



The Musket Report



Newsletter of the Wiregrass Chapter, Alabama Society, Sons of the American Revolution

ENTERPRISE, ALABAMA

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 **Happy 250th Birthday America!** 



The Wiregrass Minutemen were on hand for the City of Andalusia's Semiquincentennial parade on July 4th, 2026. Our SAR chapter is relatively small compared to others. Despite our small size, the Wiregrass Chapter has a large sphere of influence which spans eight counties in southeast Alabama and Andalusia is on our far western boundary. Our Chapter participated in this event at the invitation of the wonderful ladies of the Three Notch Chapter AL DAR. This is perhaps ... *continued on page 2.*

Left. Compatriots from L to R: Travis Parker, Paul Mullins, Perry Vickers, James Crabtree, Phillip Kitchens and Jason Dallas.

New Compatriot Inducted!

Our chapter had the privilege to induct Mr. David Kirkland of Houston County into the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution in a formal ceremony on June 18th. Compatriot Kirkland is the 5th great-grandson of Revolutionary War soldier Joseph Watford who migrated to Alabama from South Carolina probably in the 1820s. The Watfords are considered as among the first settlers of the Wiregrass region along with other families such as the Mixons, Ards, Judahs, Metcalfs and Truettes. Incidentally, Compatriot Kirkland resides roughly 14 miles from the Georgia state line making him our chapter's most eastern member. It is interesting to note; he lives merely six miles from where his patriot ancestor is interred at Big Creek United Methodist Church cemetery south of Rehobeth. This fact stands as a testament to the lasting influence his ancestors made in the Wiregrass. Huzzah!



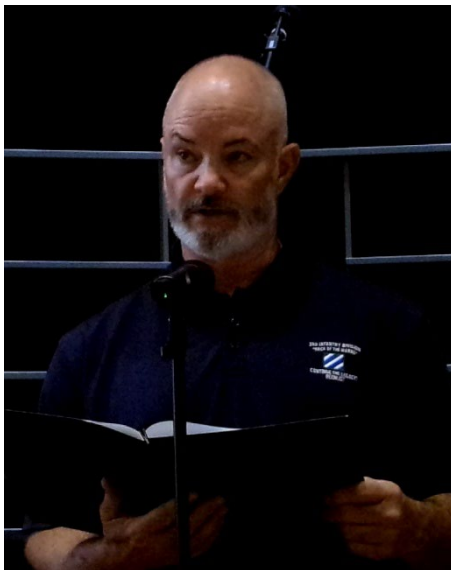
Above: President Kitchens administers the oath to Mr. David Kirkland

The Wiregrass Chapter is saddened to announce the passing of our most senior chapter member Mr. James “Jim” Emory Gilmer Sr. Jim passed away June 18th in Elba, AL. Compatriot Gilmer served as the Wiregrass Chapter President from 2004-2005 and made great contributions to the SAR in a variety of roles for many years. He will be sorely missed.

Happy 250th (*continued from Page 1*) ... the first time any SAR chapter has participated in a public event in Covington County. Our color guard was met with many warm cheers and applause from what seemed to be the entire city of Andalusia along Old Three Notch Road. Some of our compatriots rode the DAR float (which was probably the smarter choice given the extreme heat) that followed the color guard. It was truly a privilege to honor our Revolutionary War patriots in this manner on this very special day.



Above: Wiregrass Color Guard Compatriots Phillip Kithens & Perry Vickers



The evening of July 3rd in Andalusia was a special event as well. Two of our compatriots were

invited to participate in the reading of the Declaration of Independence at City Hall. Many members of the community took turns reading the Declaration to a packed auditorium. The Wiregrass Chapter wishes to thank Chapter Regent Carol Ann Mullins and the Three Notch DAR Chapter for their invitation and support to us in celebrating this event.

Left: Compatriot Paul Mullins recites the Declaration of Independence to a packed crowd at Andalusia City Hall.

Coffee County Women's Group 250th Celebration



It has been a busy Summer! Many organizations across the country are commemorating our Nation's founding. The Wiregrass Minutemen conducted a color guard event at yet another 250th celebration. This time for the Coffee County Women's Group. The event was held at the Enterprise Country Club on June 17th.

Left: Wiregrass Minutemen and VP Bob Cooper saluting in the background.

Dates To Remember

Thursday 20 August, 11:30am: Wiregrass Chapter meeting. Enterprise Country Club.



EATING AND DRINKING IN WASHINGTON'S AMERICA

Compatriot James Crabtree, Chapter Historian

The fare served on tables before, during, and after the Revolution were a product of several factors, including traditional English cooking, New World plants and animals, Imperial imports, and the way some European crops thrived in North America. It made for hearty but simple fare... with some exceptions.

