

The Plano Compatriot Gazette

*The Official Newsletter of Plano Chapter #37
Texas Sons of the American Revolution*

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January 2026

Issue #1



Mission Statement

The Sons of the American Revolution honors our Revolutionary War Patriot ancestors by promoting patriotism, serving our communities and by educating and inspiring future generations about the founding principles of our Country





President's Message



By Bob Johns, President

2026 - A New Year Ahead and Our Nation's 250th Anniversary

Compatriots,

As we rapidly approach 2026, I'm reminded of the words said by Past State President Tracy Pounders in his Farewell Address:

*"When I first joined this organization thirty-three years ago it was just an excuse to hang out with my Dad one Saturday morning a month. Later the history drew me in — the names, the battles, the documents and dates. **But over time, it became clear to me that this organization isn't just about remembering the past—it's about continuing a legacy. It's about honoring courage not just with words, but with action. It's about keeping the flame of Liberty alive—not just in ceremonies, but in our communities, our families, and our lives. Membership in the SAR is more than just membership in a club. Membership in this Society is a promise. A promise to never forget where we came from. A promise to never take for granted the sacrifices made by those who fought for our freedom. And a promise to never stop working to build a future worthy of their struggle.**"*

With these words, President Pounders captured the essence and spirit of this organization. Yes, we're all excited when Compatriot Carter coaxes some particularly obscure descendant out of hiding and into the light of day for a new member. Yes, we all share in pride for our nation when we see our Color Guard posting the Colors for an event. And yes, we all experience a sense of the blessings received as part of this great Nation each time Compatriot Miller offers prayers to our Lord at the Chapter Meetings.

This sense of patriotic pride that we feel in our Nation and ancestry, however, should be a means to an end, not an end unto itself. The "end" for which we strive is well summed up in our Mission Statement: ***"The Sons of the American Revolution honors our Revolutionary War patriot ancestors by promoting patriotism, serving our communities and educating and inspiring future generations about the founding principles of our Country."***

These words imply action, involvement on our part to help meet the mandate laid out in our Mission Statement. There are many ways that we can act and, especially so, in this year-long 250th anniversary of the founding of our Nation. These include attending Patriotic events in our communities or, if our circumstances permit, perhaps travelling to one of the many events around the country, some of which are listed in this Newsletter. Award a Flag Certificate. Each of us can now honor our neighbors who regularly fly the flag by awarding them a Certificate and, of course, flying the flag ourselves. We can volunteer to help in the Chapter by assisting and supporting our Veterans activities with Compatriot Bjorklund and assisting Compatriot Roach with presenting awards to JROTC students and judging the many youth contests we participate in. Another fine way to display our patriotism is to support, and if physically able, to join, our Color Guard.

There are, indeed, many ways to celebrate America 250 and display our love of Nation. Make it part of your New Year's resolution this year to have an active part in fulfilling our Mission Statement.

Chapter and State News Items and Upcoming Events

[Christmas at the Bonham VA - BJ Bjorklund](#) [VP Veterans Affairs](#)

Throughout the year, activities focused upon the Veterans at the Bonham Veterans Home are undertaken by VP of Veterans Affairs BJ Bjorklund and volunteers from our Chapter. Without your gifts of time, treasure and talent nothing would be possible. Please reach out to [Compatriot Bjorklund](#) to learn how you can make a difference!



**VP of Veterans Affairs,
BJ Bjorklund, prepares
blankets donated by
our Chapter to be
gifted to the Veterans
at the Bonham
Veterans Home and
Hospital**

The Plano SAR Chapter Christmas Dinner

On 2 December, The Plano Chapter SAR held its annual Christmas Dinner at the Princi Italia Restaurant. Compatriot Duane Carter gave the presentation "Christmas in the North and the Night Before Christmas" and Compatriot Steven Driever gave a presentation entitled "Christmas in the South before the American Revolution". In these presentations, our Compatriots discussed the Christmas traditions practiced in each part of the Colonies. For example, for many years in the New England Colonies, Christmas was outlawed due to the influence of the Puritan faith, with modern traditions like the Christmas tree and widespread gift-giving emerging much later. In addition, Compatriot Carter discussed the origins of our modern day Santa Claus, pointing out that Santa Claus in North America originated from Dutch settlers bringing Sinterklaas (St. Nicholas) to New York. In the Anglican Colonies of the South, Christmas was a lively, adult-focused season of feasting, dancing, hunts, and heavy drinking, lasting the full 12 Days from Christmas to Twelfth Night (Jan 6). Celebrations included lavish banquets with roasted meats and spiced treats, caroling popular hymns like "God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen," wassailing (singing for drinks), and mumming (costumed revelry). While religious services were central, the period was marked by social gatherings and merriment.



