



The Magazine

*Williamsburg Chapter - Virginia
Society
Sons of the American Revolution*



Vol. XLI

Number 38

May 2026

President's Message

Compatriots,

April proved to be an exceptional month of service, visibility, and patriotic outreach for the Williamsburg Chapter as we continue to honor the 250th Anniversary of America's Independence. I am grateful for the dedication so many of you demonstrated across multiple commemorations and community events. On April 18th, our Color Guard members served with distinction at the inaugural commemoration of the Incident at Sandy Point. This meaningful new observance—held in partnership with the Charles City County 250 Committee—was made possible through the tireless leadership of Past President Bruce Laubach, whose coordination and historical stewardship shaped the entire program. Bruce's efforts ensured that this important Revolutionary era encounter now has a fitting place in our region's Semi quincentennial story. That same day, Eric Ely represented our chapter with enthusiasm and professionalism at the James City County 250 Committee's "Revolutionary Rhythms Family Festival" at Jamestown Beach Event Park. His engagement with families and prospective members at our display table helped broaden public awareness of the SAR and the work we do to preserve the legacy of the American Revolution. Our Color Guard Commander, Ron Miller, also led a well received Presentation of the Colors during state meeting of the Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs on April 21st. His team's presence added dignity and patriotic spirit to the proceedings and reflected great credit on our chapter. I extend sincere thanks to JROTC/ROTC Chair Rick Batten for coordinating the presentation of SAR medals to deserving cadets at Charles City High School, Christopher Newport University, and the College of William & Mary. These awards remain one of our most meaningful investments in the next generation of leaders. Finally, Steve McGuffin represented the chapter at the wreath laying ceremony honoring President James Monroe's birthday at Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond. His participation ensured that Williamsburg SAR was present at this important annual tribute to one of Virginia's—and the nation's—most consequential statesmen. We now look ahead to our own chapter hosted commemoration of The Gunpowder Incident, to be held at 2:00 PM on Saturday, May 3rd, at Upper County Park. I encourage all members to attend as we honor the courage, restraint, and resolve shown by Virginians during that pivotal moment in 1775. As we move into the heart of the 250th Anniversary period, I am deeply encouraged by the commitment, professionalism, and patriotism our members continue to demonstrate. Thank you all for representing the Williamsburg Chapter with such distinction. Together, we are ensuring that the story of the American Revolution is remembered, honored, and passed forward with integrity.

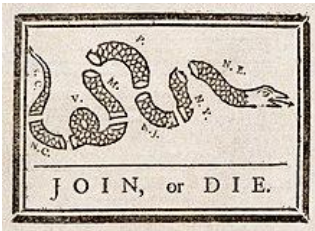
Ron Adolphi - President, Williamsburg Chapter - Virginia Society



Calendar

In Memoriam: Don Swain

Monday May 4, 2026
7:00pm BOM meeting by ZOOM



Saturday May 9, 2026
Chapter Lunch Meeting
11:30 am Social
Fords Colony Country Club

Menu for May Chapter Meeting:

The main entree is BBQ pork shoulder-sliced, cole slaw, cheddar mac & cheese, & cornbread. Dessert is apple pie with vanilla ice cream (a gluten free brownie is available upon request).

The usual alternatives are:

- #1: Grilled Chicken Breast Salad, Greens, Veggies, Balsamic Vinaigrette, or
- #2: 3 Cheeses, Crackers, Melon, Pineapple, & Berries.

The registration deadline is Sunday May 3

The payment deadline is Tuesday May 5

See page 7 for additional information

Chapter News



At the April 11th meeting of the Williamsburg Chapter SAR, Chris Yohn, Virginia Society SAR Recording Secretary and Richmond Chapter Past President gave a most interesting and well researched presentation on the Revolutionary War activities in Pennsylvania. These events are well documented in his book *The American Revolution on the Pennsylvania Frontier*. The stories of patriots and traitors are a chapter of the revolution few have known.

Pictured left to right, Chris Yohn and Ron Adolphi, Williamsburg Chapter President.
Photo courtesy of Bob Davis.