The colonies were primarily agrarian, exporting tobacco, rice, and grain to England. Wheat and rye were grown in the colonies but did not do as well as in Europe until later. Corn, on the other hand, thrived and corn bread supplemented wheat bread. Cabbage, lettuce, beets, turnips, cauliflower, asparagus, carrots, and lentils were planted in the new world, supplemented by potatoes, maize, lima beans, green and red peppers, and sweet potatoes. Vegetables and grains were well-represented in the American diet.

In England, mutton or beef was the meat of choice, and in that order. In America, pork was more common, since raising pigs involved less work than cows and sheep. Chickens were common but were seasonal. In the days before artificial light egg production was also affected, with only a fraction of the production we expect today. Spring and Summer were the best “egg months,” and colonial chickens did not produce as much meat as their modern descendants.

Game animals might find their way into pot as well, especially in the untamed wilderness. Turkeys, carrier pigeons, woodcock, canvasback duck, grouse, quail, and geese were among the game birds one might find, while squirrel, turtle, boar, opossum, venison, and even bear could end up on the plate.

And what kind of prepared dishes? Well, mostly stewed or boiled meat; frying was rare. The meat and vegetables might be fixed up into a pie. One dish common in the colonies (but not in England) was beef and oyster pie, although this was more available in the local tavern than in the home. Saltwater fish might be prepared for dinner on the coast, with smaller freshwater varieties further inland.

Stew was made of the “catch of the day” and the taste might vary from meal to meal depending on what animal was caught or what mushrooms were foraged or simply what was on hand. However, the ingredients would be cooked in ale or beer rather than water. Water was distrusted, and for good reason: contaminated water could bring on yellow fever or dysentery. Alcohol in beer killed germs, although they didn't know that at the time. They just liked beer.

Side dishes might include pickled cabbage or something simple like boiled vegetables. Onion and potato pie made a good side and was cheap to make. Bread in some form would have been offered, although in colonial America this might more often have consisted of corn bread rather than wheat.

For dessert there might be Indian pudding, made of corn meal and molasses. Or fruit pies, like apple and peach. Apple fritters were easy to make and needed little in additional ingredients. Gingerbread loaf could be made from molasses, although this would be hard to get during the Revolution.



And to drink? Tea, of course, delivered from India and China in solid bricks aboard British ships. Coffee became more popular when the American colonies boycotted tea after the British overreacted to the Boston Tea Party. Grown in the West Indies, it was considered more “patriotic” than tea but became more difficult to get after 1776. Chocolate was also available to colonists, brought in from South America.

As already mentioned, ale and beer were common. These were brewed with the colonies and, of course, were main alternative to straight water. Wines were imported from Europe but were mostly consumed by the more well-to-do Americans. Native vineyards were tried, notably by Thomas Jefferson, but could not compete with French, Spanish and German wines.

The Revolution brought on food shortages, as blockade was met with boycott. British ships stopped bringing molasses, rum, wines and British wheat. Smugglers brought in illicit goods but it wasn’t enough. It didn’t help that the British forces often confiscated crops and livestock from Patriot and Tory alike during campaigns.

The Continental Army was, in theory, well-supplied. Each soldier was authorized the following daily ration: 1 lb. of fresh or salted beef, or ¾ lb. of pork, or 1 lb. of salt fish; 1 lb. of soft bread or flour; 1 quart of spruce beer or cider per man, or molasses issued to the company for brewing; 3 pints of peas or beans per week and small weekly allocations of milk, rice, or corn meal. They rarely got it, due to the weak commissary system created by Continental Congress. During one dire year General Washington even allowed the confiscation of food stocks in New Jersey in order to provide the rations that didn’t arrive from the Commissary General.



Following the Revolution the United States had free access to goods from France, Spain, and Germany as well as from Britain in exchange for American farmers agricultural products, such as rice from the southern colonies. A few Americans embraced French cuisine, notably Thomas Jefferson, but the more Americans found out about French food the less they liked it.

Americans developed their own dishes adapted to their own culture. Frontiersmen learned to find food in the wilderness, supplemented by rice or corn meal to make bread. Settlers learned to make do with what could be found and keep livestock which could feed on the leftovers, while established farmers learned to make a variety of hardy meals based on a mix of grown pulses (such as wheat), vegetables from the garden and meat purchased in trade or hunted in the hills and forests which would remain a large part of America into the 20th century. As waves of immigrants from Ireland, Germany and Italy arrived in the United States they brought some of their own cuisine with them and these have been taken by Americans as their own.

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.