



The Independent Man

NEWSLETTER OF THE RHODE ISLAND SOCIETY OF
THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION
131 SPENCER WOODS DR, EAST GREENWICH RI 02818



Speech by John T. Duchesneau, President of the Rhode Island Society of the Sons of the American Revolution – 126th Annual Meeting - February 20, 2016

Compatriots and Guests,

I am honored by my election as President of the Rhode Island Society of the Sons of the American Revolution for the next year. I joined RISSAR eight years ago and I had no expectation that I would rise so quickly in the organization. I will endeavor to ensure that the Society grows and prospers under my leadership.

Before I go any further, I would like say that RISSAR is one of the best run organizations which I belong to. We owe that to the efforts of the Board of Managers – a group of outstanding gentlemen. Every one of them plays a valuable role in making Rhode Island SAR what it is today. I would like to recognize outgoing President John Adams and Secretary Ronald Barnes in particular. I would not be where I am today without their support and faith in me.

I would also like to acknowledge the past presidents of the Society who are here today – please rise when you name is called – Robert Allen Greene, Eugene Clause, Robert Midwood, Bruce McGunnagle, John Eastman, John Collins and, of course, John Adams.

As I have my hands full with a full time job and several other commitments, I won't be able to undertake a major project during my term of office. I do intend, however, to start the process of preparing the Society for the upcoming 250th anniversary of the American Revolution. (I will hereafter refer to this event as "AR250").

At first glance, it seems unnecessary to think about an event roughly ten years away. On the other hand, I know that it is far better to prepare for something too soon than to start preparations too late. Additionally, AR250 is closer than you think – the 250th anniversary of the battles of Lexington, Concord and Bunker hill is only 9 years away, the Boston Tea Party seven years away, the burning of the Gaspee only 6 years away, the Boston Massacre only 4 years away and the little known, but highly significant, burning of the customs ship HMS *Liberty* in nearby Newport only four years away. What, specifically, do I wish the Society to do? Over the next year or two, not much except to think and talk about how we (both individually and collectively) should prepare for the 250th of the American Revolution.

Questions we should be asking ourselves should include the following –

1. How can the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution benefit the Rhode Island Society of the Sons of the American Revolution.
2. What events should we, as a Society, develop related to AR250?
3. How can we work with other organizations (ie. DAR, SR, CAR and the Historic Military Commands) to increase public awareness of AR250?
4. Are there historic buildings or locations in Rhode Island which are little known which need to have more publicity and recognition?
5. Are there graves of Patriots of the Revolution which need restoration or replacement?
6. How can we increase our membership to a total of 250 by July 4th, 2026?

I do not expect the RISAR to take the lead on every major event related to AR250. I do, however, want the Society to play some kind of role in each event, however minor. This is why I want us to be "thinking and talking" - this is low cost, low risk and will, eventually, lead to some good ideas. I believe that AR250 will be the best opportunity for the SAR to showcase itself both to prospective members and to the community as a whole. This will, hopefully, lead to growth both in membership and finances and keep the Society going for generations to come.

Before I close, I would like to recite an abridged version of the inscription on the monument on Lexington Green which was erected in 1799 and may be the oldest monument to the Revolution in the nation -

Sacred to Liberty & the Rights of mankind!!! The Freedom & Independence of America, Sealed and defended with the blood of her sons.

This Monument is erected by the inhabitants of Lexington, to the memory of their fellow citizens, who fell on this field, the first victims to the sword of British tyranny & oppression, on the morning of the ever memorable nineteenth of April, 1775.

The Die was cast!!! The Blood of these Martyr's, in the cause of God & their Country, was the cement of the Union of these States, then colonies, & gave the spring to the spirit, firmness, and resolution of their fellow citizens. They rose as one man, to revenge their brethren's blood and at the point of the sword to assert & defend their native Rights. They nobly dar'd to be free!! The contest was long, bloody & affecting. Righteous Heaven approved the solemn appeal; Victory crowned their arms; and The Peace, Liberty & Independence of the United States of America, was their glorious reward.

Those few words embody the reason why the Sons of the American Revolution, and similar societies, exist – to remind the citizens of the present day of the sacrifices of the patriots of the American Revolution. By learning from the past we can better serve in the present and prepare for the future.

The line in the inscription which makes the greatest impression on me is “**They Nobly Dared to be Free!!**” Today, all Americans have freedom as a birthright. Relatively few people in history have been free from birth. Most have been born the subjects of either a monarchy or an autocracy.

The central concept of the founding fathers that a government should govern with the consent of the governed is still a radical idea in most of the world. Although our country sometimes falls short of its ideas, we, its citizens, still have the privilege and right of addressing our grievances with our governing officials. I would encourage all of you to appreciate how fortunate you are to be Americans and exercise the rights our ancestors fought and died for.

