

“THE GOWANUS GAZETTE”

Historical Journal and Newsletter

The Battle of Brooklyn Chapter

Empire State Society

Sons of the American Revolution

Vol. I Edit. I

LIBERTAS ET PATRIA

20 Sept 2023

Editor's Introduction

As the newly appointed chapter historian and genealogist I thought it would be a good idea to publish a journal focused the history of the American Revolution in each edition I will cover in short articles local history, biographies of soldiers, battles, regiments, genealogy and ancestral research tips, grave markers, historic landmarks and plaques, interesting and odd stories, chapter news and events. Feel free to contact me for if you would like add to the journal or to contribute an article, idea or photo, David Peters

Recent Events

On August 28th of 2023 we commemorated the 247th anniversary of the Battle of Brooklyn at the Old Stone House. There was a great turn out by all groups involved and the general public. We honored the “Maryland 400” by a reading of the roll call of the fallen at Gowanus. A rifle salute was preformed by the Maryland Army National Guard, followed by a musket volley by a guard of Revolutionary War reenactors, commanded by Patrick Wesolosky, National Color Guard Adjutant and chapter Sergeant at Arms Norman Goblen. Followed by an artillery volley by the Huntington Militia Company of Artillery. Taps was played. Present was a large contingent from Maryland of SAR, DAR, and Society of Cincinnati members, the Maryland Army National Guard, SAR Color Guard from various chapters, Empire Society compatriots from the Battle of Brooklyn, Long Island and Continental Chapters and others from Connecticut, New Jersey, the Nansemond Indian Chapter of Virginia as well as officers from the state and national level. Also, present was the Brooklyn DAR, New York Sons of the Revolution, “Gowanus” VFW Post 7096 and American Legion. Afterwards we had an ad hoc chapter meeting.

Reenactors on hand presented a display of maps showing the Battle of Brooklyn and talked with general public about the battle. The reenactors were Michael Grillo as Gen. Washington, George Tonkin, retired NPS ranger as Glover's 14th Continentals “the Marbleheaders”, Jim Sarlo as a Continental Corporal, Luke Boyd from Historic Richmond Town and Justin, 3rd N.Y. Regt., reenactors of Long Island as Militiamen and compatriots Norm Goblen and David Peters. representing their ancestors that fought in

Mile's Regt. (Peters) and Atlee's Musketry Bn. (Goben) of Stirling's Brigade during the Battle of Brooklyn

Special thanks to Eddie and Karen Quinonnes aka Mrs. Q. of Patriot Tours for live streaming the event on You Tube and interviewing many of the participants and Kim and NYCPR staff for providing the facility and a great lunch.



SAR and DAR Members



SAR Color Guard, Reenactors, and Maryland Army National Guard

Staten Island Ferry Hawks Game Color Guard

On 9 Sept. the chapter Color Guard of Dave Nelson, Gary Lane, Norm Goben, Dave Peters and associate members Jim Sarlo and Luke Boyd presented the colors for the Star Spangled Banner prior to the Ferry Hawks game. 2nd V.P. Gary Lane presented a certificate to the Ferry Hawks on behalf of the chapter. Also, present were members of the Staten Island Pulaski Society.



Photo courtesy of compatriot Thomas Taylor



Certificate Presentation to the Ferry Hawks by Gary Lane

UPCOMING EVENTS

21 Sept 2023

Our friend, Historian Richard Melnick will be giving a book talk on his recently published book “Long Island City in 1776, The Revolution Comes to Queens” 6:00 PM at the Queens Historical Society. 143-35 37th Ave., Flushing, Queens. I would recommend you pick up a copy, I’m about half way through it, good stuff if you are interested in Queens history. A few of us are going out, he could use a few hecklers in the audience.

19 Oct. 2023

Chapter meeting at the “White Horse Tavern” 25 Bridge St in Fidi.
Time to be announced later. Can’t beat their 12 oz. PBR and a shot for 5 bucks.

November

Ft Lee, Ft. Tryon/Washington, Evacuation Day, New Bridge Landing, N.J
Particulars to be announced later

TALES FROM THE BROOKLYN OCCUPATION

“It Seemed Like a Good Idea at the Time”

In 1775 two of the Van Brunt brothers Rutger, Jr and Adrian were appointed officers of the New Utrecht Regiment of Militia, the younger Adrian as Captain and the elder Rutger as its Colonel both were pro-independence Whigs. This all changed as of 22 August 1776 when Gen. Howe landed his army of at least 15,000 soldiers on Adrian Van Brunt and a kinsman Isaac Cortelyou’s farms at Gravesend. After the victory at the Battle of Brooklyn, New Utrecht and Gravesend was occupied territory. The residents of the town had two options if they were pro-independence flee and risk losing their property and livelihood or swear an oath of allegiance to King George. The Van Brunt family who had substantial property holdings and were not prepared to flee, so they swore the oath grudgingly, Nov of 1776.

On 13 June 1778 along comes Capt. William Marrener and Lt. John Schenk militiamen and privateers rowing out of Sandy Hook, N.J., landing on the New Utrecht beach in two boats filled with a merry-band of about twenty four militiamen with plans to kidnap the Loyalist Mayor of New York David Matthews who maintained a summer home in Flatbush, other Loyalist officials and British officers. They managed to kidnap three British officers, Majors Moncriffe and Bache and a Captain Forrest before skedaddling back to New Jersey.