**Gabriel Potts, son of
Compatriot Kyle Potts,
poses with Chapter
President Bob Johns**

**Color Guard Upcoming Events - Major Dave
Fautheree, Color Guard Commander**

Plano Symphony Orchestra School Concerts

Present and post the colors during the National Anthem.

Monday, January 26 - 10AM & 11:30AM

Tuesday, January 27 - 10AM & 11:30AM

Wednesday, January 28 - 10AM & 11:30AM

Tuesday, February 17 - 10AM & 11:30AM

Wednesday, February 18 - 10AM & 11:30AM

Thursday, February 19 - 10AM & 11:30AM

Friday, February 20

Robinson Fine Arts Center (Plano ISD)

1800 Alma Dr, Plano, TX 75075

Muster for 10AM Concert at 9:30 AM

Muster for 11:30 AM Concert at 11:00 AM

Food will be provided between the concerts.

No weapons allowed. I will bring extra flags. **These are Chapter Events.**

Program: Legends in Sound

Star Spangled Banner.....J. Smith

Symphony No.9, Movement 4.....L.V. Beethoven

Brandenburg Concerto No. 3, Movement 1.....J.S. Bach

Piano Concerto No. 1, Movement 3.....F. Mendelssohn

Soloist- Jenna Tran

Excerpt from The Peasant Prince.....Katy Abbott

Accompanied with narrator and dance

Finale from the Firebird Suite.....I. Stravinsky

–Instrument Demos–

How to Train Your Dragon.....John Powell

Arr. Sean O’Loughlin

Please let me know which concerts you will participate in. I will provide the PSO with a list of names for registration. Please pick up your badge at the door as you enter. It will identify you as a program participant and allow you to have food with the orchestra and other participants between the concerts.

There will be over 17,000 3rd-5th grade students attending this year from over 145 schools across over 10 school districts.

Please note the current SAR magazine has Strategic Goals for SAR from the Society President General Michael J. Elston. Among them is this:

Strategic Goal #3: Patriotic Programs

Operational Objectives

A. Grow our Color Guard and the scope of its mission.

1) Train and safety certify every society Color Guard by 2030

a. 100% Youth Protection trained and certified by the end of 2025.

b. State Color Guard commanders will enforce compliance and ensure Youth Protection Training is TRACKED LOCALLY by the end of 2025 and updated annually.

I am asking all Guardsmen who have their primary chapter as Plano to please complete the YPT Training as soon as possible and *send me your completion certificates*. I will start tracking this immediately and will coordinate status with the State Color Guard Commander.

UPCOMING EVENT
Plano Symphony Orchestra
School Concerts
The Robinson Fine Arts Center
1800 Alma Road, Plano TX 75075

“Legends in Sound”

January/February Schedule

January 26-28 10:00am and 11:30am

February 17-20 10:00am and 11:30am

REPERTOIRE

The Star Spangled Banner.....John Smith
Symphony No.9, Movement 4.....L.V. Beethoven
Brandenburg Concerto No. 3, Movement 1.....J.S. Bach
Piano Concerto No. 1, Movement 3.....F. Mendelssohn
(Soloist- Jenna Tran)
Excerpt from The Peasant Prince.....Katy Abbott
(Accompanied with narrator and dance)
Finale from the Firebird Suite.....I. Stravinsky
–Instrument Demos–
How to Train Your Dragon.....John Powell
Arr. Sean O’Loughlin

Tickets to these Concerts are purchased online [HERE](#). Hurry, as they will sell out quickly. You will not only see a great performance, but also experience our Color Guard presenting the Colors!



