



COL. MATTHEW SINGLETON



Dispatch

Vol. 2, No. 1

April 2025

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

2025 is shaping up to be a busy year for our Chapter and I appreciate everyone helping the chapter. Our members are participating in events at the Sumter Museum for the Grand Opening of the Gen. Thomas Sumter Exhibit, Lafayette Commemoration at Mepkin Abbey, Gen Marion's Commemoration in Pineville, Compatriot Hal Gonzales spoke at the Sumter America 250 presentation at Temple Sinai. We inducted a new member, Compatriot Vinson and we sent two new applications forward. These are all good signs for our chapter.

This year marks the 250th Anniversary of the "Shot Heard Around the World" at Lexington and Concord, which I will attend and join the SAR Contingent marching in the Concord Parade. Starting in 2023, America is celebrating the 250th Anniversary of events during the Revolutionary War. This is a great opportunity to raise our raise our visibility in the community through Sept. 2033. Activity breeds interest, that is the cornerstone of my thoughts regarding the decade of America 250 and long-term vision of the Col. Matthew Singleton Chapter.

We serve **Sumter, Lee, Clarendon**, and the Western part of **Williamsburg** counties. This large service area demands our activity. To that end, our Chapter needs to generate publicity in "our service area" to increase our visibility and potential to recruit new members. I see "America250" as the pathway to increase our community presence and partner where practical with the DAR and even other genealogical societies in our area.

First, we continue our activity in the community; activity breeds interest and interest leads to new members.

- **Art in the Park** was a great success, we had 6 members helping, gave away 122 Coloring Books, and 23 genealogy worksheets to prospective members. As I write this, we've gotten two forms back to begin research.
- Commemorations at **Fort Watson** (April 26) and **Gen Thomas Sumter Commemoration** (August 2).
- Keeping engaged with the **JROTC** in high schools, also; soliciting schools in our counties for students competing in **7 SAR Youth Contests**, plus there is **Eagle Scout** recognition we should be doing.
- We need re-kindle our **Flag Observers Committee**, recognize monthly businesses or individuals flying Old Glory proudly and properly, and do a community news PR for the local paper and on our social media.

Second, let's make a splash with bold events that put us in a positive light and generate earned media.

- Start **Revolutionary War Grave** "finding" and clean up to honor our Patriot Ancestors.
- Start a **Liberty Tree Initiative** in each of our counties where we plant a tree in honor of a Revolutionary War Patriot. It means working with County Councils for permission and location, then we have a Commemoration.
- In February, host **George Washington Birthday Celebration**.
- In September, host a **Constitution Day Celebration**.

Your Humble Servant,

Larry Gamble
President, Col. Matthew Singleton Chapter

Our Next Chapter Meeting:

General Membership Meeting

Tuesday, July 8, 2025

The Restaurant at Second Mill @ 6pm

2390 Broad Street, Sumter, SC

Chapter Meeting Begins @ 7pm

Chapter Business

Secretary's Notes:

We are opening **Nominations** to vote for new **Chapter Secretary**.

If we have anyone willing to self-nominate or be nominated for the position. We will open the floor for a brief election period.

At this time, think of the Chapter in transition. Meeting quarterly, we're looking to try doing more updates with email to get your ideas for planning these events.

A "soft" Constitution Day Celebration is possible. The Museum's BackCountry would be a great back drop for the first celebration.

Contacting schools and scout troops is another low hanging fruit on the idea tree.

Also, arranging Ride Shares with members who want to attend but can't or don't drive.

Thomas Blackmon
Treasurer and Acting Secretary

Registrar's Notes:

With the success of Art in the Park, we have two new researches in progress.

We have 9 applications in the gathering process to prove the lineage to their Patriot Ancestor.

We currently have two supplemental packages being processed at National.

Timelines for packages:

- The Routing process from the time we send your application to State is about 3 weeks for them to forward to National.
- New Applications, once they arrive at National and get marked as received, the current approval wait time is 17 weeks.
- Supplemental Applications, presently take 64 weeks after receipt at National

John Holmberg
Registrar

Meeting Dates and Sponsored Events

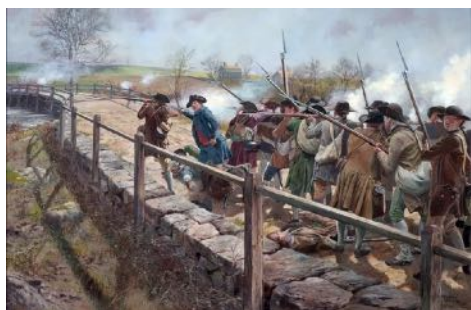
January 14	Chapter Meeting	6pm
April 8	Chapter Meeting	6pm
April 26	Fort Watson Com.	11am
July 8	Chapter Meeting	6pm
August 2	Gen. Sumter Com.	11am
October 14	Chapter Meeting	6pm
December 9	Christmas Gathering	6pm

America's 250th Minute

Shot Heard 'round the World Fired!