God Bless all of you, the Rhode Island Society of the Sons of the American Revolution and the United States of America.

126th Annual Meeting:

The 126th Annual Meeting of the society was held on February, 20 at the 1149 Restaurant. We had a great turnout for the meeting and luncheon that followed. Below are some photos from the meeting.



President John Adams presented Bob Butler with the Distinguished Service Award for his work on numerous historic cemetery projects and as Treasurer. John also presented the DAR Service to SAR medal to Charlene Butler for her hard work alongside Bob.



President Adams presented Registrar Carlen Booth with a token of appreciation for his service as Registrar.



New members Glenn Russell and Anthony Maietta were sworn in and presented with their membership certificates, rosettes and 125th Anniversary Membership Manuals.

Elections were held with the following results:

President	John T. Duchesneau
First Vice President	Daniel S. Harrop, III
Second Vice President	William M. Weaver
Secretary	Ronald W. Barnes
Treasurer	Robert S. Butler
Registrar	Carlen P. Booth
Historian	Thomas E. Greene
Chaplain	David B. Butler
Surgeon	Daniel S. Harrop, III
Genealogist	David M. Procaccini
Ensign	Kevin P. England

Members of the Board of Managers

Living Past Presidents of the Society, and

<u>Term Ending 2017</u>	<u>Term Ending 2018</u>	<u>Term Ending 2019</u>
Philip D. Rowell	Henry A. L. Brown	Robert B. Baxter
William W. Taylor, Jr.	Harry J. Curran	Ralph C. Weiss
Ronald C. Hillegass	Jonathan K. Farnum	Mark W. Gee

National Trustees from Rhode Island

Trustee	Sidney Clifford, Jr.
Alternate Trustee	Eugene S. Clauss

Representatives of the Society as Trustees to the General Nathanael Greene Homestead Association

until February 2017	Jonathan K. Farnum
until February 2018	Daniel S. Harrop, III M.D.
until February 2019	Thomas E. Greene



2016 Officers of the Society



Outgoing President John Adams passes the gavel to incoming President John Duchesneau.

DAR State Regent Barbara Watrous accepts 40 year membership certificates for her father and brother, Everett D. Watrous, Jr. and Everett D. Watrous, III.





Peter Sarazin presents Ken Postle with the Bronze Good Citizenship Award for his work in restoration and rehabilitation of historic cemeteries in the North Providence and surrounding area.



Karen Weiser accepts a scholarship award for her son Andrew Jeffrey Weiser from Bob Baxter for winning the Eagle Scout Essay contest.

Outgoing President John Adams was awarded the Meritorious Service Award for his outstanding work and dedication to the society.



Compatriot Bill Weaver recently presented a SAR Eagle Scout certificate to Eagle Scout Jonathan Michael Haberek.



2016 SPECIAL EVENT: Visit and tour of the USS Constitution – Saturday, April 30.

To include Tour on the USS Constitution and visit to the USS Constitution museum, lunch at the Union Oyster House and access to and a tour of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company museum on the top floor of Faneuil Hall.

An invitation with details will be sent soon.



Your State Registrar Carlen Booth reports the following:

New Member:

Glenn Wayne Russell, Jr., Bristol, RI, admitted December 21, 2015, national number 197276, state number 1795. Glenn is descended from Daniel Russell, 1755-1837, Rindge, NH - served under Lt. Crombie, Capt. Blodget's Co, Col. Hale's Regiment, Rindge, NH.

In Memoriam:

John Phillips Colton: Duluth, GA & Saunderstown, RI, admitted March 19, 1979, national number 113207, state number 1507. He was descended from Isaac Van Horne, 1754-1834, Bucks Co., PA - Capt. in 6th PA Regiment.

John was born in New York City and graduated Brown University in 1958. He is a U.S. Navy veteran and spent many years in the banking and financial leasing industries. He was both a member and president of the Plum Beach Club.

George Parker King: Warwick, RI, admitted September 20, 2004, national number 163340, state number 1660. He was descended from Nathaniel Parker, Jr., 1741-1775, Groton, MA - Sgt. in Capt. John Nutting's Minuteman Co. Col. William Prescott's Regiment.

George was a retired member of the East Greenwich, RI Fire Department.

Horatio(Ray) Rodman Rogers: Middletown, RI, admitted September 25, 1990, national number 135711, state number 1598. He was descended from John Rogers, 1756-1840, Newport, RI - Lt. 1st RI Regiment, Continental Line.

Ray was a 10th generation Rhode Islander, wildlife conservationist, historian, artist and musician. A WWII veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps., he attended Brown University and worked for Colgate-Palmolive Co. in NYC for 40 years. As a naturalist, he served as a long time member of the Norman Bird Sanctuary and a volunteer at the Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge. He was also well known for his masterful wood carvings, his ragtime and boogie-woogie piano playing and his talent as a bagpiper.