**PLANO
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA**
HECTOR GUZMAN MUSIC DIRECTOR

Wreaths Across America
Pecan Grove Cemetery, McKinney TX
13 December 2025

This year, The National Wreaths Across America Day was held on Saturday, December 13, 2025. More than two million volunteers and supporters gather annually to remember, honor and teach at more than 4,600 participating locations in all 50 states, at sea and abroad.

Our chapter supports the event at the Pecan Grove Cemetery in McKinney where over 945 Veterans are buried.

A commemorative event is held and, following that, volunteers spread out with maps and place wreaths on every Veterans gravesite, speaking that Veterans name aloud to commemorate their service by name.

Compatriot Rocky Miller served as Chaplain. Compatriots Bob Johns, Nick Gilliam, Dave Fautheree, Ronald Carey and Roger Hardin participated in the event as ceremonial military wreath layers. Compatriot John Rothermel served as Taps Bugler. Our chapter bought over 100 wreaths for the event.



**The Laying of the Ceremonial Wreaths:
Facing, from R to L:**

- US Army Major General (Ret) Keith Thurgood representing the US Army.
- Bob Johns, Plano Chapter SAR, representing the US Marines.
- Nick Gilliam, US Navy and Plano Chapter SAR, representing the US Navy.
- Jeff Schnitzer, US Air Force, representing the US Air Force.
- Major Dave Fautheree, US Air Force and Plano Chapter SAR, representing the US Space Force.
- Ronald Carey, Plano Chapter SAR, representing the US Coast Guard.
- Roger Hardin, Plano Chapter SAR, representing the US Merchant Marines.
- Joe Conger, Plano Chapter SAR, representing all MIA/POWs.

Our Nation's and State's Colors were presented by Cadets representing the McKinney Thunderbolt Composite Squadron, Group 2, Texas Wing, Civil Air Patrol, United States Air Force Auxiliary





From L to R: Major Dave Fautheree, Major General (Ret) Keith Thurgood, Roger Hardin, Michael Becker, Joe Conger, Rocky Miller, President Bob Johns, Ronald Carey and Nick Gilliam



Missy McPherson, Honorary Regent of the John Abston Chapter NSDAR welcomed the Assembly. Civil Air Patrol Cadet C/Lt Jack Ruscheinski delivered the Opening Remarks.

MEMBER APPROVED FLAG PRESENTATIONS

The Summer Issue of SAR Magazine contains NSSAR Goals to be fully implemented by the National Organization, State Societies and Local Chapters. Among those is increasing the issuance of SAR Flag Recognition Certificates.

To refresh your knowledge of Flag Certificates, ***“The SAR Flag Certificate is presented to individuals, companies, and government agencies that fly the United States flag regularly and properly for patriotic purposes.”***

Previously, the Chapter President was required to sign a Flag Certificate prior to issuance. To make Flag Certificates easier to award and to involve the Chapter Membership in general, ***the President General has now delegated authority to award Flag Certificates DIRECTLY to every Chapter Member!***

That means any of us who observes neighbors, businesses, etc who fly the flag regularly can award that person or business a Flag Certificate. Simply send [VP Alan Roach](#) the entity’s name to place on the Certificate, sign it when you receive it from him and award it to the deserving party at your convenience.

How about each of us make an effort to award at least one certificate a year starting this year!

Bob Johns, President



[The Plano Chapter #37](#) [Community Service Lapel Pin](#)

The Plano SAR Chapter Community Service Pin is a 1" lapel pin with artwork based on our 2" Commemorative Coin.

The Summer 2025 issue of SAR Magazine contains NSSAR's "2030 Operational Plan" which contains many goals, including some directed at local Chapters. We will be implementing those goals, one of which is to promote and improve community service by our Chapter Members.

Accordingly, we have created our new Community Service lapel pin. "Serving our Communities and Promoting Patriotism" being front and center in our SAR Mission Statement.

Any Chapter Member can earn the pin by participating in at least 3 events which focus on serving our communities and promoting patriotism. Events that are not sponsored by our or any other SAR Chapter, but by are sponsored by other community organizations, are also eligible..

Let's get involved—more of us—especially at the time of our country's 250th Anniversary!



[SAR Youth Protection Training](#)

Compatriots,

As we approach the time of contests in our SAR Society, ***please be reminded that all who participate in ANY SAR Sponsored event involving children are required to take the SAR Youth Protection Training*** -

<https://www.bredenfoerder.com/youth-protection-training.html>

Please take the training provided at the link above, and print and retain the completion certificate for your records.

