

Annual Meeting: Enclosed you will find the announcement for our Annual Meeting on February 18th at the Varnum Memorial Armory. Hopefully, you will attend this important meeting and all others that occur during the coming year.

Presidents Message:

Greetings to all members of the RISSAR and Best Wishes for a great 2012. I want to thank all of the members who have provided assistance to my ascension to the Acting Presidency. 2011 was a challenging year but I sincerely believe we have met the challenges and persevered. I would like to thank Past President John C. Eastman for his advice and counsel in months past and hope to continue the works he has started. Our current slate of officers have had a beneficial effect on my taking over and made the transition easy and painless. I especially wish to thank John W. Adams, Carlen Booth, Ron Barnes, and Warren Kaye for their help.

Chief among the accomplishments of this Society for 2011 is the compilation and publishing of the Regimental Book 1st RI Regiment for 1781 &c. There is a very nice article elsewhere in this letter so I won't repeat it here. Suffice to say that once again, Past State President Bruce C. MacGunnigle has provided a source of pride and respect for the RISSAR and I thank him. Kudos' also to John Eastman for his shepherding the book along the way.

For 2012, as I assume the full duties of President, I have a couple of projects in mind and we have gotten off to a good start with the main one. Because of the work done by Compatriot MacGunnigle, we have an opportunity to work with the RI Historical Society in their plan to celebrate "Rhode Island In War". I think this will be a stellar moment in our history if we can work together to showcase RI and how it has led the way in defending our country. More on this as it develops.

I would also like to move forward in developing a working relationship with Narragansett Council, BSA for the Eagle Scout Scholarship Program. While the leadership of the Council is somewhat in disarray due to the untimely death of the Chief Scout, I am hopeful that we can work with his replacement to insure RI scouts have an opportunity to compete for this scholarship.

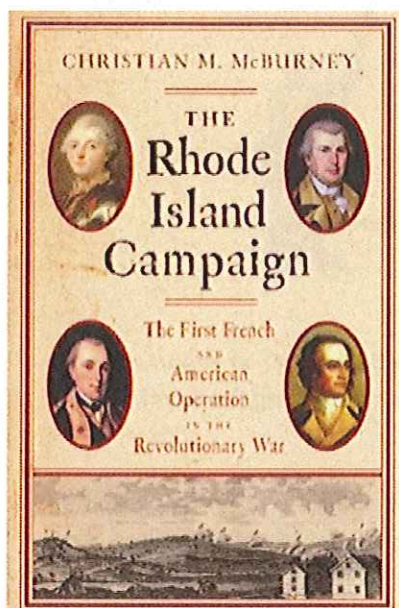
It would please me for the RISSAR to be instrumental in providing an SAR marker of some sort for the headstone of John Peck Rathbun's wife. Capt Rathbun is buried in an unmarked grave in the former naval prison yard in Plymouth, England and as his spouse's headstone proudly proclaims her to be his wife; we should also acknowledge his service with a marker on these shores.

And lastly, with an eye towards the Regimental Book of the 1st RI, I think it is appropriate to continue Compatriot Eastman's quest for diversity. Perhaps, in conjunction with the annual celebration of the Battle of RI by the Newport County Chapter of the NAACP, we could uncover a candidate, or candidates, for membership from the minority community.

As I wrap up my first message to the Society, I would like to again thank all who have helped me as I assume the leadership of a fine and dedicated group of men. I hope I prove worthy of your trust.

Sincerely yours,

John "JC" Collins



On the book shelves

It is a detailed history of the French and American joint operation in 1778 to try to capture Newport when it was occupied by a British army and ends with the most complete and accurate description of the Battle of Rhode Island. At the time, the eyes of the Western world were on Rhode Island, like no other time in its history. This is the first major book on this topic in more than 100 years. Reviewer Dennis Conrad, editor of the *Naval Documents of the American Revolution* and *Papers of General Nathaniel Greene*, wrote that the author, Christian M. McBurney, provides "a fresh, nuanced, and compelling reinterpretation of the United States' first joint operation. Moreover, he does it with readable style. This work will be the standard for years to come."

On March 12th Christian M. McBurney will be speaking on the Rhode Island Campaign at the Varnum Memorial Armory.

Contact John W. Adams for more details, or reservations.

Email: jwadams148@aol.com

Phone: 401-886-9078

Your State Registrar Carlen Booth reports the following:

Gregory Glenn King, Murfreesboro, TN, admitted 2 December 2011, national number 181642, state number 1761, Greg is descended from Benjamin Barber, Richmond, RI and served as a private, Rhode Island.

