

**The M. Graham Clark Chapter
Missouri Society
The Sons of the American Revolution
17 May 2014 Meeting Minutes**

Opening

President J. Y. Miller II opened the M. Graham Clark Chapter meeting at 8:34 am at the Hy-Vee store located at providence and Nifong in Columbia, Missouri. In attendance were 13 members and 6 visitors. Since there was no color guard in attendance, the colors were not posted, but set up in advance. Acting Chaplain COM Cunningham gave the invocation, since Chaplain Merrill was absent. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by COM Woodward and the SAR Pledge was led by COM Lybarger.

The Draping of the Chapter was done in memory of Otis V. "O.V." Wheeler. President Miller read the obituary as well as an article that was in the Columbia newspaper about him. Acting Chaplain Cunningham led the Chapter in the Prayer.

Birthdays for May were as follows: COM Cunningham, COM Kerr, and President Miller's wife. COM Alfred Jones stated his birthday would be in June.

The Chapter adjourned at 8:42 am for breakfast.

Reconvened

The Chapter reconvened at 9:04 am. COM Kerr was called to give the minutes of the 19 April 2014 meeting. The minutes were approved as read.

COM Coutts was called to give the Treasurer's Report. The M. Graham Clark Operations Account balance on 130 April 2014 was \$1,388.41. This amount included a donation of \$70 from an anonymous source. The M. Graham Clark Endowment Fund balance on 30 April 2013 was \$13,123.82, of which \$351.24 is in available funds. The Treasurer's Report was approved as read.

Announcements

President Miller announced that there would be a SAR-sponsored trip to France to commemorate the 100th anniversary of involvement in World War I. The members would pay their own airfare. Anyone interested is to contact President Miller.

President Miller announced that the commemoration of the Battle of Fort San Carlos, which was in the St. Louis area, is to be Sunday, 25 May 2014. The MOSSAR is asking anyone with ancestors who participated in that battle to notify them either directly or through President Miller so that information can be in the prepared material.

Mrs. DeVenney mentioned she is selling Cookbooks for \$17 each and also selling raffle tickets, 3 for \$5 for the quilt "Patriots and Petticoats". For a time she was selling the raffle tickets 6 for \$5 but that was only to three people, so she said if any of them won, they would just need to pay another \$5. The funds for these projects go to NSSAR. She is the 2nd Vice-President of the Ladies Auxiliary, NSSAR.

Mrs. DeVenney is also selling for \$10 dog tags that have one of two dogs posed on them. Her granddaughter, whose project this is, is the President of the CAR and the funds from this project are going to pay for training of comfort dogs for the veterans coming home from the recent wars who are in need of this assistance. This is a very worthy project.

President Miller mentioned the Battle of Glasgow Missouri Civil War Reenactment is to be 10-11 October 2014. COM Lybarger's wife is a descendent of one of the men who was in the battle, on the Union side, and she and COM Lybarger are to be ½ of the parade Grand Marshals.

President Miller announced we have two new members: Justin Hampton and Edward Hampton. Neither were present, so their certificates and rosettes will be mailed.

President Miller announced that in the past, we have had an award for an American History Teacher Award (statewide) and our Chapter is in need of a volunteer to chair the committee to make a selection of a local American History teacher to be considered for this award. COM Dietzel volunteered. COM Miller is the State Chairman and details of the award can be found on our Chapter Webpage.

President Miller asked if the Chapter wanted to take the hiatus from June through July as was done in the past, to not meet. COM Woodward moved to do so, COM Cunningham seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Awards

The following awards were presented:

1. Josiah Fogg Award presented to the Chapter at the State MOSSAR Conference.
2. Lamplighter Award, presented to COM John Coutts.
3. SAR Bronze Roger Sherman Award, presented to COM John D. Miller.
4. SAR Silver Roger Sherman Award, presented to President Miller by State President Richard Bryant for the excellent service provided to MOSSAR.

Program

At this point, President Miller introduced the speaker. His name is COM John D. Miller, and his subject was "Investments of a Rebel". The "rebel" in this case is George Washington.

COM Miller began his presentation by handing out very interesting items: a photo of Mt. Vernon, a photo of another building, a booklet with the 16-sided, 2 story threshing house of George Washington and a book with a transcription of George Washington's will.

COM Miller stated Washington was an uncommon man of uncommon ambition. He was the wealthiest of our United States Presidents, being worth about ½ billion dollars in today's money at the time of his death. COM Miller said he wanted to learn more about Washington than he learned in school, so he has taken several trips to Mt. Vernon, which he described as truly extraordinary.

