



Pine Shavings



**PineyWoods Chapter #51
Texas Society of Sons of the American Revolution**

DECEMBER 2015



Joe Potter, President



Christmas Time at Valley Forge 1777

This time each year with the mild weather in this part of Texas, I reflect on what our ancestors faced in the winter of 1777. It was not only cold in Pennsylvania, but in most of the colonies as well. Supplies had been depleted from area farms with the British foraging the same areas. Wagons traveling in with supplies found difficulty traversing the often frozen but muddy trails. And yet, the season was celebrated, not as today; the Christmas Tree was still on the horizon. The celebration was for the Christ Child born on Christmas Day.

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Calendar of Events



Jan 21, 2016

Feb. 20th, 2016

Feb. 26th and 27th, 2016

March 31-April 3

July 8-14, 2016

Oct. 14-16, 2016

Mar. 30-April 2, 2017

PineyWoods—Member Only—Jimmy G's

Annual George Washington Parade in Laredo Texas

Spring Leadership and Trustees meeting in Louisville

122nd Texas Convention Hyatt North Plano

126th NSSAR Congress, Westin Copley Place Hotel in Boston

Fall BOM at Holiday Inn Midtown Austin

123 Annual Texas Convention at the Menger in San Antonio

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General George Washington marched his weary Army of 14,000 (the number varies from one source to another) into Valley Forge on December 19th, 1777 and ordered an encampment built. His men were poorly clothed, many with no shoes, and a large number suffering from disease. The General described his men as ***“marching without clothes, blankets or shoes leaving trails of blood in the snow.”*** His men displayed ***“patience and obedience which in my opinion can scarce be Paralleled.”*** Washington had hoped the Continental Congress would furnish the supplies of clothing and food needed, however, this did not happen. Instead his men were fed on Christmas Eve *Rice and Vinegar* with feet bound in scarp cloth to protect frost bitten and bleeding feet.



Washington wrote that they had resorted to whipping those who attempted desertion and threatened to shoot deserters on sight just to keep his Army intact.

There were rumors that due to displeasure of his actions that Congress would replace George Washington as Commander of the Continental Forces. Washington addressed this in a December 31st letter to the Marquis de Lafayette where he wrote ***“I will continue to observe one steady and uniform conduct, which I shall invariably pursue, while I have the honor to command, regardless of the tongue of slander or the powers of distraction.”*** And, ***“if Congress can find someone better suited to lead the Army that he would be happy to resign and re-***



turn to life at my Mount Vernon estate.”



Martha had joined Washington at Valley Forge in December after a nine-day trip from Mount Vernon, and she would spend some four months. Interesting to note that Martha was not the only woman at the camp, there were about 400 others which the General had observed were a nuisance due the nearly 14,000 men there. There were also some children, and if the men had no food or clothing, neither did the women and the children.

November 2015—Piney Woods Meeting

Piney Woods Chapter 51 Texas Society SAR

Members/Guest Meeting at Jimmy G's at Greenspoint, Houston, Texas

Compatriots present: Joe Potter, Karl Falken, Jeff LaRoche, David LaBrot, Kermit Breed, Kim Morton, Marty Landry, Larry Stevens, John Beard and Ray Cox

Guest: Linda LaBrot, Jennifer LaRoche, Barbara Stevens, Mary-Claire Beard, Sarah Potter, Sandra Breed, Hank Ziemer and James Tomlin

President Potter welcomed all to the meeting at 6:30PM. After invocation by Ray Cox, members recited the pledge to the United States and Texas flags followed by the SAR pledge.

MINUTES: Motion was made and seconded to approve minutes from the October meeting. Motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT: No Report

REGISTRAR'S REPORT: Kermit Breed is working on applications. Andrew Kodak, Benjamin Baskin and Jerry Lenzinger. Larry Stevens is working on an application for Karl Falken's son. Our Youth Application for Buckley is in Louisville.

NEWSLETTER REPORT: Coming soon

WEB MASTER REPORT: Dues can be paid on line. <http://www.txssar.org/dues.htm>

YOUTH ACTIVITIES: Jeff LaRoche reported he attend the Scouting Flaming Arrow District Meeting. There he explained the SAR Eagle Scout Scholarship and offer to help scouts with their applications. Larry Stevens reported that the NCO at New Caney would be sending us a JROTC Scholarship Candidate.

NEW BUSINESS: President Potter presented John Beard the Distinguish Service Metal for his hard work and devotion to the SAR and Piney Wood Chapter #51.

PROGRAM: Jeff LaRoche did a great job presenting a program on Heritage Week 2015 in Washington DC. Karl Falken was inducted into the SAR and gave inspiring acceptance speech. Karl brought a 150-year-old family 13 Star US Flag made by his German Ancestors. (See photo at right)

OLD BUSINESS: Please pay your dues on time. This will save a lot of paper work.

After the benediction by Ray Cox. Members joined together in the SAR closing. President Potter adjourned the meeting at 8:30 PM

Piney Wood #51 Secretary
Kermit Breed



John Beard receives Distinguished Service Medal from Chapter President Joe Potter.





This Month in the Revolution



December 25th, 1776 – At 4 PM, Washington’s Army was ordered out for parade and issued powder and ball. Even the officers and musicians were issued muskets. The men were told they would be departing on a secret mission. They marched to McKonskeys Farm on the Delaware River arriving around 6 PM or after sunset. Washington ordered the 2400 men with horses, and cannon to board boats to cross to New Jersey in an ever-worsening storm.



Christmas at Valley Forge December 25th, 1777 – Soldiers gathered in tents and huts, hunger and cold with only rice to eat and many with no blankets, coats, or shoes.