Williamsburg Chapter April Happenings



The Williamsburg Chapter SAR (represented by several of our outstanding color guardsman) participated in two exciting events – Benjamin Harrison’s birthday celebration held at Berkeley Plantation (April 11th) and the commemoration of the incident at Sandy Point in Charles City County (April 18th). Photos submitted by Bruce Laubach and Mike Doucette. Photo on left courtesy of Crystal Phillips).

Color Guard Report - By Ron Miller, Color Guard Commander

The Color Guard participated in three events in April:

April 11 - 300th birthday of Benjamin Harrison at Berkeley Plantation sponsored by Berkeley Plantation and the Descendants of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence.

April 18 - Commemoration of the Incident at Sandy Point. A 250th Anniversary commemoration. On April 18, 1776, an incident at Sandy Point that excited local interest was an engagement involving a British ship loaded with flour. The ship was taken by men at the fort but was later retaken by the British. A Charles City militia man injured in the fighting and a Charles City resident who came to watch the conflict were charged with treason.

April 21 - Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs Convention at Williamsburg Lodge

Coming up in May:

May 3 - Commemoration of the Gunpowder Incident in Williamsburg – Upper County Park, JCC – 2:00 pm (Muster 1:00 pm). This is one of the six events that will qualify Color Guardsmen, who participate, to receive the “Road to Virginia’s Independence” Medal.

May 16 - The Color Guard has the honor of presenting the colors for commencement at Christopher Newport University.

May 25 - Annual Memorial Day Celebration at Colonial Williamsburg 10:00 (Muster 9:15).





UPCOMING EVENTS!

1. May 3: Gunpowder Incident Commemoration
2. May 4: Chapter Board of Managers Meeting
3. May 15-16: 250th Commemoration of 5th Virginia Convention
4. May 25: Memorial Day Observance
5. May 30: Patrick Henry Birthday

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS!

On May 3, 2026, Celebrate the 251st Anniversary of the Gunpowder Incident, a pivotal moment in colonial Virginia's resistance to British authority. This event honors the courage of Virginia militiamen who stood up for their rights and helped set the stage for American independence. The Gunpowder Incident was a bold act of defiance against British attempts to disarm the colonists. It symbolizes the spirit of liberty and the determination that fueled the American Revolution. The event will take place at Upper County Park in Toano from 2-3pm.

On May 27, 1774, an association of 89 former House of Burgesses members sent a petition to the King, expressing displeasure at British Crown treatment toward American colonists. The petition, signed by many Williamsburg-based Patriots, also announced that they planned on holding annual General Congresses with representatives from sister colonies.

The Williamsburg Chapter is looking for a member who can assist the Newsletter Editor/Webmaster with social media operations. If you are interested in learning more about this opportunity, please contact Chapter President Ron Adolphi at ronald.adolphi@cox.net – thanks for your consideration!

My Patriot Ancestor: Ephraim Cleaveland, Captain – 8th Massachusetts Regiment

By Sean Heuvel, Newsletter Editor



Ephraim Cleaveland was born in Dedham, Massachusetts on 13 September 1737 to Ephraim Cleaveland Sr. (1712-1781) and Abigail Curtis Cleaveland (1716-1738). During the French and Indian War, he enlisted on 2 May 1758 as a private in Capt. Eliphalet Fales' Company, Col. Ebenezer Nichols' Regiment, and served at Lake George until his discharge on 18 October 1758. Around that time, he moved to Hardwick, Massachusetts and married Dorothy "Dolly" Whipple on 15 November 1770. During the American Revolution's early stages, he enlisted on 1 July 1775 as a lieutenant in Capt. George Gould's Company, Col. Paul Dudley Sargent's Regiment, and served during the Siege of Boston for the rest of the year. In 1776, he was a first lieutenant in Col. Paul Dudley Sargent's 16th Massachusetts Regiment, Continental Line, and was also on detached service (in fall 1776) as a first lieutenant in Knowlton's Rangers. During this time, he saw action in the New York Campaign as well as at the Battles of Trenton and Princeton.