Regarding 1st Rhode Island Regiment

Renowned sculptor Jay Warren has been selected to commemorate The Battle of Pine's Bridge.

On May 14, 1781, just after sunrise there was a surprise attack on the first Rhode Island Regiment headquartered at the Davenport House in Croton Heights. This regiment comprised of African American, Native American and European American soldiers under the command of Colonel Christopher Greene. Colonel Christopher Greene was killed and buried at the site of the battle as a result of the surprise attack.

To learn more or participate in the fundraising you can contact:

The Yorktown Historical Society

P.O. Box 355

Yorktown Heights, N.Y. 10598

Or call 914-218-7005

The Nathanael Greene Homestead by Thomas E. Greene, President 1988-2012

In 1741, Nathanael Greene Sr. built a forge at Coventry RI and its property maintained over 100 families in a village they named Greenville. When Nathanael Jr. (born 1742) reached adult age, he and his five brothers established a larger forge in Coventry on the southwest branch of the Pawtuxet River near the Warwick town line in an area now known as Anthony.

In 1770, Nathanael Jr. built a 12 room colonial house on the hill above the forge. On July 20, 1774, he married Katharine Littlefield of Block Island. With the onset of the Revolutionary War, Nathanael answered the call and was off to war. By 1776 Nathanael and Caty had left their Coventry residence to the care of his brother Jacob. From that time it was Jacob and his descendants who lived in the house. His son Jacob Varnum Greene was the next to own the house after Jacob died in 1808. Jacob V. died in 1815 and he was succeeded by his daughter Elizabeth Margaret Greene who died in 1899. Throughout her lifetime, she was married three times; all of her husband's predeceasing her.

When Elizabeth died, she willed the property to her daughter, Eliza (Inman) Williams and Harris Inman. Both were children from her first marriage to Harris Inman (who died in 1835). Eliza and Harris sold the property in 1915 to Alfred Turcotte who in turn in 1917 sold the property to Adelard Lorenger. Mr. Lorenger rented the house to mill workers. The

cemetery on the property is occupied by the Greene family members from Jacob through Elizabeth Margaret but not General Nathanael or his wife Caty, both of whom were buried in Georgia.

On May 4, 1919, the purchase of the homestead was first proposed by Herbert M. Clarke at a meeting of the Kent Co. Chapter, R.I.S.S.A.R. Members in 1919 were observing the property fast getting out of repair and they wanted to save it as a memorial to General Nathanael Greene. The purchase of the property occurred on June 30, 1919 and the first group of elected officers were: President-Herbert M. Clarke, First V.P.-Charles J. Davol, Second V.P.-Howard V. Allen, Treasurer-Frank B. Smith and Secretary Elisha W. Bucklin. The object of the Nathanael Greene Homestead Association as stated by the founders is to perpetuate the memory of General Greene and to provide suitable repairs and gather articles connected with the Revolutionary War period and especially such as are connected in any way with General Greene and the Greene family. This goal has been perpetuated to the present day.



Signing day-June 30, 1919: Left to right are Dr. Frank B. Smith, Henry Greene Jackson, Adelard Loranger(owner), Dr. Ben Franklin Tefft & Herbert M. Clarke

The Homestead opened as a museum in 1922 under the care of a series of caretakers (10 over the years) whose responsibility it has been to give tours of the homestead and property. In the beginning, the caretakers either lived upstairs in the homestead or lived off site (this is uncertain). In 1935, a caretakers cottage was built which has been used for that purpose ever since. It has always been a financial challenge to maintain the property and it has depended on various sources of income. In August of this past season, it became necessary to discharge our caretakers. This resulted in a loss of revenue and some additional expenses caused by the caretaker. It is going to be difficult to get through this winter and we are counting on the R.I.S.S.A.R. to be especially generous this year.

Our presidents have always been members of the R.I.S.S.A.R. and the first four were R.I.S.S.A.R. presidents of the State organization.

Herbert M. Clarke(1919-1925), S.A.R. Pres. 1920-1921
Henry Greene Jackson(1925-1933), S.A.R. Pres. 1931-1933
Dr. Benjamin F. Tefft(1933-1937), S.A.R. Pres. 1937-1938
George C. Allen(1971-1977), Pres. 1970-1971
Robert E. Remington(1977-1978)
Robert B. Jones(1978-1988)
Thomas E. Greene(1988-2012)

Current members of RISSAR that serve as Trustees to the Nathanael Greene Homestead include: Bruce MacGunnigle, Jonathan Farnum, Robert Allen Greene, Thomas E. Greene, John W. Adams and David Procaccini

Did you know?