April 19, 1775, British Troops and Minutemen clash

Years of tensions brewing, the American colonist and British authorities argued over issues like taxation without representation.



Plus, the British hearing that the colonial stockpiled arms, cannon, and power, they aimed to seize the supplies in Concord and arrest Patriot leaders like Samuel Adams and John Hancock.

Early that morning, about 700 British soldiers, under Lieutenant Colonel Francis Smith, marched toward Concord. In Lexington, they encountered 77 minutemen led by Captain John Parker on the town green. The shot - its origin still debated - rang out (the now famous "shot heard 'round the world"), sparking a brief skirmish.

By the time the British reached Concord, the militia had grown to around 400. After finding little of the stockpiled supplies, the British

faced resistance at the North Bridge by responding Minutemen.

With this, the British retreated to Boston. All along the way, they were harried by growing numbers of minutemen firing from behind trees, walls, and buildings.

These battles ignited the war, rallied colonial support and proved the militia could stand up to the world's premier army. It wasn't a decisive victory, but it was a symbolic one that showed the level of fight the in the Colonials seeking independence and the war had begun in earnest.

As mentioned, the Minutemen were resilient and tactically savvy in this brief but one-sided encounter. The Minutemen led by Captain Parker quickly dispersed after firing their first volley and the fighting at the North Bridge was more organized. The Minutemen fired on command in the face of well-trained British Regulars.

Reports from Lexington listed 8 killed with fighter dispersing quickly. Concord listed the Colonial casualties as 2 killed at the North Bridge with an unknown number wounded.

After both skirmishes, Minutemen dispersed, joining the ambush lines following the British retreating to Boston. The Colonial militia's 16-mile gauntlet proved a continuous drain on British troop morale.



Estimates determined over 1,000 colonials aided in this rolling ambush from the wood line cover and other improvised fighting positions.

For the British, they lost nearly three times the men as the colonists in the unconventional ambush harassment back to Boston. This day became a stark indicator of the effectiveness of the fighting skills honed in the French and Indian Wars years earlier.

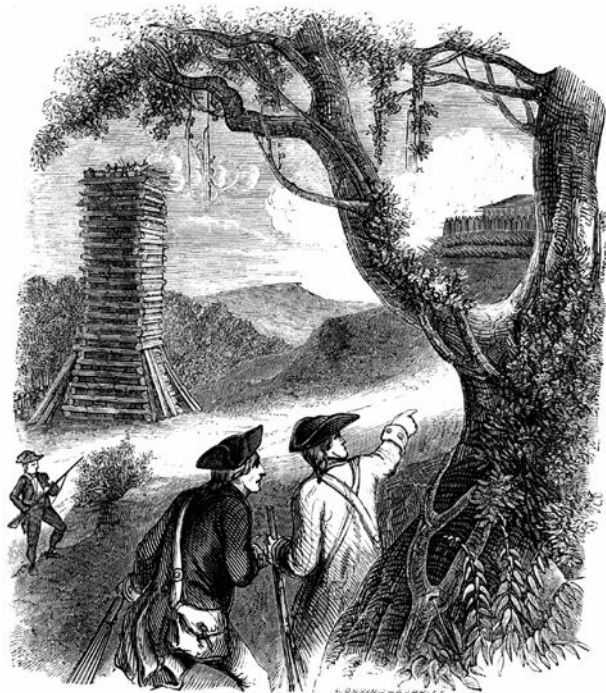
At the end of the day, Colonial casualties at 93; 49 killed, 39 wounded, and 5 missing. While British casualties mounted to 273; 73 killed, 174 wounded, and 26 missing.

Fort Watson Commemoration

Surprising Ingenuity After Six Day Stalemate

April 26, 1781, Gen Marion and LtCol Lee attack

British Lieutenant Colonel John Watson Tadwell Watson ordered the construction of his namesake fort to defend British supply lines from Charles Town to Camden. The location for building the fort placed it on top of an old, abandoned Santee Indian Burial and Ceremonial Mound that was left by the Santee as their numbers dwindled from the diseases brought by the Spanish and other settlers.



By February of 1781, British Lieutenant James McKay commanded 114 men at Fort Watson, a mixture of regulars and loyalists. The Fort sat at a height of thirty feet providing overlooking views of the Santee River and Camden Road from Nelson's Ferry. Despite its small size, being only about twenty yards on each side, the fort had three rows of abatis (sharpened logs and branches roped together) that surrounded the flanks at the base. These formed a difficult barrier for an opposing infantry to cross. Also, trees within rifle range were cut down to short stumps to remove opportunity for cover and concealment.

