



Enterprise, Alabama

June, 1999

TO ALL COMPATRIOTS AND FRIENDS:

The June meeting of the Wiregrass Chapter will be held at **Noon on June 17th at Po' Folks Restaurant in Enterprise.** With the arrival of Summer, we are all involved in a great many extra activities, but why not mark your calendar now, and join your fellow chapter members for lunch that day? We had an excellent May meeting in Geneva, and were very pleased to have some DAR members present. Mr. Lamar Beck gave a very informative presentation on the early history of Geneva County. With the increase in the number of members from Geneva County, it was decided to hold three meetings a year in Geneva. It should be noted that our President is serving as Chairman of three Alabama Society committees during the current year: Flag, Public Affairs and Color Guard. Feel free to direct questions to him regarding these or other committees

ADMINISTRATIVE FORMS

The Chapter President has several forms available which may be of assistance to members. One is for requests for copies of ancestor cards or approved applications available at NSSAR Headquarters. There is a non-refundable fee of \$4.00 for each name searched with no more than five names per order. *Application for SAR Youth Registration* forms are also available.

This form is used to request the registration of an active member's grandson, son or nephew as a candidate for admission to membership in the National Society, according to the National Bylaws in effect at the time of the youngster's formal application for admission. Cost is \$10.00 for each young person, none of whom may be more than 18 years old. A certificate of registration and a lapel pin are forwarded to the member applicant.

NSSAR HANDBOOK

All chapter members who have not yet acquired a NSSAR Handbook are encouraged to do so by the chapter president. The handbook details the organization of our century old society as well as requirements for awards, certificates, bringing in new members, etc. It is the guide to successful involvement in the organization. The back cover of the current SAR Magazine is a handy order form for the handbook along with other items available for the National Headquarters.

STATE CONVENTION

State President Hoyt O. Smith reports the Alabama Society convention during the year 2000 will be held February 25 - 26 at the Hilton Hotel in Huntsville. Registration information and fees will be published in a future Society newsletter.

The Dutch Antilles and the Revolution?

St. Eustatius Island or as it is often called "Statia" is one of several islands of the Dutch Antilles situated off the coast of Venezuela. Discovered in 1493 by Columbus the island changed hands at least 22 times until in 1636 it came under control of the Dutch. Due to its location along shipping routes between Europe and the new world, it became a prime trading post for supplies, both legal and illegal, to various nations. For a while, the island was the only link between Europe and the new American Colonies. Benjamin Franklin had his mail routed through Statia to ensure its safe arrival. Warehouses along the docks of the town of Oranjestad overflowed with food supplies, arms and munitions marked for shipment to George Washington's army. In an attempt to avoid notice, gunpowder was often transported in barrels marked *tea*, *rice* or *molasses*. While there were many Dutch on the island who had sympathy for the American cause, they were also motivated by the profit margin - these merchants could make up to 120% profit on gunpowder!

On November 16, 1776 the American Brig-of-War, *Andrew Doria* flying the new American flag, sailed into the harbor of Statia firing a 13-gun salute indicating America's long sought independence. The 11-gun salute reply, roaring from the canons at Fort Oranje under the command of Dutch Governor Johannes de Graaff, established Statia as the first foreign nation to officially recognize the newly formed United States of America.

At the time neutrality agreements were in effect between Holland and England which made it illegal for the Dutch to sell arms to the American colonies. The fact the island

recognized the American flag, and did not view it as a pirate flag, as the British, greatly upset the English. It was considered "a flagrant insult to His Majesty's colours."

The breeches of the official Dutch stance of neutrality came to a head on December 20th, 1780 when England declared war on Holland. On Feb 3rd, 1781 Statia became the first Dutch target of the British Caribbean Fleet, when approximately 15 ships of the line with some 3,000 troops sailed into the harbor. The Dutch on the island did not know that a state of war existed between the two countries, and quickly surrendered to the vastly superior force.

The amount of trade that was conducted with the American Colonies rapidly became apparent. Within a very short period of time the British captured more than 150 ships that unknowingly sailed into the now British port. The British commander wrote England, "All the Magazines and Storehouses are filled with Provisions, Naval and other Stores, intended for the use of his Majesty's Enemies and Rebel Subjects". The supplies which had flowed though the island of Statia were key in sustaining the American Colonial Forces.

A French Fleet returning from assisting in the victory of Yorktown, captured Statia from the British on November 15, 1781. Following the signing of the Treaty of Paris, the island was returned to the Dutch.

Source: <http://www.revwar.com>
<http://turq.com/statia/>

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