

January, 2025



Ink & Quill



TEXAS SOCIETY OF THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, DENTON CHAPTER #23, TXSSAR INC.®

Next Meeting: January 11, 2025 at 10am

Emily Fowler Public Library, 502 Oakland Street, Denton

Chapter Officers

- President—Brandon Story
- Vice President—Ronnie Rencher
- Recording Secretary—Mike Fry
- Secretary, Annual Reports —
Mike Connelley
- Treasurer—Chris Strauss
- Asst Treasurer—Bill Rowell
- Registrar— Mike Lester
- Sgt at Arms—Billy Roussell, III
- Color Guard — David Cook

Opportunities

1. **January 11, 2025, Denton Chapter meeting**
2. **March 8, 2025, Denton Chapter meeting**
3. **May 10, 2025, Denton Chapter meeting**
4. **SAR National Conference, July 2027**

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What America needed that 1776 Christmas: Leadership
Talmage Boston, The Dallas Morning New Opinion

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Washington's persistent guidance in rain, hail and snow helped saved the young republic

Those of us blessed to live in this land of the free and home of the brave allow most Christmases to pass without remembering one of the most important events in American history: George Washington's heroics on Dec. 25, 1776, and the days that followed, that proved to be the tipping point toward victory in the Revolutionary War. Because of Big George's Christmas Day leadership, we gained "the sacred fire of liberty" and "republican model of government" (words from his first inaugural address in 1789) that have served us so well for so long.

Shortly after the Declaration of Independence was signed in July 1776, America's military effort appeared doomed to fail after defeat at the Battle of Brooklyn in August, the taking of Fort Mifflin on the Delaware River in October, and the subsequent retreat through New Jersey.

Hopes for success were dying and colonial soldiers counted the days until their service commitments expired at year's end.

The situation drove Washington to acknowledge in a Dec. 10 letter, "One's imagination can scarce extend to a situation more distressing than mine. Our only dependence now is upon the speedy enlistment of a new army. If this fails, I think the game will be pretty well up."

In his biography of Washington, Ron Chernow described what his subject saw when he looked at his troops that December: "A beleaguered rump army, a raggedy band of a few thousand men who had worn out their shoes and crafted makeshift footwear by slaughtering cattle, skinning their hides, and wrapping crude sections around their bare feet. ... Years later, he remembered that in that moment, he 'trembled for the fate of America.'"

In his book *1776*, David McCullough wrote that soon after that moment, Gen. Nathanael Greene observed that his boss, "never appeared to so much advantage as in the hour of distress."

Washington wrote to a friend about the prospect of his having a "brilliant stroke" that might save the cause. A few days later, he predicted landing "a lucky blow against the enemy that would most certainly rouse the spirits of the people, who are quite sunk by our misfortunes."

Washington proceeded to devise and execute the "brilliant stroke" and "lucky blow" plan that changed the course of the war.

It started on Christmas night.

.....Continued on the next page

Gathering storm

Thinking the enemy would be relaxed that holiday evening at their garrison in Trenton, N.J., Washington planned to have his men, horses and cannons depart from their camp in Pennsylvania and cross the nearby Delaware River in flat-bottomed boats normally used to transport pig iron. Upon reaching the other side, they would then march 10 miles to their destination.

The plan went forward that night despite a gathering storm and the river's being filled with broken sheets of ice. His password for the daring venture — Victory or Death — aligned with his orders: "No man to quit his ranks on pain of death."

To inspire his troops before they left camp, Washington had a passage from Thomas Paine read aloud: "These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now deserves the love and thanks of all people."

As the men got in the boats to cross the river, the storm hit. One soldier's description: "It rained, hailed, snowed, and froze, and at the same time blew a perfect hurricane."

Chernow believed "Crossing the Delaware on Christmas night, Washington knew, would produce either storied success or utter calamity, and he was ready to pay the price. ... With the country's future riding on his shoulders, he displayed indomitable tenacity. If the raid backfired, the war was likely over and he would be captured and killed."

