



# The Musket Report

Newsletter of the Wiregrass Chapter, ALSSAR

Enterprise, Alabama

"Home of the Boll Weevil Monument"

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



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## May Meeting

The May Meeting of the Wiregrass Chapter will be **Thursday, 17 May at 11:30** at the Rawls Hotel. **Mr. Sam Covington**, a history teacher at the Junior College (and Jack Oden's son-in-law) will be speaking on "*The Growth and Development of Slavery in 17th century colonial Virginia*". At the same time, the status of our September Constitution Week Luncheon will be updated and work started on the chapter's grave marking program for William Wicker.

The chapter wants to extend a big "*Thank You*" to **Bob Portman** for having members out to his forge and sharing some of his "smithy" expertise at our April meeting. Everyone who attended had a great time, and certainly now has a much better appreciation for a hardware store where you can buy a box of nails, rather than having to make them individually!!

We are pleased to report that both **Walt Reeder** and **John Wallace** are home from the hospital and are recovering. Both are taking it easy and not moving too quickly. This is especially true of John whose knee will be in an immobilizing brace for up to six weeks.

## Another Wiregrass Revolutionary War Soldier ?

While the chapter's work in developing a new chapter in Troy has resulted in several new ALSSAR members, it has now led to information about another Revolutionary War Soldier buried in the area. Henry Jones was born in 1762 in Virginia and by his Revolutionary Pension Application filed in Barbour County, AL in 1839 he provided military service both in Virginia and Georgia. His pension was denied as he did not meet the requirement of the day for six months of service. Henry Jones and his third wife appear on the 1850 census of Barbour County, and according to "*Rural Land Owners of Barbour County, AL, 1851*" he died 15 May 1851 and is buried in the Louisville Cemetery. *The Historic Atlas of Alabama Cemetery Locations* lists the cemetery and notes that the first internment was in 1826 and that Jones is one of the common surnames appearing in the cemetery. Certainly a lead the chapter will want to pursue!

## Troy Chapter Update

A special thanks to **Jim Gilmer** and **Bruce Taylor** for conducting a meeting with the Troy group on the 26 April. It was well attended and there is a great deal of enthusiasm among the group. To date *5 members* have been approved with *3 applications* awaiting approval. It is extremely probable that 5 additional applications will be submitted by the end of May. These gentlemen are already thinking about a possible name for this new ALS-SAR chapter. The next meeting will be held at the Troy Library at 6:30 on 24 May.

## JROTC WINNERS

Chapter JROTC Chairman John R. Fuller has announced the following JROTC cadets who have been selected by their respective schools to receive the SAR Bronze JROTC Medal and certificate:

Thomas Malone - Carroll High School  
Jeremy Davis - Headland High School  
Charles Breeden - Daleville High School  
Kyle Gibson - Pike County High School  
Steven Spicer - Enterprise High School  
Letera Thomas - Goshen High School

The chapter salutes these outstanding JROTC cadets for their superior leadership abilities, military bearing and overall academic excellence.

## Books for Veterans

The chapter wishes to extend its thanks to the Ozark-Dale County Library for the some 400 books they recently donated for distribution to Veterans' Facilities. A special "Hats Off" to **Mary Ann Wallace** who was good enough to transport them back to Enterprise.

President Fuller has broken these down into individual boxes and has them available for distribution. The summer travel season is fast approaching and, if your plans take you near a Veterans' home, or hospital, please volunteer to deliver a couple of boxes on your way! This has been an ongoing chapter project for years, and you can be assured your efforts will be appreciated by our veterans!

## Registrar's Report

The chapter wishes to extend its congratulations to **Allison (Al) E. Spann** whose membership application was approved on 12 April. Al is Andy Spann's brother and while living in California he has elected to become part of the Wiregrass Chapter. Again, congratulations to Al in becoming a member and helping to honor his patriot ancestor Charles Spann.



The submission of New membership applications for the chapter have been a little slow these last few months. Keep asking your friends if they have a Revolutionary War Soldier in their family tree, and volunteer to assist in the development of their application.