McKay's troops from the 64th Regiment and Provincial light infantry were adequately supplied and had dug a well inside the stockade, but the garrison relied on its fresh water from nearby Scott's Lake.

McKay's fortifications proved to be effective when American Major General Thomas Sumter failed to capture the fort in February 1781.

On April 14, 1781, Lt. Colonel Henry "Light Horse Lee's Legion met Gen. Francis Marion's outside of Charleston and combined their forces with their first target, Fort Watson. Lt. Col. Lee's force was low on ammunition and supplies, so capturing these from British supply depots would be doubly effective in reequipping his soldiers and further disrupting British supply lines. Gen. Marion already staked a claim in destroying British Lt. Col. Watson's small forces and removing Watson's namesake garrison would be the first step to dealing a humiliating blow.

Lee's Legion and infantry forces totaled about 300 strong while Marion's militia force totaled about 80. Despite the small force size, it had the ability to react move quickly.

Fort Watson – continued:

On April 15, they approached Fort Watson and demanded McKay surrender. The officer politely declined and taunted the Americans to ‘come and take it.’

“There are forty of the principal Torys enclosed in the works. Their captivity would be attended with happy consequences to our distressed friends between the Santee and PeDee,” Lee wrote to Greene.

The seige of Fort Watson started with cutting off British access to the Scott’s Lake water supply but failed due to the British well inside the fort. With no artillery, Marion had no way to force a surrender.

At this point, the militia force was running low on ammo, supplies, and morale. Lee wrote to Gen. Greene requesting a cannon, but the team got lost and never made it to the fight. At the time, Smallpox also hit Marion’s camp, who weren’t inoculated like Lee’s continentals. The militia lacked siege materials and the tools to dig trenches to create their own fortifications. It looked bleak.

Running low on ammunition, the morale among the soldiers, and their commanding officers, began to wane. Marion dealt with whispers of his inability to command his forces while Lee wondered what would become of this short-lived affair. The siege continued nearly a week, a viable idea to attack.

Lieutenant Colonel Hezekiah Maham suggested constructing a tall, oblong tower, ascending higher than the enemy’s rampart. With the fort sitting on the mound roughly twenty-two feet above ground level and a wall of seven feet, this siege tower required just thirty feet tall to have a strategic impact. It give Marion’s sharpshooters an effective field of fire over the fort walls. To protect the militia fighters, the tower’s wall would be reinforced with shields of spliced timber.

To effect this operation, all troops were ordered to visit nearby plantations to obtain axes and cutting tools to begin working on Maham’s Tower.

Felled and notched trees were assembled overnight on April 22. Placed within a short distance of the fort, logs were fastened across each other until the tower rose to the desired thirty feet. The plan called for the revolutionary forces to attack at dawn. Maryland Continentals provided covering fire from behind the stacks of logs under the tower and sharpshooter manned into the crow’s nest firing volleys of musket ball into the fort.

In the fort, men tried to hide behind a makeshift ditch to no avail. Lieutenant McKay was shot and both he and his men crawled around trying to avoid the sharpshooters. Mounting casualties left McKay unable to maintain the defenses as patriots sent volunteers with axes to tear down the abatis.

At this point, McKay saw the assault parties ready to storm the fort, and upon hearing Marion once again offered terms of surrender, the British officer capitulated.

###

Revolutionary History

Slavery, that vile and divisive issue, was a complex issue with the founders trying to form a new nation. Slaves were introduced to the “new world” by the Spanish about 1619. In most of the world, it was a moral evil but a normal way of life to subjugate conquered people. The founders had other ideas, Thomas Jefferson wrote “all men are created equal” in the Declaration of Independence as a signal to others. But in 1775, his focus was independence from Britain and his plan to phase out slavery within a generation failed because compromise was needed for unity of the colonies. George Washington, similarly conflicted, did not want black men (enslaved or free) to serve in the military. He changed his mind when Britain’s Lord Dunmore Proclamation offered freedom to enslaved people who joined their fight. John Adams viewed slavery as a moral stain and in contrast to natural rights he championed. Similarly, Samuel Adams saw it as contrary to personal liberty but in 1775 he sidelined his thoughts to maintain unity among the colonies. Ben Franklin transitioned to an abolitionist in his lifetime.

Before the war started, Vermont prohibited slavery in 1770, Pennsylvania followed in 1780, New Hampshire in 1783 along with Massachusetts (plus what is now Maine), and in 1784 Connecticut and Rhode Island joined the ban on slavery. All before the new Constitution in 1789. Britain got around to banning the practice in 1833. Despite the difference in the north with its growing industrial base, the economic dependence and personal attitudes led to no resolution after the war as a compromise to keep the colonies unified as a new nation.