Washington accumulated his wealth in four different ways: earning it, marrying into it, inheriting it, and investing his wealth. His first job was as a surveyor, in which he earned \$6 to \$7 a day, and from that he had to pay his help and cover his expenses. When he was 18 he had 459 acres leased to John Garner.

Land was what he wanted at the very beginning, and he inherited his first land at the age of 11 when his father died and he inherited 1/5 of the property. He could not do anything with it until he reached age 21 but he had it nonetheless.

When he married Martha Dandridge Custis, he inherited about \$20,000 worth of land and other property. He acquired land from Martha's father-in-law (from her first marriage).

The crop that every farmer of his time and place raised was tobacco. They all measured their honor and reputation by the size of their crops. Washington could not grow the quality of the others—the land he had was clay and they were not conducive to tobacco growing. So, he started growing hemp and flax as well. All the farmers were obsessed with their debts, and

Washington was no different. They all wanted to ride the finest horses and wear the best clothes, to do this, borrowing was rampant. The merchants who encouraged the buying of these materials, and, hence, the debts, were eventually seen by the farmers as being agents of the King. The farmers all cited Proverbs 22:7 as their cornerstone. In the New International Version, this says, "The Rich rule over the poor and the borrower is slave to the lender."

As a CPA, COM Miller stated, not all debt is bad: Good debt is debt that allows the borrower to prosper and bad debt is what is sunk into depreciating assets. So, Washington fell back onto land as the best way to invest, as he felt it would appreciate in value over time, whereas other debt would be riskier.

In 1799 when Washington died, Mt. Vernon was 8,000 acres in size. Washington raised 60 crops over the years. He developed crop rotation as a strategy. He experimented with different fertilizers. He developed 7-year business plans. And, as stated before, he had the 16-sided, 2 story threshing building which allowed him to thresh his wheat without as much loss due to rain and/or wind. He put bars on the windows of the building and locks on the door to prevent robbery.

He developed a Barrel Plow, and on 22 July 1786; he used one of the first one-pass planting implements on a farm. He had a gristmill, which added value by buying corn and grinding it. He had a distillery, and from the grinding he was able to take the mash and use it in distilling over 11,000 gallons of whiskey.

He had fisheries, which were consistently profitable. He used the excess fish parts in the fertilizer experimentation. He had a clothing enterprise.

In short, Mt. Vernon was a thriving village. It had 5 farms and 300 slaves.

One interesting case was, in the summer of 1772, he shipped some herring to the West Indies on a ship called the Fairfax. He didn't get paid, so he sued and the result was he was given the ship, which he in turn sent more shipments to the West Indies in.

After the Revolutionary War, he owned 4,691 along the Little Kanawha River, which fed into the Ohio River. And 17 miles along the Greater Kanawha River.

In 1784 he owned land in western Pennsylvania and so he went there to look it over and there were squatters all over the place. A man named Simpson was supposed to be looking after it for him but he didn't. So, Washington, after he could not convince the squatters that this was his land, decided to try to sell a gristmill and people came around at the time of the sale, but no one bid. They were more interested in seeing him. He was the first most interesting person in the United States. It was then he decided to retreat and gave up on the area. Overall, the whole trip—to the Kanawha and Pennsylvania—was a bust.

In May 1785 he was selected as president of the Potomac Company and he invested 2400 pounds into this venture. Light horse Harry Lee and Madison also invested.

COM Miller stated that as an accountant, it is vital to keep records of investments, and Washington was more than a good accountant, he was a "Detail Freak".

Lastly, Washington had all these investments and he did what every person should do, no matter how big or small the estate. He left a very precise, handwritten will, stating to who what should go, and when. His estate at the time of his death was valued at (in the money of the time) \$530,00, exclusive of Martha and her estate. He was one of the wealthiest people of his time.

Additional Comment

After the program, COM Cunningham, asked if COM DeVenney would say a few words about his recent trip to Ireland. COM DeVenney said it was wonderful time, and he met several of his fellow DeVenney's. He said the time of the "troubles" where the Catholic and Protestant were fighting is still pretty tense. One of the goals of the trip was to recognize the Irish ancestors who fought for our independence and the people there were so welcoming to the group. COM DeVenney stated the ribbon he was wearing, which is orange, green and white striped denotes: Orange for protestant, Green for Catholic and White for tranquility. COM DeVenney said if anyone had the chance to go there, he would suggest they do so.

Closing

With no further business to come before the Chapter, President Miller proceeded to close the meeting. COM Alfred Jones led the SAR Processional and Acting Chaplain Cunningham gave the Benediction. President Miller adjourned the meeting at 10:34 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Harold H. Kerr II, Secretary
M. Graham Clark Chapter, SAR