## Blue Star Salute

The Blue Star Salute, 2007 will be held at the American Village on Monday 28 May (Memorial Day) nr, Monroeville. Color guard members are requested to be at the village NLT 10:00 AM to prepare for the opening ceremonies at 11:00. Please enter via the service road and park in the area of the Red Barn.



**Early Wiregrass Settlers:** Following the American Revolution, families along the eastern seaboard started looking west, for land, and a more prosperous life for themselves and their families. One of these individuals was James Strother Murphree who was born in Franklin Co., NC on 1 August 1796. As a young man he relocated in Carthage, TN and married Matilda Strother Dyer on December 20, 1820. It is possible the two were cousins as they both had the same middle name. James became a successful general trader and merchant in both Rome and Commerce, TN and it was somewhat a matter of chance that brought him to Pike County and Troy.

It seems that one Elisha Moore owed Murphree some \$500.00. Well, Murphree came southward to sell horses, and when he learned Mr. Moore was in Troy he came to Pike County. He was convinced to stay, and very quickly sold his horses. Leaving his son Joel Dyer with a wagon, he returned to TN to obtain more horses. Meanwhile son Joel started hauling groceries from Montgomery and sold them strictly for cash. When the senior Murphree returned, he was pleased to see the amount of business his son had done, and decided to settle in Troy. In January 1845 he sent for his remaining family to join him in Troy.

James Murphree acquired extensive land holdings in Troy. A portion of the land was set aside as a cemetery and it is where his young daughter Almira was buried. This area is now the Murphree Cemetery on College Street. James Strother Murphree died in 1856, while his wife Matilda outlived him by almost 20 years passing away in 1875. In his obituary published 23 July 1856, he is described as *"a kind husband, a faithful parent, and a feeling master, and leaves to mourn his death, a wife and 10 children. He has fallen asleep in the arms of a bleeding Saviour, with that early, heavenly piety that passeth all human understanding; but yet lives to admonish the children he has left to trust in that Saviour who can make a dying bed feel soft as downy pillows are."* James is known to have been a Whig, Mason and a Baptist. He and his wife Matilda had eleven children, which are listed in his estate papers filed in Pike County: William M., James K., Dan, Joel Dyer, Thomas M., Edwin, Benjamin, Sarah, Mary, Elizabeth, and their Almira who died as a child. A monument in the Murphree Cemetery outlines the family and children of the Murphree Family. These descendants were an integral part of the development of both Troy and Pike County. James Strother Murphree was the son of James and Sarah Strother Murphree. James, Sr. served in the NC Line during the American Revolution, and his wife Sarah applied for a Revolutionary War pension. Present day descendants of both William M. and Joel D. have been identified and have expressed interest in becoming members of the new SAR chapter in Troy.

## Goshen Parade



On Saturday 31 March, members of the Wiregrass Chapter Color Guard, augmented with members from the Color Guard of the Cahaba-Coosa Chapter, served as the lead element of the Centennial Parade in downtown Goshen. Our chapter piper Nelson Gwinn led the group, followed by son Jonathan who carried the U.S. Flag. A special thanks goes to William Wyatt, Bob Melton and Glenn Nivens for making the trip down from Shelby County. John Kelsoe, Joe Graves, Andy Spann and Bruce Taylor along with granddaughter Paige in colonial dress also participated in the event. Additional pictures can be seen on the chapter web page at:

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

## Joel Darsey Grave Dedication

On Saturday April 14, members of the Wiregrass and the Tri-State chapters assisted the GASSAR in the grave dedication program of Compatriot Joel Darsey at the Darsey Family Cemetery in Decatur Co., GA.



Chapter President John R. Fuller presented the chapter wreath during the dedication program.



Fletcher and Kenney Dunaway along with Bruce Taylor represented the Alabama Color Guard at the event. John Wallace of our chapter was also in attendance.

**Remember:** The early bird may get the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese in the trap!