Needless to say this did not sit well with the British high command, whose breeches were in a very tight wad by this time. To them the question was “how could a troop of militiamen march through New Utrecht and Flatbush and not be spotted and the alarm not raised”? So they rounded up the usual Whig suspects the Van Brunt brothers Rutger and Adrian and the Van Pelt brothers Rem and Aert and arrested them all for treason and not honoring their oath to the King and not raising the alarm of the militia’s presence. They were sent off to the Provost Marshals jail at the British barracks in New York, near City Hall. Luckily the Sergeant of the Provost Guard was corrupt and was bribed by Rutger Van Brunt, allowing the four men to meet together and get their alibis straight, they were all exonerated on all charges and cheating the hangman's noose they returned home to Brooklyn. On an aside, Rutger Van Brunt’s daughter Marritje (1762-1803) married Colonel Robert Magaw (1738-1790) while he was a prisoner of war held at New Utrecht after his capture at Fort Washington, they married in 1779, after his release they removed to his hometown of Carlisle, Pa., after Marritje’s death in 1803 their son Van Brunt Robert Magaw, inherited some of the family property in New Utrecht.

GENEALOGY CORNER

“Family Ties and Kinsmen”

When researching your ancestor you may just find a footnote, a name on a muster roll or a service record and have trouble determining if this is your ancestor. You may be able to gather additional records and information by researching his extended family. A brother, father, or other kinsman may have substantially more documentation than your ancestor although they served together in the same companies or regiments

One of biggest errors is many new researcher make is mixing up usually kinsmen with the same name. In the 18th century most families would name their children redundantly for relatives. So you may have a soldier named Simeon Williams but his father or uncle and a few first cousins or distant cousins all of the same name and may have served in the same militia regiments and companies or in neighboring towns in the same county or a neighboring county. First cousins can be especially difficult because they are often about the same age and many lived in close proximity of each other. For example in Brinckerhoff’s 2nd Dutchess County Militia Regiment there were three soldiers named Obadiah Cooper, what is their relationship to each other? Father, son, and nephew, uncle, two nephews, three cousins? You get the idea.

Off hand among my own ancestors I can think of Samuel Moser, Jr. (1750-1816) a 5th great grandfather and his first cousin also Samuel Moser (1746-1806) named for his uncle. Both were York County, Pa. Militiamen but the cousin enlisted later in Armand’s Legion later as Samuel Moser, Jr. guarded Hessian prisoners of war from Saratoga at Camp Security under his brother in-law Capt. George Gieselman. Notice the dates on

another 5th great-grandfather, Lt. Matthew Thompson (1754-1823) and his 1st cousin also Matthew Thompson (1754-1821) both were born the same year, died two years apart and both served in the Cumberland Co. Militia. I resolved this through the wills of my ancestors, marriage records and the death place of his cousin in a neighboring county.

Family connections are especially relevant with the militia because everything was organized at the local town, township and county level, many militia companies and regiments are often a few big extended family of fathers, sons, brothers, cousins, nephews, uncles and sons and brothers in-law. Many brothers and cousins also enlisted together in the Continental Line Regiments. A high ranking officers may have relatives serving as his Adjutants, Aide-de-Camps and other staff and subordinate officers. A Captain may have relatives as his Lieutenants, Sergeants or enlisted men under his command, a younger teen son may be the company drummer or fifer.



Arrival of British Troops at Gravesend, Brooklyn 22 Aug 1776

PATRIOT GRAVES and PLAQUES



Photo courtesy of Norman Goben

Memorial plaque of Major William Bernard Gifford at the Reformed Church of Staten Island at Port Richmond. (Rank on the plaque is incorrect)

Brief Biography of Maj. William Bernard Gifford

Born in Northern Ireland, 27 Dec 1750 and educated at the University of Dublin. Emigrated to Elizabethtown, N.J. prior to the war in early the 1770s

Commissioned in the 3rd New Jersey under Col. Elias Dayton, 2nd Lt., 7 Feb 1776, 1st Lt. 10 Aug 1776, Capt. 20 Nov 1776. At Monmouth, he was wounded but remained at his post and took command of 3rd N.J. troops with no field grade officers present.

Promoted to Major, for his bravery and leadership at Monmouth. Aide-de-Camp and staff officer to Generals Putnam, Wayne, Greene, and Washington. Taken as a prisoner of war at Elizabethtown, 25 Jan 1780 sent to Gravesend, Brooklyn, paroled and released 22 Nov. 1780, He married Annetteje Van Voorhees of Gravesend, April of 1780 while he was a prisoner. Never returned to active duty after his parole. He is listed in the 1790 and 1800 Census as living in Flatbush, Brooklyn and in Castleton, Staten Island in

1810. He died in Castleton on 14 Feb 1815. He is believed to be buried in the Old Reformed Churchyard.

Sources: Primarily Heitman's Registry of Continental Officers and Compiled Revolutionary War Service Records, U.S, Census Records

FINIS

Next one the Pennsylvania Special issue