If you have taken this training even within the last two years, please review the video, as new information has been added.

Please reach out to any State or Chapter Officers if you have any questions.

In the Spirit of '76,

Mel Oller

Texas SAR President

[The Texas SAR 250 Monument](#)



Compatriots,

A Dedication Ceremony at the Texas State Cemetery is being planned for the weekend of April 17, 2026 in coordination with the Texas SAR State Convention in Austin. The program will include:

- o Official Unveiling and Dedication
- o Participation of the Texas SAR Color Guard
- o Attendance by dignitaries, including elected officials and both State and National SAR officers
- o Recognition of substantial donors
- o Recognition of descendants being honored on the monument
- o Music from local choir

We continue to raise funds for the Monument Dedication Ceremony, which is to take place at **10:00am, Saturday, 18 April 2026** in conjunction with the Texas SAR Annual State Convention. We are a few thousand dollars from having the funds necessary to cover the budgeted costs.

You may donate funds via PayPal when you pay your dues or via the [monument web page](#) on the Texas SAR website.

If you prefer to write a check, please make it payable to: **Texas SAR, Attn: Treasurer, 11 Winhall Place, The Woodlands, TX 77354-3313.**

If you have any questions, please reach out to Richard Zdunkewicz, Chairman of the Monument Committee.

Richard Lee Zdunkewicz
Staff Secretary, Texas SAR
staffsec@texassar.org
713.302.0237

Upcoming America 250 Patriotic and Travel Events

[Liberty Tree Dedication Ceremony](#)

**Captain Molly Corbin Chapter NSDAR
Liberty Gardens of Bicentennial Park
200 Unity Way
Southlake TX 76092
28 February 2026 2:00pm - 3:00pm**

The Captain Molly Corbin Chapter, NSDAR, will host a community event to dedicate a Liberty Tree in honor of America 250! A bronze DAR Commemorative Marker will accompany a newly planted Shumard red oak in the tranquil setting of the Liberty Gardens of Bicentennial Park.



America 250
Dallas Symphony Orchestra: Jeff Tuzik
With the U.S. Naval Academy Glee Club

Meyerson Symphony Center
2301 Flora St
Dallas TX 75201
10 & 11 April 2026 7:30pm
12 April 2026 2:00pm

America 250 is a monumental celebration taking place in Dallas, TX on April 10, 11 & 12, 2026 at 7:30 PM. This event commemorates 250 years of American history, featuring a variety of performances that encapsulate the artistic and cultural spirit of the nation. Attendees can expect a rich blend of music, art, and historical reflection, making it a unique and engaging experience suitable for all ages.



Click [HERE](#) for tickets!!

Contribution Opportunities

[Bonham VA Needs List](#)

Dear Compatriots,

The Plano Chapter of SAR continues to support our veterans at the Bonham Veterans Center. Your generous contributions are greatly appreciated by our veterans. Attached is a list of current needs. Please inform [BJ Bjorklund](#), chapter VP for Veteran Activities, if you feel called to help with items on this list. Thank you!

Bonham VA Needs Listing

We appreciate your interest in wanting to serve Veterans and below is an updated needs listing for Summer 2025. All items must be new and in original packaging.

Gift Cards:

- Exxon or Shell gas cards (Social Work to assist Veterans to/from appointments)
- Whataburger gift Cards
- Braum's gift Cards

Clothing & Comfort Items:

- Diabetic gripper socks – *Special request as regular gripper socks are too restrictive on legs of the diabetic or patients with larger legs.*
- Men's athletic shorts (various sizes)
- Men's sweat pants - lightweight (various sizes)
- T-shirts or short sleeve pullover
- Body Wash (no bar soap or hotel/motel toiletries)
- Shampoo & Conditioner
- Deodorant
- Lotion
- Electric Razors (for Veterans on blood thinners)
- Razors (disposable double to triple blade)
- Shaving Cream

Refreshments: Individually wrapped snack items to include ingredients are welcome, but no homemade food items. Items such as the following:

