on as a lieutenant onboard the *Congress*, the first privateer to be fitted out for service against Great Britain, and in 1776-77 participated in the capture of many prizes. Successively, he commanded *Independence*, *Commerce* and *St. James*.

At a dinner in Truxtun's honor, George Washington declared his services had been worth those of a regiment. He was thirty years old when he brought Benjamin Franklin home from his long wartime service in

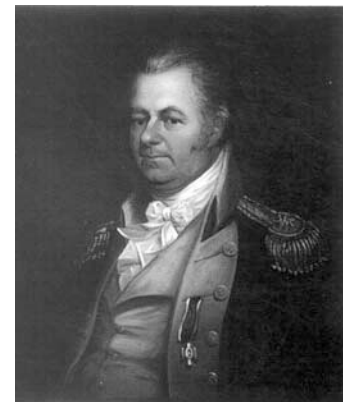
France.

For the next eight years he was a China hand, pioneering in the newly established trade to that distant corner of the world.

When the United States Navy was organized, he was selected as one of its first six captains on June 4, 1798. He was assigned command of the *Constellation*, one of the new frigates, and he put to sea immediately to prosecute the undeclared naval war with revolutionary France.

On February 9, 1799, Truxtun scored the first of his two most famous victories. After an hour's fight, *Constellation* battered the French warship *L'Insurgente* into submission in one of the most illustrious battles of the Quasi-War with France.

He has often been called the Father of the Navy, because of the heritage he bestowed upon it.



*“Good discipline is considered by all who know anything of service as the vital part of a ship at war.”*

– Captain Thomas Truxtun

*Source: Truxtun of the Constellation, by Eugene S. Ferguson, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD.*

[www.truxtun.navy.mil/default.aspx](http://www.truxtun.navy.mil/default.aspx)

## NEXT MEETING

The Minnesota Society's 121st Annual General Meeting will be held at Jax Cafe at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, January 9, 2010. Please watch for details to be mailed to you.

# AMERICAN EAGLE

News of Yesterday Reported Today

Saturday, December 14, 1776



## MAJOR GENERAL CHARLES LEE CAPTURED!

British capture America's second ranking general.

Brunswick, New Jersey. — Yesterday, just after ten a.m. a swarm of British cavalry appeared suddenly at Mrs. White's Tavern at Basking Ridge, New Jersey. They were a scouting party of twenty-five horsemen commanded by Colonel William Harcourt, who had once served under Lee in Portugal. They had been sent out from Trenton by General Lord Cornwallis to gather intelligence on Lee's "motions and situation."

On Thursday with a body-guard of four officers and fifteen men, General Lee rode to Basking Ridge, where an Irish widow named White kept a tavern. Mrs. White also had other women boarding at her establishment; during a long night, one of Lee's officers was awakened by female screaming.

The next morning, Friday the thirteenth, General Lee was late coming down for breakfast. In an old blue coat and greasy leather breeches, he sat at the table writing a letter to General Horatio Gates, who he knew shared his unfavorable opinion of George Washington.

"Entre nous, a certain great man is damnable difficult," Lee wrote, "He has thrown me into a situation where I may have my choice of difficulties. In short, unless something which I do not expect turns up, we are lost."

He was finishing his letter with "Adieu, my dear friend! God bless you!" when an aide rose from the breakfast table

and told Lee he'd better look out the window.

During the night Lee spent at Mrs. White's tavern, Lieutenant Banastre Tarleton of the British Sixteenth Regiment of Light Dragoons, and thirty of the dragoons had been reconnoitering nearby for intelligence about Lee. The next morning they captured an American soldier, and two miles farther on, some townspeople volunteered that General Lee was in the vicinity. Tarleton then picked up two of Lee's advance sentries. To save themselves, they told about Mrs. White's tavern and the general's guard, which wasn't large. Next the dragoons captured an American messenger carrying letters from Lee to John Sullivan, who had recently been exchanged for a British officer and had joined Lee's troops. The messenger had pointed out the tavern itself.

Reining up in front, Tarleton could see two American sentries standing at the Tavern door. Shouting and waving their sabers, Tarleton and six dragoons rode at full speed up to the Americans, who panicked, dropped their weapons and ran off. Tarleton ordered his men to fire through every window and cut up the American troops inside. At that, an old woman appeared in the doorway and dropped to her knees. Begging for her life, she told Tarleton that General Lee was still there.

It was then that the aide had looked out the window and seen the rest of Tarleton's dra-

goons in their green uniforms charging down at the house from a nearby orchard.

"Here sir," he told General Lee, "are the British cavalry!"

Lee asked, "Where?" He quickly signed his name at the bottom of his letter to Gates.

"Around the house."

Tarleton and the dragoons circled the inn and opened fire, hitting several of the guards. Lee watched in shock as a British soldier raised his saber and hacked through the arm of a sentry.

Tarleton shouted from outside that he knew General Lee was in the house. If he surrendered, he and his attendants would be safe. But if he didn't obey immediately, the tavern would be burned and every person in it, without exception, put to the sword.

Inside, Charles Lee couldn't believe that he had been captured. "For God's sake," he cried. "What shall I do?"

Mrs. White hustled him upstairs and tried to hide him in a nook between the chimney and the fireplace. But the space was small and Lee couldn't squeeze into it.

They heard Tarleton give orders to set the house on fire. Still Lee hesitated, pacing the chamber as he tried to think of an escape. At last he saw he had no chance and sent down word that he would surrender.

Lee's aid-de-camp, William Bradford, went to the front door. When he opened it, there was a fresh volley of shots. Bradford leaped back and shouted that his general was coming out. Charles Lee stepped forward and surrendered his sword. He said he trusted he would be treated like a gentleman. One of the dragoons agreed and ordered

Lee to mount his horse. The British were far from their lines and eager to get their prize to headquarters. Lee asked for his hat and coat, and Captain Bradford went for them. Once inside, she snatched a servant's shirt, and substituted it for his uniform jacket. The excited British soldiers had eyes only for General Lee and didn't notice the servant who handed over the general's coat. As Lee was being led away, Captain Bradford slipped back inside. James Wilkinson, an aide to Horatio Gates, who had been waiting to return with Lee's answer, escaped to a room that the British did not search, taking with him two pistols and the letter.

Tarleton's men rode rapidly for thirteen miles until they forded a river and considered themselves safe from American pursuit. Tarleton thought the entire affair seemed like a miracle. He and his men had taken prisoner America's most distinguished general and Britain's foremost traitor. Riding almost without stop, they covered the remaining sixty miles and turned Lee over to Lord Cornwallis. That night there was wild celebrating in the British camp. Military bands played until dawn, and officers toasted King George until they couldn't raise their glasses. They fed so much alcohol to General Lee's horse that it got as drunk as they did.

*Source: 1776, by David McCullough, Simon and Schuster, 2005.*

*Washington's Crossing, by David Hackett Fischer, Oxford University Press, Inc.*

*Patriots, by A.J. Langguth, Simon and Schuster, 1988*