The ice slowed the paddle and pole-driven boats and those who made it didn't get across the river until 3 a.m., putting them three hours behind schedule. Before their departure, Washington divided his men into three separate regiments meant to land at three different places on the banks of Delaware, but two of the groups never made it across the river.

Regardless of the storm delay and manpower reduction, Washington knew retreat was impossible. "I was determined to push on at all events," he wrote.

The march toward Trenton was made by the remaining 2,400 men over steeply sloped rain-slicked terrain and in weather so severe two of them froze to death.

The commander-in-chief rode up and down the rows of his drenched and freezing soldiers, keeping them focused on the challenge at hand. Upon reaching their destination, many of the men's guns were so rain-soaked they couldn't fire. Washington's Plan B command: "Use the bayonet."

.....Continued on the next page

An hour after daylight, with the storm still raging, the attack began. It lasted about 45 minutes. Despite their fatigue and lack of firepower, Washington said every American soldier “vied with the other for pressing forward.” The result: The enemy had 21 soldiers killed, 90 wounded, 900 taken prisoner, and 500 escaped, while the Americans suffered only four wounded (one being future president James Monroe) and no one killed.

After the battle, Washington delivered a glowing message to his men, thanking them for “their spirited and gallant” effort, since he had “not seen a single instance of bad behavior in either officers or privates.”

He told Maj. James Wilkinson, “This is a glorious day for our country.” In fact, it proved to be the day that saved our country.

‘Indebted’

When news of the victory at Trenton arrived at the Continental Congress, John Hancock could see that, although it had been achieved by men “broken by fatigue and ill-fortune,” Washington’s leadership deserved credit: “Troops properly inspired and animated by a just confidence in their leader will often exceed expectations. As it is entirely to your wisdom and conduct, the United States are indebted for the success of your arms.”

Four days after the victory, Washington succeeded in persuading his troops to renew their military service commitment into the new year. When they did, Gen. Greene decided it was “God Almighty who inclined their hearts to listen to the proposal and they engaged anew.” Additional men soon volunteered and by August 1777, the army’s size had grown to 12,000.

Washington led his troops to another triumph in early January at the Battle of Princeton.

McCullough drew this conclusion about the back-to-back victories: “As thrilling as the news of Princeton was for the country, coming so quickly after the triumph at Trenton, it was Trenton that meant the most. Trenton and the night crossing of the Delaware were rightly seen as a great turning point. With that victory came the realization that Americans had bested the enemy, outsmarted them and outfought them, and so might well again.”

On Christmas night 1776, George Washington kept our Continental Army “spirited and gallant” in its darkest hours, and thereby delivered the “brilliant stroke” and “lucky blow” needed for America to obtain her independence from England.

At Christmas 2024, many of us with our bellies full, homes warm and stockings filled, in the greatest country in the world, let’s take a minute to give thanks for our first president and that first American Christmas.

Talmage Boston is a presidential historian, practicing lawyer and contributing columnist for The Dallas Morning News.

Bicentennial of Lafayette's Farewell Tour



August 16, 2024 saw the kick off this monumental Bicentennial celebration. The hundreds of events planned will trace Lafayette's footstep on the exact dates and in the exact order he followed on his tour of America as the "Guest of the Nation" between 1824 and 1825. Celebration and party at every stop.

An introductory video is here:

<https://vimeo.com/855470022>

Did your Patriot meet Lafayette on his tour? Check out the map on the Tour website <https://lafayette200.org/>, research your Patriot's life and/or family in 1824-1825. Was he still alive? Was he or his ancestors on the Tour route? Any family documentation for that period of time?

