

TO ALL COMPATRIOTS AND FRIENDS

SEPTEMBER MEETING

Our September meeting will be something of a change and promises to be a very enjoyable time. We will be meeting at **0930 on 16 September** in the **Auditorium** of the **Elba Elementary School**. This will be the final joint event with the John Coffee Chapter of the DAR in our year long Bicentennial Celebration. The program, *George Washington Your the One*, was developed by the two organizations and will feature Mr. Mike Kozlowski and will be presented to the 6th grade classes of the local school. We are planning to have a Dutch Treat Luncheon at one of the local restaurants with the DAR members following the program. It is hoped as many members as possible can make this event.

We would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest member, **Joe Paul**, of Geneva whose patriot ancestor was Robert Paul, SR who served with the Georgia Militia. His membership certificate was presented at our August meeting. We are keeping a close eye on the mail, for the approval of our other two applications which have been submitted. For those who were unable to attend our last meeting, you missed a very patriotic presentation by Acie Taylor on his participation in the D-Day landing, and combat experiences with Patton's Army along with his personal feeling on the defense of our country and its ideals.

DUES

I want to thank everyone for the great response we have had about the 2000 dues. Remember they are \$37.50 for the upcoming year and a check payable to the Wiregrass Chapter should be sent to: John R. Wallace, 200 E. Silver Oak Dr., Enterprise, AL 36330

PEA RIVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Pea River Historical Society is looking for individuals who would like to volunteer for a few hours a week at their Store in Enterprise, the Depot or assisting with other projects the group has in progress. The historical society is dedicated to preserving the history of the Wiregrass Area and anyone interested should contact Compatriot Roy Schoffner at 347-8887

EAGLE SCOUTS

The Chapter has mailed out 18 certificates to new Eagle Scouts in the area along with information of the National Eagle Scout Essay Contest. There is a deadline of 10 December 1999 for Chapter entries.

ALSAR BOARD MEETING

The ALSAR Board will meet at noon, 18 September in the Alabama Room of the Ramada Inn Statehouse, in Montgomery. This meeting is open to all SAR members. The luncheon is \$15.00 and anyone interested in attending should contact Dick Kemp at 774-9965 as soon as possible.

THE LONG HOT SUMMER OF 1787

Did you know that when the Constitutional Convention was first called, it was only supposed to make suggestions on how to change the existing government (Articles of Confederation)? On February 21, 1787, the Continental Congress resolved that:

...it is expedient that on the second Monday in May next a Convention of delegates who shall have been appointed by the several States be held at Philadelphia for the sole and express purpose of revising the Articles of Confederation...

But the delegates to the convention ignored the rules and created an entirely new constitution and form of government. The original states, except Rhode Island, collectively appointed 70 individuals to the Constitutional Convention, but a number did not accept or could not attend. Among some of the noted individuals of the time who did not attend were Richard Henry Lee, Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Samuel Adams and John Hancock. George Washington, at first, did not even want to attend the convention; but since he was a national figure, he did not want the public to think he had lost faith in the government and went as a delegate from Virginia. Washington served as the president of the Philadelphia Convention and his presence helped assure the future ratification of the new document. In all, 55 delegates attended the Constitutional Convention sessions, but only 39 actually signed the Constitution. The delegates ranged in age from Jonathan Dayton, aged 26, to Benjamin Franklin, aged 81, who was so infirm that he had to be carried to sessions in a sedan chair.

Thomas Jefferson, in describing the 55 men sent to attend the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, called the convention "an assembly of demigods". Probably there had never before been such a collection of minds in one location. Though they may not all have been equally qualified to attend the convention, in

general the delegates were a snapshot of the 18th century upper crust. Statistics prove this: all were white men, mostly Protestant with one or two Catholics and Quakers. Professionally, lawyers composed over a half of the group (34 out of the 55 delegates), while another quarter were planters owning 1,000 acres or more. Political life was also common to the delegates: all had held public office or some variety. Eight had been judges, three were governors of their respective states (four were former governors), 42 had served in Congress, and a handful were speakers of their state legislatures. These men also had the history to back up their reputations: eight had signed the Declaration of Independence, thirty had served in the Continental Army during the war, fifteen had survived true combat situations, and four had been on Washington's personal staff.

Over four long hot months, the delegates argued, proposed, offered compromises and probably cursed and discussed the new constitution. Finally, on September 17, 1787 the document was completed and, as President of the Convention, Washington was the first to sign the document. The Bill of Rights were not part of the original document, but, as part of the compromises made to assure that the individual states would ratify the new constitution, the new Congress added these very important amendments.

September 17th is now recognized as Constitution Day, and is an excellent time to fly our Flag to help celebrate this historic document.

The following is one of many books on the Constitutional Convention of 1787: *Miracle at Philadelphia: The Story of the Constitutional Convention, May to September, 1787* by Catherine Drinker Bowen, Pub: Little, Brown & Co.

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Dick Kemp - President