



# The Musket Report

Newsletter of the Wiregrass Chapter, ALSSAR  
Enterprise, Alabama  
"Home of the Boll Weevil Monument"



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## May Meeting

The May meeting of the Wiregrass Chapter will be held on **18 May at 11:30** at the **Rawls Hotel**. Chapter Vice-President **Jack Oden** will be making a presentation on "The Boston Tea Party".

A special thanks to **Rod Hildreth** for making the trip to Enterprise last month and his excellent presentation on Washington's ancestral homes in England. At the same time a real "hats off" to **Bruce Taylor** for his technical assistance in getting the VCR to work! It was good to have **Mary Ann Wallace** at the meeting. She expressed her thanks to everyone for the cards, e-mails and prayers following her recent accident and surgery. Full recovery is still several months away, but she is making excellent progress.

**John Kelsoe** announced that several new items have been added to the chapter website <[www.wiregrasssar.org](http://www.wiregrasssar.org)> to include the April Newsletter. Several people have elected to use this means as a way to receive their newsletter. If you are interested, please contact the editor so that we can reduce postage/printing costs to the chapter.

The chapter has not had any more new applications go forward last month but several potential new members have been identified. Remember, our goal is to have one new application per month!

## Blue Star Salute



On Monday 17 April, **Andy Spann** and **Bruce Taylor** joined SAR color guard members from AL, MS and GA in the Old

House Chamber of the State Capitol for the reading of the Governor's proclamation announcing 20 May 2006 as Blue Star Salute Day in Alabama to honor all veterans and their families.

This year's event will be at the Shelby County Airport, exit 234 off I-65 North, from 12:00 - 7:00 PM. All color guard members are requested to be present NLT 3PM on the afternoon of the 20th in order to prepare for the presentation of colors at 4:00 PM. Active Duty individuals in uniform will be admitted at no charge as are children under 12. All others are being asked to make a \$5.00 donation to help defray some of the costs associated with the event. For additional information visit:

[www.bluestarsalute.org](http://www.bluestarsalute.org)

## Memorial Day



Let us not forget that May 29th is Memorial Day and a time to remember all those who made the ultimate sacrifice so that we can enjoy all the rights and freedoms we as Americans have today.

## Medal of Appreciation

Designed to recognize members of the Daughters of the American Revolution who provide outstanding service to the SAR, the Medal of Appreciation has been awarded to **Sylvia Jones McDonough**. Through her efforts her three sons have become members of the Wiregrass Chapter. The ALSSAR has a program whereby *any* DAR member who helps obtain three new SAR members is eligible for this award. Just a small way the Sons of the American Revolution can express appreciation for the support given by the DAR to local SAR chapters as we strive in our joint efforts to keep alive the patriotic principles of our forefathers.

## Modern Trail Blazers

**Bruce Taylor, Andy Spann and Rex Everage** clear a w a y



b r u s h  
from the  
f a m i l y  
marker of  
R e v o l u -  
t i o n a r y  
W a r S o l -  
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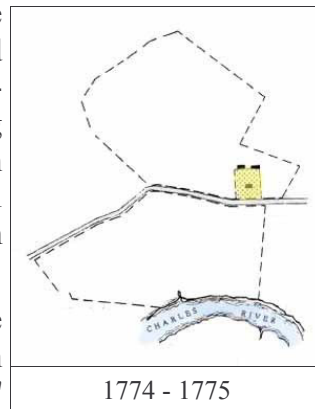
cestor. **John Kelsoe** was also along and provided the picture. In a nearby field, the group was also able to locate a marker denoting the cemetery where William Liles was buried - another Revolutionary War Patriot. Both of these sites are in Covington County. Check [www.wiregrasssar.org](http://www.wiregrasssar.org) for additional pictures.

## This an' That

ALSSAR Board of Managers meeting will be held Saturday, **May 13th** at the Old Court House in Columbia at 10:00. Lunch will be served and the cost is \$15.00 for the meal and registration. This is one of the three times during the year, that there is a general meeting of the ALSSAR. In addition to past state presidents, elected state officers, each chapter has two votes at the meeting. Reservations need to be made ASAP. Check [www.alssar.org](http://www.alssar.org) for additional details.