On 1 January 1777, Ephraim Cleaveland was appointed a captain in Col. Michael Jackson's 8th Massachusetts Regiment, Continental Line, in which his distant cousin, Ebenezer Cleaveland, was also a captain. With the rest of the 8th Massachusetts, he was part of the force led by Maj. Gen. Benedict Arnold that lifted the August 1777 British Siege of Fort Stanwix in upstate New York. He later fought at the Battles of Saratoga with the 8th Massachusetts and was among those led by General Arnold who captured Breyman's Redoubt during the second battle on 7 October 1777. Following Saratoga, he spent the winter of 1777-1778 at Valley Forge in Brig. Gen. Ebenezer Learned's Brigade. It appears that Ephraim Cleaveland also served at the Battle of Monmouth on 28 June 1778 and was listed as sick at Peekskill (New York) in the weeks following the battle – possibly from heat exhaustion.

It is not entirely clear when Ephraim Cleaveland left the Continental Army service. Heitman's Historical Register of Officers of the Continental Army claims that he was deranged on 30 October 1778, while Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors of the Revolutionary War claims that he was reported "arranged out" on 1 April 1779. Regardless of the specific departure date, he returned home to Hardwick, Massachusetts, where he served on the local Committee of Correspondence in 1779. In 1780, it appears that he served for eight months as a captain in the Massachusetts Militia, charged with supervising guards at Rutland Barracks (a Massachusetts prison camp which housed captured British and Hessian troops). After the war, he continued to reside in Hardwick and passed away there on 9 April 1822.

Note: Compatriot Heuvel represents Capt. Ephraim Cleaveland in the Society of the Cincinnati

Source: <https://www.socnh.org/ephraim-cleaveland/>



Register through Member Clicks or mail in the registration form below!

Topic: The American Revolution on the Pennsylvania Frontier

May 9, 2026 Meeting Speaker: Michael Pfeifer

Michael Pfeifer is a historian from Williamsburg, Virginia. Originally from Illinois, Pfeifer first caught the “history bug” on a family vacation to Colonial Williamsburg in 1974. After studying education and US history, his career in museums and historic interpretation began at the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry.

He moved to Virginia in 2004 to take a position as a Historic Interpreter at Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. He has been an English Civil War and American Civil War reenactor for 48 years. Pfeifer and his wife, Heather, are now both employed as Historical Interpreters for Shades Of Our Past, LLC where Michael is concerned with the continuous, methodical research and interpretation of past places, people, and events of the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries.

Reservation for the Saturday, May 9, 2026 Meeting

Name(s) _____

Please reserve _____ regular meals at \$28.50 each

Special need _____

Please make checks payable to “Williamsburg Chapter SAR”

Mail to:

William Dorn – Chapter Treasurer

349 Capeside Court

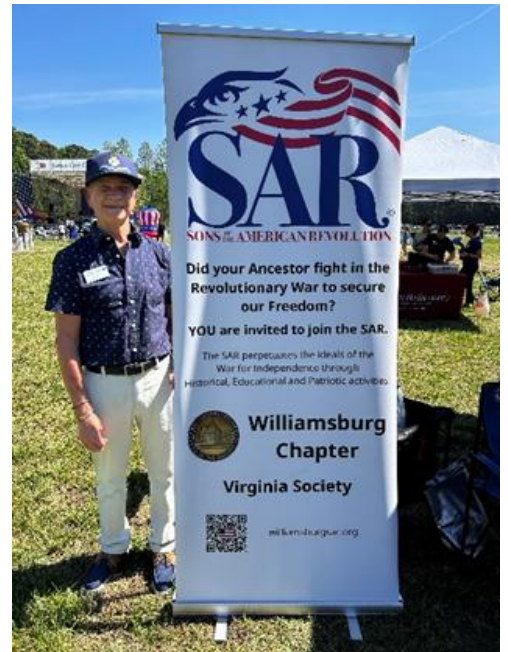
Williamsburg, VA 23188

(252) 658-2348

wrdorn48@gmail.com

Registrar's Corner – By Ron Miller, Registrar

Huzzah to Eric Ely for manning the SAR table at the Revolutionary Rhythms Weekend at the Jamestown Beach Event Park on Saturday, April 21. The Williamsburg Chapter of the NSDAR graciously invited us to share their table to promote the SAR and DAR to the public. Eric talked to a number of potential new members and provided them with a copy of our new informational flyer as well as promoting the SAR to all those in attendance.