January, 2025

January 1, 1825 — Washington D.C.
January 2-5, 1825 — Washington D.C.
January 6, 1825 — Arlington, VA
January 7, 1825 — Washington D.C.
January 8, 1825 — Washington D.C.
January 9-11, 1825 — Washington D.C.
January 12, 1825 — Washington D.C.
January 13-16, 1825 — Washington D.C.
January 17, 1825 — Washington D.C.
January 18, 1825 — Washington D.C.
January 19-20, 1825 — Baltimore, MD
January 22, 1825 — Richmond, VA
January 23-25, 1825 — Richmond, VA
January 27-28, 1825 — Baltimore, MD
January 29, 1825 — York, Pennsylvania
January 30, 1825 — Middletown, Pennsylvania
January 30, 1825 — Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
January 31, 1825 — Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Bench for Denton

SAR 250th Anniversary of America

Memorial Bench Program

FRONT

TOP OF THE BENCH

Sons of the American Revolution/
Daughters of the American Revolution
Celebrating 250 years of
American Freedom 1776-2026

BOTH BENCH SIDE ENDS

Bench Donated And Manufactured By
Texas Gravestone Care LLC

Denton Chapter/Benjamin Lyon Chapter, Texas Society

FRONT AND BACK EDGE



BENCH LEG
OUTSIDE

S
A
R

LEGS FRONT
AND BACK

D
A
R



BENCH LEG
OUTSIDE

BACK

TOP OF THE BENCH

American Freedom 1776-2026
Celebrating 250 years of
Daughters of the American Revolution/
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AND BACK

S
A
R



BENCH LEG
OUTSIDE

Bench for Denton

SAR 250th Anniversary of America

Memorial Bench Program

STATUS:

1. Previous page, our bench design from the engraving company.
2. Met with DAR Chapter President Jill Johnson
3. We decided to remove

Sons of the American Revolution/
Daughters of the American Revolution

from the top of the bench design, leaving only

Celebrating 250 Years of
American Freedom 1776 – 2026

on the top/seat, as in the picture below.



Bench for Denton

SAR 250th Anniversary of America

Memorial Bench Program

Next steps:

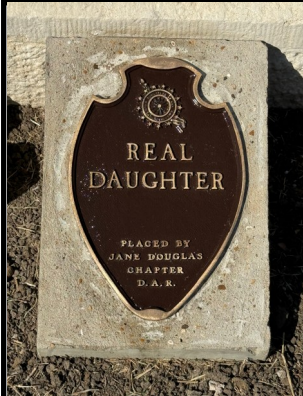
1. Meet with Denton County contacts to determine location and schedule for installation and celebration
2. Continue to work with the Denton DAR project manager on plan & presentation.
3. Present plan to Denton SAR & DAR chapters.
4. Update plan and presentation based on feedback.
5. Present plan to Denton County contacts.
6. Gain approval to install bench
7. Finalize agreement with bench manufacturer



Denton SAR Chapter Color Guard



Denton SAR Color Guard marching in the Denton 4th of July parade.



Denton color guard members Todd Wilber and Christopher Strauss attended the "DAR Real Daughters" Grave ceremony in McKinney Saturday, October 19 in Continental uniform. The ceremony was for Nancy Barbee Mayes. They were two out of six Color Guard participants and thus provided significant Denton Chapter Color Guard representation.

Great job to both Todd and Chris.

David Cook



Join the Denton Chapter Color Guard

Members can participate individually or we can attend as a Color Guard unit representing the Denton SAR Chapter. New Color Guard members are welcome. Color guard members wanting to attend are to contact Color Guard Commander David Cook.

It is significant to note that several events are designated as National Events which earns 20 points toward national and state Color Guard medals.

“We are the face of the Sons of the American Revolution at the national, state, and chapter levels. Accordingly, as we further the Patriotic, Historic, and Educational Goals of the SAR let us have fun, enjoy the comradely, and practice safety for yourself and others. Yours in Patriotism

K. Scott Collins National Society SAR Color Guard Commander”

**David R. Cook
Denton Color Guard Commander
706-835-5910
davidcook1936@gmail.com**



America 250 Decade Of The American Revolution



The National SAR has created this **Decade of the American Revolution** calendar to list Revolutionary War signature events each year that will be the focus of the NSSAR main celebration. Every State Society and all State Chapters should download the programs for the year and celebrate with us in your local area.