Martha Washington visited Valley Forge to be with her husband during this cold winter. Her presence in the camp bolstered the morale of the common soldier and was remembered in diaries and memoirs.

December 5-8, 1777 – **The Battle of White Marsh or Battle of Edge Hill** was a battle of the Philadelphia campaign that took place in the area surrounding Whitemarsh, Pennsylvania. The battle was a series of skirmishes and was the last major engagement of war in 1777.



December 16, 1777 – **Virginia State Legislature** ratifies the Articles of Confederation. At the Continental Congress temporary Headquarters in York, Pennsylvania. the continental Congress passed the Articles on November 15, 1777. The last state to ratify was Maryland on February 2, 1781.

Golden Plough Tavern (left) and the Gen. Horatio Gates House (middle)



Francis Marion

Duel at Halfway Swamp



Brigadier General Francis Marion resumed the war in South Carolina on December 12, 1780 after learning that British Major Robert McLeroth and his 64th Regiment was escorting some 200 recruits for the Royal Fusiliers from Charleston to Winnsboro accompanied by a large contingent of supply wagons. Marion left Snow' Island with about 600 men, the actual count is in doubt, and pursued in haste up the Santee Road encountering the British at Nelson's Ferry, just a little over a mile above Halfway Swamp. Marion attacked the pickets and drove into the rear guard causing McLeroth's force to take cover behind a rail fence. The British gained advantage when musket fire stalled Marion's assault. McLeroth's escape route was blocked so he sent a flag requesting a cease fire and parley. McLeroth protested the slaughter of his pickets. During this parley McLeroth challenging Marion to a gentlemanly duel between 20 men on each side. Marion responded by stating he would only stop shooting pickets when the British ceased burning civilian houses and sending out raids against the populace. However, Marion agreed by saying, "if Major McLeroth wishes to see mortal combat between teams of twenty men picked by each side, I will gratify him." And McLeod accepted.

A field was chosen. The contest organized. Marion named Major John Vanderhorst the team Captain and he handpicked his twenty men. Vanderhorst told his men to hold their fire until fifty yards and pick one man to keep track to the distance and notify him when the range was right. When the plan was understood, his men moved forward. McLeroth's twenty men marched out first to about 100 yards but then turned and retreated. The seemingly act of cowardice drew a cheer from Marion's men. Marion realized the British were just stalling. At this time, British Captain James Coffin rode up with 140 New York volunteers but when he learned of Marion's presence he refused to attack retreating to Swift Creek.

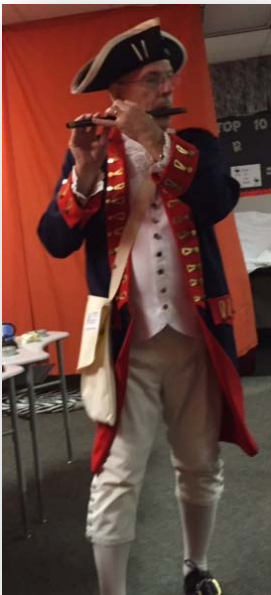
McLeroth managed to escape during the night towards the Singleton residence abandoning most of his supplies and wagons. Marion's sent his swiftest mounted under Major John James and Major Hugh Horry, after the British in the early hours of December 13th. They passed McLeroth seizing the buildings at Singleton's and then taking positions on a hill. When McLeroth's force arrived, the Americans fired a volley and left the field. They had discovered the Singleton family had *smallpox*. Marion withdrew to Nelson's Ferry. McLeroth continued his march to Camden. The Duel at Halfway Swamp did not materialize. It is probably one of the strangest encounters of the American Revolution. One wonders what British intelligence about Marion, of the patriots, led McLeroth to believe that the stalling tactic of the duel would work. Very interesting dynamic of the encounter.

PineyWoods Members News

Newest PineyWoods Chapter 51 Youth Member Gavin. His Uncle Baron is a PineyWoods chapter member. Gavin was sponsored by his grandmother, DAR Member, and SAR friend Janisue Rigel. Merry Christmas Gavin from the PineyWoods Chapter and welcome to the Texas Society Sons of the American Revolution.



Lady Houston Chapter DAR National Defense Day Luncheon attended by PineyWoods Members and Spouses Kermit and Sandra Breed, Nancy and Jim Pinkerton, and Barbara and Larry Stevens.



Larry Stevens and Ray Cox present programs at Eagle Springs Elementary in Atascocita.

Larry Stevens presented the Colonial Life Trunk at Willow Creek Elementary. Nancy Pinkerton, wife of Compatriot Jim Pinkerton, is principal here. Nancy was instrumental in implementing this program in the Humble School District. She and Jim have participated for many years.



TXSSAR President Larry Stevens with NSDAR President General Lynn Young at the filming of the Genealogy Road Show at the Julia Idelson Library in Houston. Several potential new members were identified.

Pictured right: Dickens on the Strand. Bernardo de Galvez chapter had an entry and Larry and Barbara Stevens participated.



PineyWoods Meetings

The PineyWoods Chapter #51 meets at 6:30 pm at Jimmy G's Cajun Restaurant located at Greenspoint at Beltway 8 and I 45 in Houston on the third Thursday of each month except for the months of June and July.

MEETINGS SCHEDULE

December 17, 2015	Members Christmas Meeting
January 21, 2016	Member/Guest Meeting with Speaker
February 18, 2016	Members Meeting
March 17, 2016	Members/Guest Meeting with Speaker
April 21, 2016	Members Meeting
May 19, 2016,	Members/Guests Meeting with Speaker
June and July	No Meetings Scheduled
August 18, 2016	Members Meeting