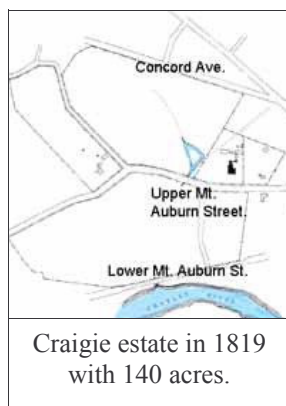
# **Vassall, Craigie, Longfellow: a loyalist, a patriot and a leading American poet. What thread joins these three gentlemen together?**

One Leonard Vassall settled in the Massachusetts Bay Colony before 1723 and between 1746-1747 his son Colonel John Vassall purchased land near the King's Highway in Cambridge. The Colonel's son, also named John, inherited the land upon the death of his father and proceeded to build a house there in 1759. At the time it was necessary to have sufficient lands to farm and support the family so John Vassall purchased neighboring properties and developed a 97 acre estate. This was his summer residence along with his wife, Elizabeth (Oliver), and their several children (most born in the House) until 1774. This was a rural area on the outskirts of Cambridge. On the eve of the American Revolution, they had to flee to Boston due to their Loyalist sympathies.



On June 15, 1775, the Continental Congress in Philadelphia appointed George Washington commander-in-chief of the army. Arriving in Cambridge on the afternoon of July 2, Washington met that evening with the New England generals at Hastings' house. The next day he took command of the army and visited the troops at their lines in Cambridge and Roxbury. The Provincial Congress had arranged for the commander-in-chief to stay in the college president's house, but Washington ... ordered the mansion of John Vassall, Jr. be prepared for his occupancy. The Vassall house would be the army's headquarters for nine months. Washington wrote that he expected to leave Cambridge by autumn, but as the stalemate with the British dragged on into the winter, he sent for his family. Martha Washington, her son, and his wife, arrived in Cambridge on December 11, 1775, and remained here until the army's departure in April 1776. The property was confiscated in 1779 at the end of the American Revolution, as were the properties of most Loyalists and was purchased in 1781 by Nathaniel Tracy.

One of the Revolutionary War staff officers almost never mentioned is that of Apothecary General. This was a position copied from the British Army and the individual was responsible for supplying the army with medicines, hospital stores, surgical instruments, etc. Andrew Craigie, a Boston apothecary and first man to hold the rank of a commissioned pharmaceutical officer in an American army was appointed commissary of medical stores by Massachusetts' Committee of Safety, April 30, 1775. He was present at the Battle of Bunker Hill, and probably assisted in taking care of the sick and wounded there in a makeshift station behind the lines. When Congress reorganized the Army's Medical Department in 1777, Craigie became the first American Apothecary General. Like his British counterpart his duties included the procurement, storage, manufacture, and distribution of the Army's drug requirements, but he also developed an early wholesaling and manufacturing business. Craigie profited from that position during the Revolutionary War and in 1791 purchased the Vassall home and in addition to adding a rear section of the House in 1793 and numerous out buildings, he procured additional land increasing the estate to some 140 acres. At the time of his death Craigie had suffered numerous financial setback, and was in a great deal of debt. His wife Elizabeth inherited one-third of the estate to include the mansion. She continued to make "Castle Craigie" (as it was known locally) her home and began taking in boarders to help cover some of the many expenses.



In 1834, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was appointed to a professorship at Harvard and once set out for Europe by way of preparation. This time his young wife accompanied him, but the journey ended in tragedy. In Rotterdam, his wife died, and Longfellow came alone to Cambridge and the new professorship. The lonely young professor took a room at the historic Craigie House. Longfellow found Mrs. Craigie to be an eccentric woman who kept much to herself and was somewhat scornful of the young men to whom she let rooms. But she read widely and well, and her library contained complete sets of Voltaire and other French masters. Longfellow entered the beautiful old elm-encircled house as a lodger, not knowing that this would become his home for the rest of his life.

In time, the house was purchased by Nathan Appleton. Seven years after he came to Cambridge, Longfellow married again, this time to Frances Appleton, daughter of Nathan Appleton. As a wedding gift the Longfellows were given Craigie House along with four acres of land around the house and five acres between the house and the river. The Longfellows had a great respect for the house which "Washington has rendered sacred." H.W. Longfellow's oldest daughter, continued to live in the Craigie house after her father's death in 1882 until her death in 1928 while his grandson lived in the house from 1917 until his death in 1950.

*We have decided to let Father purchase this grand old mansion if he will...how noble an inheritance, this is where Washington dwelt in every room.*

*- Fanny Appleton Longfellow to Thomas Gold Appleton, August 30, 1843*

The Vassall-Craigie-Longfellow House and Gardens are today operated by the National Parks service.

<http://www.nps.gov/long/>  
<http://lnhstest.brinkster.net/Level2/house/Ext-Garden/Exter-HistProp.htm>  
<http://lnhstest.brinkster.net/Level2/house/HouseEssay/essay.html>



Vassall-Craigie-Longfellow House