December 16, 2023 Boston Tea Party

August 14, 2024 200th Anniversary of Lafayette's arrival in the U.S. for his Tour

September 5, 2024 The First Continental Congress

2025 Battles of Lexington and Concord.

2026 Declaration of Independence

2027 Battle of Saratoga

2028 French Alliance

2029 Siege of Vincennes/Fort Sackville Battle of Kettle Creek

2030 Battle of Kings Mountain

2031 Siege of Yorktown 2032 Battle of Blue Licks

2033 Treaty of Paris

Visit <https://america250sar.org/rd/> for details of each event.

Telling Her Story

A Guide to Researching and Writing
about Women of the Past



Sharon DeBartolo Carmack

“When I read published genealogies, find family trees online, or receive information from other researchers, I am constantly amazed: many of the women in the lineage are sorely neglected.” This is author Sharon DeBartolo Carmack’s lament regarding the lack of documentation about women in most family trees. She also rightly notes that, “Women were the shapers of the family,” when it came to family traditions, passing on culture, bearing and raising children, providing discipline, and so much more.

While the author understands why women are so overlooked in our family stories, due to name changes, lack of records, and other reasons, she also proposes that it doesn’t have to be that way. Examining the social history of a woman's lifetime can greatly supplement the typical records which document her life.

In *Telling Her Story: A Guide to Researching and Writing about Women of the Past*, author DeBartolo Carmack (Salt Lake City: Scattered Leaves Press, 2024) offers a terrific recipe for delving into the lives of our female ancestors that any family historian can follow. It is a revised and expanded follow up to her 1998 book *A Genealogist’s Guide to Discovering Your Female Ancestors*.

The book broadly covers three areas: Getting Started, Sources with Unique Information about Women, and What Will You Say About Her? Writing Woman’s Life Stories.

Chapter 1: Who Was She?: Determining Her Maiden Name and Parents dives headfirst into the tricky problem of identifying female ancestors.

Chapter 2: What They Said About Her, covers the various record sets where clues to women can be found, including online trees and family histories, church, city directories, divorce, institutional, land, medical, military, school, guardianship, voter registrations, and many more.

Chapter 3: What She Said About Herself looks at records created by women, such as letters, diaries, memoirs, autobiographies, oral histories, as well as family heirlooms and artifacts.

Chapters 4 and 5 offer additional sources for various ethnicities, such as for African-American or Native American women, and research techniques for tackling brick walls and common pitfalls.

Chapter 6: Case Studies includes book and article excerpts illuminating women in unique stories.

Chapter 7: Researching Her Daily Life: Women’s Social Histories dives into many social and historical topics bearing on women’s lives such as religion, work, health, sexuality, childbearing, caregiving, work, domestic abuse, death and burial customs. Each provides a lens through which to view an ancestor’s life.

Chapter 8: What Type of Story Will You Write? outlines the various types of writing which can be employed to tell a female ancestor’s story: fiction, non-fiction, creative nonfiction, as well as how to approach facts and truth, and audience and scope considerations.

Chapters 9: Finding Conflict and Keeping the Story Going, and *Chapter 10: Historical Context and Speculative Writing* provide more in-depth writing guidance.