Statistics for April 2026:

**8 New requests for membership
Completed 7 New Member Applications
Completed 1 Supplemental Application
Submitted 5 Applications to VSSAR for submission to NSSAR.**

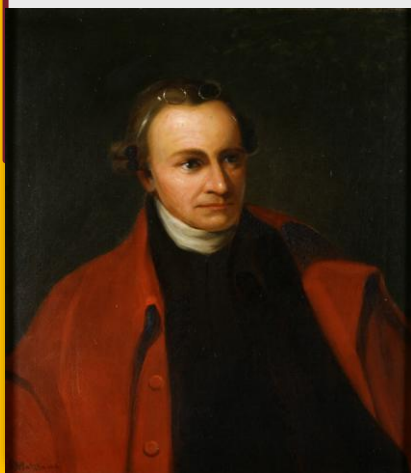
Revolutionary War History of the Month Submitted by Stuart Butler, Chapter Historian

The Virginia Conventions

In August 1774, Virginia's political leaders began to meet in the first of five extra-constitutional conventions to govern Virginia in the wake of overthrowing British royal government. Of the five conventions, two stand out as particularly pivotal or significantly important on the road to Virginia's independence. The first met in the former House of Burgesses from August 1-6, 1774, and established the Virginia Association to pressure Parliament to repeal its punitive measures. The next three conventions met at St. John's Church in Richmond. The second lasted from March 20-27, 1775, and is perhaps the most historically known for Patrick Henry's "Liberty or Death speech." Following Henry's speech, the convention voted to put defensive measures in place. The third and fourth conventions established two Virginia regiments and other defensive measures to check the military forces of Governor Murray trying to maintain control in Norfolk.

The fifth convention met in the former House of Burgesses' chamber from May 5 to July 6, 1776. It was during this convention that the vote was taken to declare Virginia an independent entity outside of the British Empire. While there was a disparity of sentiment over the best way to achieve that status among the 132 delegates, all of the delegates finally voted to end the political relationship with Great Britain, no small feat indeed. At the same time, they voted to send instructions to its delegate in Philadelphia, Richard Henry Lee, to introduce a resolution declaring the American colonies "free and independent states." In furtherance of that assertion, the delegates on June 12 unanimously adopted the Virginia Declaration of Rights, primarily authored by George Mason, and the new state's first written constitution on June 29 with Patrick Henry as its first governor. Until the rest of the colonies adopted a similar stance, Virginia became the first colony to operate as a free and independent state. According to James Madison, on May 15 the British Union Jack was hauled down from the capitol and replaced it with the new continental flag with thirteen red and white stripes.

In April 1865, a Union soldier took the fifth convention journals home with him. The journals remained in the family until 1941 when descendants sold the document to a Philadelphia rare book dealer, James Hook, who, in turn, tried to sell it to the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation for \$25,000. At that time, the Virginia State Library and state Attorney General intervened and managed to return the document to what is now the Library of Virginia by August 1942. Virginia reimbursed the book dealer \$500.



Chaplain's Corner – By George Corbett, Chaplain

May is Upon Us

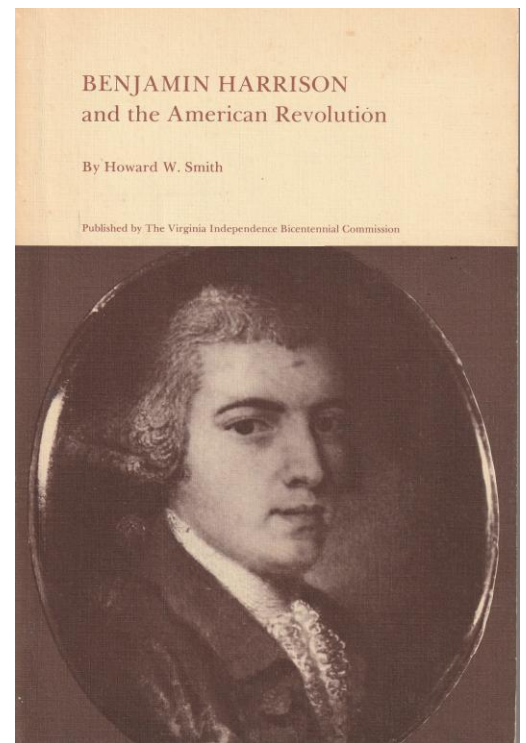
Ah, the merry month of May is upon us!! Flowers in bloom, trees all green with new leaves and the warmer weather is finally here. God's beautiful palette is all around us. When our patriot ancestors first arrived on these shores from a congested and over forested Europe, it must have been a sight to them of the "New World".