Visionaries like Jefferson and Washington prophetically said “slavery would be a problem for future generations to solve.” Both Adams and Franklin hoped it would fade away. With no guarantee of freedom, black men did volunteer, putting their faith in what these founding fathers hoped for. Sadly, it did not come to pass equally.

On April 19th, 1775, the historical records show several black men were among the militiamen fighting that day.

Prince Estabrook, probably the most well documented participant was part of Captain John Parker’s company, was wounded on Lexington Green. He survived and later gained his freedom. Since 2008, a memorial sits near Buckman Tavern in Lexington that honors him as the first “Black Minuteman” to fight in the Revolution.

Peter Salem, more famous for his action in battle at Bunker Hill, was freed to join the militia. He is presumed to have joined in the fighting as a Minuteman responding to the gun fire heard coming from Concord.

Cato Steadman and Cato Wood, were from Concord, their names are on rolls tying them to April 19th. It’s not exactly known if either were freedmen but they did rally with the Patriots to resist the British that day.

There are recordings of a few black men in South Carolina fighting for independence despite their situation. Antiqua was rewarded by the SC legislature for his service as a Patriot and a Spy. Sadly, it’s unknown if he was freed for his daring work. Oscar Marion, who fought along side Gen Francis Marion at Savannah in 1779, Charleston in 1780, and Eutaw Springs in 1781, kept a diary that reflects blacks and whites fighting for Liberty together. In December 2006, Pres. George W. Bush presided over a ceremony in the US Capitol recognizing Oscar Marion as an African American Patriot.

Revolutionary War Service lists for South Carolina 1775-1783 lists 168 people (they could be African, Indian, European, or mixed) but the records do not reflect their ethnicity. Hopefully, as more records are discovered and digitized, these fine people can be honored as the true Patriots they were.

###

Compatriots Promoting the SAR:

March 29th - Photos of the early crew at “Art in the Park”



March 13th – Photos from Mepkin Abby Compatriots Bruton and Gonzales



Upcoming Events:

S U M M E R , S O U T H C A R O L I N A

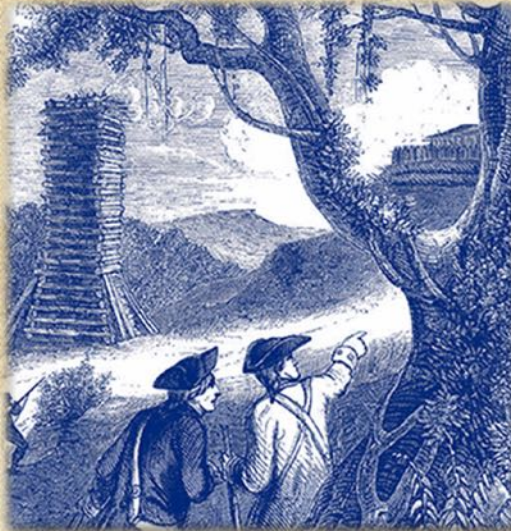


JOIN US!



244TH COMMEMORATION OF THE

SIEGE OF FORT WATSON



SATURDAY, APRIL 26, 2025 AT 11AM



**FORT WATSON BATTLEFIELD
SANTEE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
1142 FORT WATSON RD
SUMMERTON, SC**

SUMTER, SOUTH CAROLINA



JOIN US!



Thos. Sumter COMMEMORATION



THOMAS SUMTER MEMORIAL PARK
7120 ACTON ROAD
DALZELL, SC

SATURDAY
AUGUST 2, 2025
11AM

S U M M E R S O U T H C A R O L I N A



JOIN US!



2 4 4 T H A N N I V E R S A R Y

BATTLE *of* EUTAW SPRINGS

C O M M E M O R A T I O N



AUGUST 29-30, 2025



A National SAR Recognized Event

**** We have a standing invitation to set up an SAR table at BACKCOUNTRY ***.*

A vertical poster for the Sumter Museum Backcountry event. The background is a collage of historical photographs. On the left, a woman in a pink top and white skirt stands near a red wooden building, with a young boy in a blue shirt next to her. Below them, an older man in a striped shirt and black hat is working with a hammer on a wooden structure. On the right, a woman in a white bonnet and checkered vest stands above a young man in a white shirt and black hat holding a long rifle. Below him, a man in a green vest is using a hand plane on a wooden board. At the bottom, a wide shot shows the museum's red wooden buildings and a grassy area with people. The text is centered on a parchment-like background.

SUMTER MUSEUM

BACKCOUNTRY DATES 2025

SPRINGTIME
MAY 10TH

JUNE 21

JULY 19

AUGUST 16

HARVEST
OCTOBER 11

CHRISTMAS
DEC 13TH



SUMTER
MUSEUM

122 NORTH WASHINGTON STREET, SUMTER, SOUTH CAROLINA