

President General's George Washington Birthday Message

February 21, 2010

First in War,

First in Peace, and

First in the Hearts of his Countrymen.

But George Washington is no longer first in our nation's history books. Lamentably, he is not even included in many of today's American history texts.

In Texas, and in many other states where book publishers sell history text books, American History starts with the period of Reconstruction following the Civil War. Liberal educators who now control the content of history books have chosen to focus on the "Social Revolution" rather than the "American Revolution". There is a sinister undercurrent among educators to discredit George Washington. PG McClanahan reported to me last week that his grandson came in from school telling him that his history teacher in Nashville, TN had disparaged our nation's first President because he was a slave owner.

I have in my library a copy of the American History text book used in my school district. There is very little substance relating to the American Revolutionary War or the origins of our US Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The book contains 10 brief biographies – presumably of the 10 most important figures in American History. Although George Washington was included, the others were Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Cesar Chavez, three former slaves, and other civil rights leaders. There was no mention of John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, John Marshall or the other icons to whom we owe our freedom and the rights acquired under our Constitution and Bill of Rights.

Two weeks ago I had the privilege of testifying before the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the arm of the Texas State Legislature that determines text book content. I testified about what should be included in our text books. I argued that our children cannot begin to understand their rights and duties as citizens until they know the hardships encountered by our founding fathers, and the events leading to this conflict. The TEA meets again next month. At that hearing, it will determine the content of our history books. At least we received a commitment from them to include information about General Bernardo Galvez, for whom Galveston, TX is named, which will include at least some reference to the American Revolutionary War.

What can you, as a SAR member do to correct this heinous omission? There are two avenues open to you:

You can participate in SAR activities in your area to celebrate George Washington's birthday. Yesterday, some 40 SAR members from Virginia, Florida, California and Texas marched in the largest George Washington birthday celebration in the world in Laredo, TX. Although some of the ladies, clad in colonial attire, marched with the color guard, tossing Mardi Gras type necklaces to the crowd, others

rode on a float holding period flags. A second float contained a life size Liberty Bell and two large stones with the Ten Commandments carved thereon. Last year, it was reported by the press that 425,000 people lined streets along the 3 ½ mile parade route, so the numbers this year were probably about the same. In Southern California today, there will be the largest Massing of the Colors in the US, with a fly over by military jets. In Memphis, the SAR and DAR had a joint George Washington dinner last night. In almost every city and town across this nation, there was or will be a public event in which you and your family can participate to show your support for the founder of our nation.

The second thing you can do is to become politically proactive. Many avenues are open to you. You can write to your state legislators and express your opinion about what should be in American History text books in your area. Letters to the editor of your newspaper can raise this issue in your community. Visit your school board meetings and express your opinion, or run for a seat on your local school board. When your state education agency meets at your state capital, ask to be placed on the agenda to speak and take a group of supporters with you. Seek appointment to your state's text book committee. If you have the time and resources, consider running for a seat in your legislature. Try to get invited to speak to your local Chamber of Commerce, PTA, Rotary, Kiwanis, Optimist, Lions Club or other civic groups. Talk about this travesty to your family and friends. Be vocal!

Bill Allerton, current president of LASSAR, and also president of the SAR Foundation, is heading up a committee to provide Revolutionary War information, including portraits of George Washington, to each SAR Chapter. We are actively seeking seed money to manufacture patriotic kiosks. Under this new program, each chapter would start putting kiosks with this information into the schools in its locality. After the visit is over, each school would be given the opportunity to purchase framed posters for display in classrooms of Washington, Signing of the Declaration of Independence, Washington Crossing the Delaware, US Constitution, Bill of Rights, etc. If you have no interest in becoming proactive, a third way you can help is by making a donation to the Center for the Advancement of American History (CAAH).

As of Dec. 31, 2009, our membership was almost 29,000. Certainly, an organization as large as ours should be able to shape public opinion – if each of us joins in the cause. Hopefully, our first US President can once again be first in the hearts of his countrymen. This can happen – with your support!

You can start by forwarding this message to SAR members in your state, and to your friends, co-workers, and neighbors. Only through a public awakening can we expect positive results.

God bless you,

God bless the United States, and

God bless the SAR

Ed Butler, President General 2009-2010