- Bottled water
- Breakfast pastries/muffins for coffee cart
- Peanut butter/Cheese crackers
- Chips, Cookies (Variety Pack, Individual Bags)
- Small bottles Gatorade
- Ground Coffee (regular only)
- Juices (small boxed)
- Liquid Creamer (individual packs/cups only)
- Coffee supplies (8 oz cups, sugar/Splenda packets)

Miscellaneous:

- 12 oz Coffee insulated cup/tumbler with lids and handle
- Plastic Models (Cars, Airplanes, Ships, Etc.)
- Leather crafts
- Dominoes (Big)
- Journals, notebooks
- Art supplies - 5x7" canvas, variety of acrylic paint colors
- Adult coloring books, with colors or colored pencils
- Paint by stickers
- Markers
- Postage Stamps
- Pens, stationary
- 1,000, 1,500 and 2,000 piece Jigsaw Puzzles
- Crossword puzzles/word search (large print)
- Sudoku books (large print)
- **New** books, **new** magazines

Seeking Sponsorship for the following items/activities:

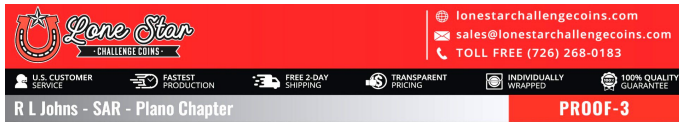
- Monthly Birthday Socials
- Popcorn & Movie
- Bingo & Prizes
- Cooking Group – monthly or quarterly
- Bowling for Domiciliary Residents
- Bonham State Park Pass
- Sporting & Music Events - Baseball Games [Rangers/Roughriders] and movie tickets for Domiciliary residents.

Monetary and In-Kind Donations by mail, please send to:

Sam Rayburn Memorial Veterans Center
Center for Development and Civic Engagement (135)
Atten: Brenda Magness, CDCE Specialist
1201 E.9th Street
Bonham, Texas 75418

- If you would like to make a monetary donation please make check or money order payable to *Bonham VA Medical Center*.
- You can also donate to the Bonham VA Medical Center using E-Donate online: Donating is just a click away with an online donation option that provides community members the account of their choice. E-Donate provides a quick, safe way for you to pledge your support to Veterans online. E-Donate also allows you to make a donation in memory of a loved one. Select *VA North Texas Health Care System* and choose a designated medical center and program, along with amount that you'd like to donate. Every penny of your donation goes to help Veterans.
- All donations must be coordinated with Center for Development and Civic Engagement (CDCE) for acceptance and delivery drop off. Should you have questions regarding donations please call **903-583-6282** or email brenda.magness@va.gov. Items may be mailed to the mailing address listed above.

[The Plano SAR Chapter #37](#) [40th Anniversary Commemorative Coin](#)



SIDE A



SIDE B



*PLEASE REVIEW ALL DETAILS OF THE PROOF TO ENSURE ACCURACY OF SPELLING, GRAPHICS AND PRODUCT SPECS BEFORE APPROVING AS CHANGES CANNOT BE MADE ONCE PRODUCTION BEGINS

**A Special Item to Mark the
40th Anniversary of the
Plano Chapter of the SAR**

The Plano Chapter #37 of the SAR observed its 40th Anniversary in 2025. To celebrate the event, the Chapter Board commissioned a Commemorative Celebration coin intended to both recognize our anniversary and to enhance our budget funds as a fundraiser.

The coin is a full color 2” antique brass coin. The front shows a rendering of the famous Minute Man sculpture by Daniel Chester French, presently standing in Concord in recognition of the Battle of Lexington-Concord. The reverse celebrates our chapter and gives our founding date.

This impressive coin is available to all chapter members for a \$20 donation to the chapter. Donations will enable our chapter to fund even more of the activities and awards we engage in to support veterans, youth awards, public service awards and more.

Please consider making your donation this calendar year. Personally, I have purchased five of the coins to use for recruiting awareness and for recognition.

Make your donation check payable to **Plano SAR Chapter #37** and send it to **Treasurer Scott Knightly at 3121 Satsuma Drive, Dallas TX, 75229**. You will receive one of the coins in return.

Let’s make this a successful recognition program and fundraising opportunity.