It is recorded that the first thing they did when they landed at what is now Berkley plantation, they gave prayers and thanks to the Almighty Creator for their safe passage to this new land. When I see the three ships at Jamestown, I marvel that these patriots would risk all to cross a great ocean in such small craft. Over 150 years later, they would seek independence from the British Crown and claim this great nation for themselves and their prodigy.

As we approach the nation's 250th birthday, let us pause a moment and give eternal thanks for their faith, service and sacrifices. As members of the Sons of the American Revolution, we endeavor to keep their memory alive for this and future generations. May we never fail in this solemn obligation.

Almighty God of our forefathers, we hallow your name and seek your blessing on this great nation. We are indeed thankful for all that You have provided to our nation and its people. We humble ourselves before You and praise your Holy Name. Amen.

Book of the Month – By Stephen Holm, Sergeant-at- Arms



Benjamin Harrison and the American Revolution, by Howard Smith, January 1, 1978

Benjamin Harrison and the American Revolution written by Howard W. Smith, is a concise biographical study of Benjamin Harrison V (1726–1791), a pivotal yet often overshadowed Virginia statesman. Published in 1978 by the Virginia Independence Bicentennial Commission, the book is part of a series of booklets intended to highlight the contributions of Virginia's revolutionary leaders. The book is valued for clarifying that this Benjamin Harrison was a Founding Father, distinguishing him from his presidential descendants who often dominate historical searches. It serves as a good

entry point for researching the life of the planter, merchant, and politician who served as a key Virginia patriot. The book interestingly details Virginia politics, the Continental Congress, and the governance of Virginia during the Revolution. Benjamin Harrison V (1726–1791) was a prominent Virginia planter, 5th Governor of Virginia (1781–1784), and a Founding Father who signed the Declaration of Independence. A wealthy owner of Berkeley Plantation, he served in the House of Burgesses for three decades and was a key delegate to the Continental Congress, playing a crucial role in the American Revolution. Born April 5, 1726, at Berkeley Plantation in Charles City County, Virginia. He attended the College of William and Mary before taking over the family estate. He was a staunch patriot, who opposed the Stamp Act and was elected to the First Continental Congress in

1774. He served as Chairman of the Board of War and was known for his work with George Washington. As a member of the Second Continental Congress, he signed the Declaration of Independence in 1776. He served three terms as Governor (1781-1784) during the challenging final years of the Revolutionary War and post-war period. After the war, Harrison remained active in Virginia politics as a member of the House of Delegates. There he was elected to be Speaker. He died on April 24, 1791, soon after his 65th birthday. He is buried at his beloved Berkeley Plantation.

Family Legacy: He was the father of William Henry Harrison (9th U.S. President) and the great-grandfather of Benjamin Harrison (23rd U.S. President).

2026 Williamsburg Chapter SAR Officers



President	Ron Adolphi
Vice President	Ray Duncombe
Secretary	Mike Braswell
Treasurer	Bill Dorn
Registrar	Ron Miller
Public Relations	Robert Davis III
Newsletter Editor/Webmaster	Sean Heuvel
Chaplain	George Corbett
Sergeant-at-Arms	Stephen Holm
Historian	Stuart Butler
Member-at-Large	Bruce Laubach
Member-at-Large	Michael Doucette
Immediate Past President	John Lynch

SAR GIFTS AND FASHIONABLE APPAREL



SAR apparel and other items are available for purchase at: store.sar.org

Nametags can be purchased at: <https://store.sar.org/personalized-items-C46.aspx>

