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Robert Rankin Chapter #62

Texas Society Sons of the American Revolution

The Rankin Register

Organized April 2002



May 2018



President Allen Greene opens the May meeting at Spring Creek Barbecue. The Willowfork Country Club was flooded by Harvey and is still not open.

Robert Rankin, Texas SAR Spring Creek Barbecue May Meeting Highlights

- ❖ The speaker for the evening is Susan Kaufman, head librarian of the Carlton Library.
- ❖ Bruce Alfredson spoke about Rhode Island's declaration of independence.
- ❖ Tom Jackson talked Benjamin Lincoln.
- ❖ Texas SAR President Tom Jackson spoke about plans for the 2018 National Congress to be held in Houston at the Westin Memorial City.



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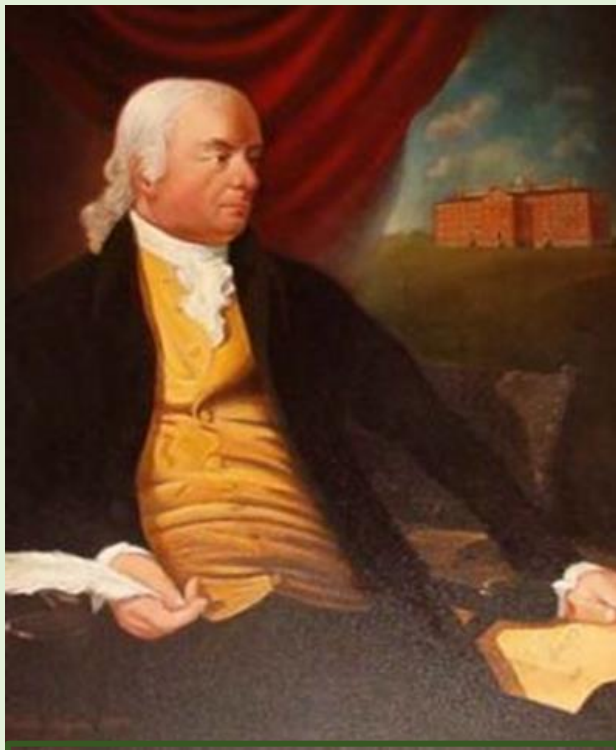
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Bruce Alfredson, shown to the right, speaks of Rhode Island being the first state to declare independence!



Stephen Hopkins, shown above, is considered the father of Rhode Island independence.

The month of May is special for our smallest state. On May 29, 1790 Rhode Island achieved statehood. Rhode Island independence was declared two months before the other 12 colonies got around to formally breaking ties with King George III. On May 4, 1776, the General Assembly of the Colony of Rhode Island declared its absolute independence from Great Britain. They voted nearly unanimously, thus making Rhode Island the first independent sovereign state in the western world. The colony drew on its traditions of radical religious dissent as well as protecting its commercial interests. Newport and Providence, both prosperous centers of transatlantic trade, sheltered pirates and smugglers. Merchants chafed at Britain's attempts to tighten control over commercial shipping in Narragansett Bay.

Parliament passed the Sugar Act of 1764 raising the tariff on molasses. That provoked Rhode Islanders into attacking the customs ship HMS St. John in 1764, the HMS Liberty in 1769, and the HMS Gaspee in 1772. Abraham Whipple and John Brown led the Sons of Liberty in attacking, looting, boarding and burning the vessel. A Royal Commission of Inquiry charged the men with treason, and the prospect of Americans going to England for trial sent an alarm through the colonies. Ultimately the Commission dropped the matter.



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President Allan Greene (pictured left), along with President Tom Jackson (pictured right) present the Military Service Medal to Dave Zachmeyer.



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Susan Kaufman, our speaker, is the Manager of the Clayton Library Center for Genealogical Research / Houston Public Library and also the Director of Education for the Texas State Genealogical Society; she was previously its President. She is responsible for planning genealogical education opportunities in house and via web for the Texas State Genealogical Society.



The Carriage House above. "We try and collect at least one thing from every county and parish in the United States," Kaufman says. "We've gone beyond that. In our international collection we try and collect things from Great Britain, Germany, Canada, Mexico. Our strength is the Gulf Coast." Their is a fact-based system, and information can be gleaned from wills, deeds, marriages, divorces, deaths, court minutes and records, church and cemetery records, tax information, colonial collections, and directories from the 19th and 20th centuries. Kaufman says they also have unusual resources including microfilm and documents that aren't digitized due to copyright issues. Kaufman says it's the mission of her team to help interested persons get started by understanding the method behind the pursuit. For example, Harris County only began sending birth records to Austin in 1908, and marriage records weren't sent prior to 1965. So, one place to start would be the federal census, which is made available to the public after 72 years.