The SAR Education Center and Museum Liberty Tree Campaign

Greetings Compatriots,

It is with great pleasure that I inform you of a momentous development in our ongoing efforts to honor and preserve the legacy of our Patriot Ancestors. The Commonwealth of Kentucky's 2024 budget includes an allocation by the Kentucky General Assembly of \$5 million in the upcoming fiscal year to support the construction of the SAR Education Center and Museum in Louisville!

This monumental decision brings us closer to completion of your state-of-the-art facility that will enlighten and inspire citizens for decades. This important funding will keep construction on track, aiming for an opening date in 2026, coinciding with the 250th anniversary of our great Nation.

As we approach this historic 250th Anniversary, the importance of fostering a deep appreciation of our heritage and the principles upon which our country was founded cannot be overstated. The SAR Education Center and Museum will honor the sacrifices and ideals of our patriot ancestors, inspiring and educating present and future citizens to uphold their values of liberty and self-government.

Even if you have supported the project in the past, as our dream becomes reality, I encourage you to consider an additional contribution. The Liberty Tree Campaign is the easiest way to give. A small, recurring, monthly credit card contribution is the simplest way to make a difference. For those who are able, naming opportunities begin at \$100,000.00. Please contact Phil Bloyd for details. Thank you again for your support and for your important work on behalf of the SAR.

Yours in patriotism,

John L. Dodd
President General, 2023-2024

Compatriot News

Compatriot Anniversaries for January

Happy Anniversary, Compatriots!

Billy E Brewer	1993
Mark I Dailey	2016
Mark R Dailey	2016
Tony W Day	2012
Robert L Fletcher	2018
Steven K McLaughlin	1987
Melvin Richards	2022
Thomas M Richards	2022
Kevin P Schuler	2000 (25 Years)
John W Crawford	1998

Patriot Stories

**Contributed by Kyle Potts
Regarding his Patriot Ancestor
Henry Van Heining**

Henry Van Heining was born in October 1738 in Mohawk Valley, New York (200 miles north of New York City). Henry joined the 13th regiment, Albany County, New York Militia where he served for two years. Henry most famously fought in the Battle of Saratoga under General Gates where Henry and seven others captured a British officer from his tent as hostage, for which Henry was promoted to Captain. There is a famous painting that hangs in the Capitol Rotunda – “Surrender of General Burgoyne” – by John Trumbull. This painting depicts General John Burgoyne prepared to surrender his sword to General Gates. American officers gather at the sides to witness the event; their varied dress reflects their different units.

Arriving during the War of 1812, Henry is the first ancestor in this genealogy to settle in what is now Summit County, Ohio where he served as the first Justice of the Peace of Norton, Ohio (Summit County). When Henry arrived in Ohio, the townships of Norton and Northampton were part of Trumbull County, Ohio which is now part of Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio.