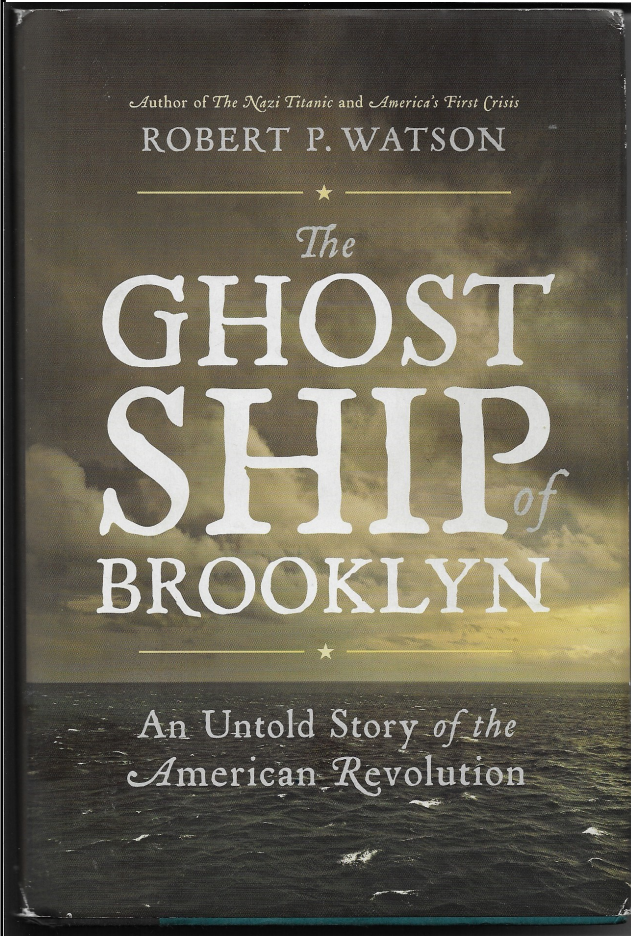
Chapter 11: Citing Sources, and *Chapter 12: Revision, Restructuring, Editing, and Proofreading* offer practical advice on these nitty-gritty details.

Chapter 13: Annotated Essays presents three writing samples demonstrating principles discussed in the book. The book’s *Resources, Notes, and Index* section completes the book with a glossary, a source checklist for researching women, notes, and a bibliography of useful resources.

Telling Her Story offers an in-depth course on documenting female ancestors, and telling their stories from myriad viewpoints, and using a range of writing styles. Researchers focused on the silent side of their family tree can find this great resource in the Special Collections area of the Emily Fowler Central Library.

—Nancy Gilbride Casey
DPL Volunteer

The Ghost Ship of Brooklyn
by Robert Watson



The story of the most infamous of the British prison ships. The Jersey was anchored about 100 yards off the coast of Brooklyn on Wallabout Bay. It was a rotten, disease infested hulk that was always packed with over 1000 prisoners. Most of the prisoners were privateers.

The British refused to treat Americans as POWs. They were treated as merely rebels deserving no status but traitors. The treatment was intentionally harsh to break the American spirit.

The guards on the ship were intentionally cruel and abusive. The food was rotten and rancid. The food was not enough to sustain life. Water was limited and of poor quality.

The prison ship commissary was sadistic and corrupt. He made a fortune undercutting food supplies and selling the extra on the side.

Most of the day the prisoners were locked in the fetid hold of the ship without light or adequate ventilation. The air was so nasty that many times candles would not stay lit. Disease was rampant. Six to twelve prisoners died every day. They were unceremoniously wrapped in blankets and buried in shallow graves on the shoreline.

The standard estimate is that over twelve thousand Americans died on prison ships. Watson makes the case that over eleven thousand died on the Jersey alone.

I recommend this book. It really shows the suffering of American POWs in the Revolutionary War.

Todd Wilber

National Society Sons of the American Revolution

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/SARmagazine>



Also see the Denton Chapter Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/dentontxsar>



Editor's Note

The Chapter website is <https://www.txssar.org/Denton/>. On that site are the back copies of this newsletter, information about the Chapter, and links to the SAR State and National web sites. NOTE: **There is now a Chapter calendar on the website.** Right-most tab: <https://www.texassar.org/Denton/calendar.htm>

All of these communication devices take time to maintain. If you would like to help and/or take over one of these, please let me know.

Bill Surles, wsmerch@gmail.com