Burning a Yule log is probably the oldest Christmas tradition there is. It started even before the first Christmas celebration. Initially, burning a Yule log was a Pagan celebration of the winter solstice. During colonial times, on or about Christmas Eve, an enormous log of freshly cut wood was brought into a home or large hall. In England, it was custom to burn the log for the twelve days of Christmas. Songs were sung and stories told. Children danced. Offerings of food and wine and decorations were placed upon it. Personal faults, mistakes and bad choices were burned in the flame so everyone's New Year would start with a clean slate. The log was never allowed to burn completely, a bit was kept in the house to start next year's log. The log brought good luck. Any pieces that were kept protected a house from fire, or lightning, or hail. Ashes of the log would be placed in wells to keep the water good. Ashes were also placed at the roots of fruit trees and vines to help them bear a good harvest. Some thought the ashes had a medicinal benefit. The log also predicted bad luck. If the fire went out before the night was through, tragedy would strike the home in the coming year.



Veterans Day ceremony 2011

RI Society publishes Regimental Book for the First RI Regiment

The Rhode Island Society of the Sons of the American Revolution has published the *Regimental Book First Rhode Island Regiment for 1781 &c* by Bruce C. MacGunnigle (a 40 year RISSAR member, and state president 2008-10), with an introduction by Cherry Fletcher Bamberg, FASG.

This careful transcription of the original manuscript at R.I. State Archives provides rich material for the study of the First Rhode Island Regiment and the men in it. Enlistment records for over 500 soldiers allow the reader a glimpse of height, hair color, age, and occupation, as well as details of birth place and enlistment. This regiment, sometimes called the Black Regiment, is well known for its diversity, and these records are particularly revealing. In addition to the core of Rhode Islanders we find a Spanish-born fan maker, a printer's assistant born in Africa, men from other colonies, and — more unexpectedly — soldiers from across Europe and the Caribbean. We find tiny soldiers (4 ft. 9 in.) and ones over six feet tall, teenage boys and men in their sixties. The appendix offers tables of information derived from the enlistment records.

Also included in the book are a register of "casualties" (injury, death, desertion, promotion, and transfer), honorary badges of distinction, and furlough details. Records go far beyond the year 1781 mentioned on the title. Introductory material, including a detailed chronology, places the book in the context of the Revolutionary War, and each section is introduced with an explanatory paragraph. A meticulous index makes it possible for the reader to find records of each individual quickly.

Regimental Book First Rhode Island Regiment for 1781 &c. by Bruce C. MacGunnigle, with introduction by Cherry Fletcher Bamberg, FASG (East Greenwich R.I.: Rhode Island Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, 2011), 156 + xx pages, hard cover, library binding, illustrated, appendix, index of names. ISBN 978-0-615-49315-2.

See www.rhodeislandsar.org for full details.

ORDER FORM

Regimental Book Rhode Island Regiment for 1781 &c.

Number

_____ \$20.00 RISSAR MEMBER
_____ \$1.40 sales tax (R.I. residents)

_____ \$25.00 NON-MEMBER
_____ \$1.75 sales tax (R.I. residents)

_____ \$3.50 S & H first book, \$1 each additional
_____ TOTAL ENCLOSED.

Return order form with your check, payable to RISSAR, to:

RISSAR, 202 Kent Dr. East Greenwich, RI 02818

Order date: _____

Ship to: Name _____

Address _____, City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Upcoming SAR events:

RISSAR Annual Meeting – Saturday, February 18

RISSAR Board of Managers – Saturday, April 7

NEDC – Saturday, April 14 (Concord, MA)

RISSAR/RIDAR Flag Day Luncheon – Sunday, June 10

RISSAR Board of Managers – Saturday, July 7

RISSAR Fall Luncheon – Monday, September 10 (Cooke House)

RISSAR Board of Managers – Saturday, October 6

RISSAR/OFPA/Dar Veteran's Day memorial – TBD

RISSAR Veteran's Day Luncheon – TBD

RISSAR Christmas Luncheon – Friday, December 7

RISSAR JPR memorial CPT Thomas Cole – Saturday, December 8

RISSAR Board of Managers – Saturday, January 5 2013