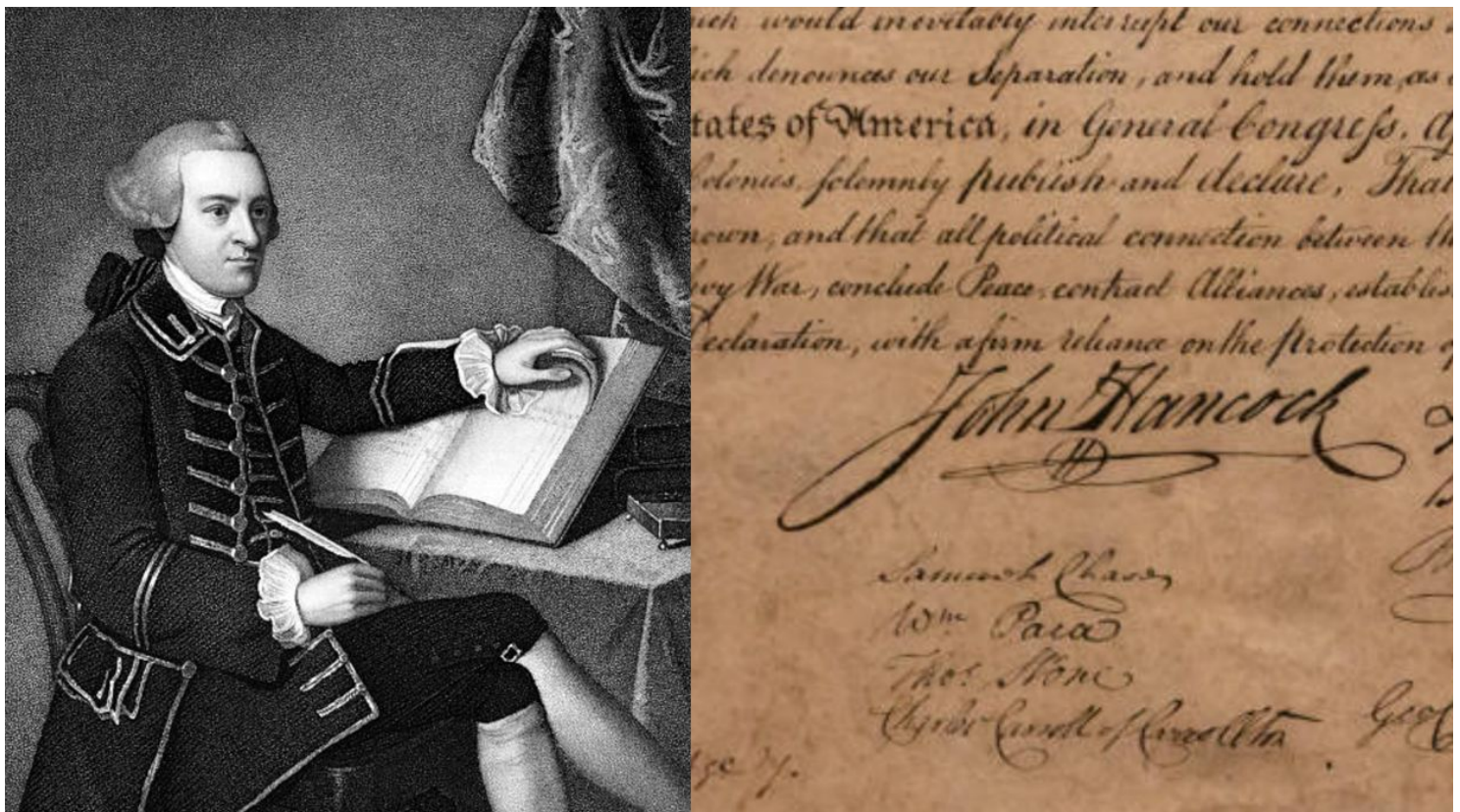
Henry’s first wife had 3 children in New York (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). Henry's second wife, Hannah, had 9 children, mostly in New York. Henry's third wife, Prudence, was too old to bear children when she married Henry and died before he did.

Henry died on Christmas, 1840 and is buried at Norton Center Cemetery in Norton, Ohio (40 miles south of Cleveland).

This Month's Fun Factoid

Why is John Hancock's Signature so Large on the Declaration of Independence?

John Hancock's signature on the Declaration of Independence is famously large because, as President of the Second Continental Congress, he was the first to sign and used his bold, flamboyant style. The popular story that he did it so King George III could read it without glasses is a myth, as the document wasn't meant for the King and his signature style was consistent across many documents. His large signing was a display of defiance and leadership, and his name became a synonym for "signature".



Connect!

[Upcoming Meeting Tidbits and Officer Connection Information](#)

6 January 2026 Meeting Highlights

- The 2026 slate of Chapter Officers will be administered the Oath of Office by Texas SAR State President Mel Oller.
- The Featured Speaker is Mel Oller, Texas SAR State President who will present “Freemasons in Early America and General Washington’s Army”.

Connect with our Officers!

President [Bob Johns](#)

Treasurer [Scott Knightly](#)

Color Guard Commander [Dave Fautheree](#)

VP of Medals and Awards [Kevin Ennis](#)

VP of Chapter Programs [Melvin Richards](#)

VP of Veterans Affairs [BJ Bjorklund](#)

VP of Youth Activities [Alan Roach](#)

Registrar [Duane Carter](#)

Sergeant at Arms [Ronald Carey](#)

Chaplain [Rocky Miller](#)

Secretary [Randall Bush](#)

[Plano SAR Chapter #37 Website](#)

The Minutes

No Meeting in December, therefore
no Minutes!

Seals and delivery
in the presence of us

* W. Cortlandt