

M I N N E S O T A

SAR Salute



THE MINNESOTA SOCIETY SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION NEWSLETTER • www.MinnesotaSAR.org • AUTUMN 2013

ANNUAL CONSTITUTION DAY LUNCHEON



Forty eight members of the Minnesota Society, along with spouses, guests, and members of the Society of the Sons of the Revolution in the State of Minnesota, gathered for the Annual Constitution Day Luncheon. The total attendance was 58. Jax Café had prepared their marvelous Broiled Atlantic Salmon, with a Mushroom Ravioli as the vegetarian alternative. Key Lime Pie topped off the meal.

MNSAR Secretary-Treasurer Jones introduced new members presenting each with their certificate of membership and rosette. Our

active membership now stands at 201, the highest in about 50 years. Compatriot Jones noted that the Minnesota Society had won the Ohio Society Award for enrolling the largest percentage of new members under 30 years of age. The MNSAR also won the Genealogist General's Award for having the lowest percentage of new member applications pended during the year. Arthur Louis Finnell and John Hallberg Jones each received another oak leaf cluster for their Liberty Medals, awarded for being the top line signer on ten new member applications.

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American Eagle

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“THE LAST FULL MEASURE: THE FIRST MINNESOTA AT GETTYSBURG”

COL Ronald McRoberts presented the keynote address during the Constitution Day Luncheon. COL Ronald McRoberts, Ph.D. is a past president of the MNSAR and is currently the Vice President General of the North Central District NSSAR.

McRoberts address included a detailed slide presentation with photos of the principal players, maps and statistics of the history of the First Minnesota and the Battle of Gettysburg. The battle took place 150 years ago in July 1863.

Minnesota Territorial Governor, Alexander Ramsey, happened to be in Washington D.C. at the onset of the Civil War. He immediately went to the War Department and volunteered one thousand men to the Union cause. Minnesota was the newest State of the Union and the first to volunteer troops.

The First Minnesota Volunteer Infantry Regiment mustered for a three-year term when the prevailing enlistment period was three months. During the First Battle of Bull Run (July 1861) the First Minnesota sustained 20% casualties and 28% more during the Battle of Antietam (September 1862). The First Minnesota is most noted for its service on the second day of the three day battle of Gettysburg.

Confederate General Robert E. Lee intended to shift the focus of the summer campaign from war-ravaged northern Virginia and hoped to influence Northern politicians to give up their prosecution of the war and sue for peace.

Just three days before the battle, Major General Joseph Hooker was relieved from command of the Army of the Potomac and replaced by Major General George Meade.

McRoberts stated that Brigadier General John Buford of the Union Calvary saved the Union cause when, at the tower atop Luther Seminary, he noticed clouds of dust indicating where the Army of Northern Virginia was headed. Buford put his force blocking Lee's army and sent a messenger to alert General Reynold's Infantry. Buford was soon reinforced with two corps of Union infantry. Confederate forces converged on the town from the west and north, driving Union defenders back through the streets of town to Cemetery Hill.

The men of the First Minnesota are most remembered for their actions on July 2, 1863.

“...Major General Winfield Scott Hancock, commander of the II Corps, galloped off to the right, where he soon came upon a large body of Confederate infantry advancing unopposed toward the undefended crest of Cemetery Ridge. The general at first thought these were Union troops retreating from the advanced front, but a volley of shots which wounded his aide, Captain W.D.W. Miller, soon revealed the truth. He then spied a Federal Regiment of about three hundred men coming up from the rear. Spurring over to them, Hancock shouted to their colonel, ‘Do you see those colors? Take them.’ It was clearly a suicidal mission, but Colonel William Colville and his First

Minnesota hesitated not a moment. Charging at top speed with bayonets leveled they tore into the enemy force, the brigade of Cadmus Wilcox of A. P. Hill's corps, and brought it to a halt. They took fearful losses – well over two-thirds of their number – but they did their job. They stopped cold a rebel advance which threatened to break the Union line in two, and they gave Hancock the time he needed to gather reinforcements in this area. The charge of the First Minnesota at Gettysburg has become one of the most famous of the whole war.”

The 83.1 percent casualty rate stands to this day as the largest loss by any surviving military unit in U.S. history during a single day's engagement. The unit's flag is now in the Minnesota Capitol's rotunda.

During the morning of July 3, the Confederate infantry were driven from their last toe-hold on Culp's Hill. In the afternoon, after a preliminary artillery bombardment, Lee attacked the Union center on Cemetery Ridge. The Pickett-Pettigrew assault (more popularly known as Pickett's Charge) momentarily pierced the Union line but was driven back with severe casualties.

Rebounding from the horrendous casualties of the previous day, the 47 survivors of the First Minnesota were reinforced by detached Company F, and the reunited regiment was moved slightly northward on Cemetery Ridge. Destiny placed the remaining Minnesotans at one of the



few places where Union lines were breached during Pickett's Charge and required them to charge advancing Confederate troops once again. During the desperate and chaotic fighting, Private Marshall Sherman of Company C captured the colors of the 28th Virginia Infantry and received the Medal of Honor for his achievement.

“No soldier, on any field, in this or any other country, ever displayed grander heroism,” Hancock later said of the First Minnesota.

Sources:

David M. Jordan, Winfield Scott Hancock: A Soldier's Life
Bloomington Indiana University Press, 1988.

<http://www.civilwar.org/battlefields/gettysburg/maps/picketts-charge.html>

Next Meeting

The Annual Business Meeting of the MNSAR will be held at Jax Cafe on Saturday, January 11, 2014. Watch for detailed information to be mailed to you.



2013 MNSAR MEDALS AND AWARDS PROGRAMS

Flag Certificates

On Flag Day five Saint Paul area businesses were presented with flag certificates by the Saint Paul Chapter SAR. This years recipients were:

- Inter Sports, Saint Paul
- Magnolia's Restaurant, Saint Paul
- Molin Concrete Products Company, Lino Lakes
- Northern Wholesale Supply Inc., Lino Lakes
- Otter Lake RV Center, Hugo



Minnesota Society ROTC Awards

Once again the Minnesota Society presented medals in all ROTC-JROTC units in the state. There are 7 college units and 12 high school units.

The Minnesota Society expresses its appreciation to the following Compatriots for doing the presentations: Hon. David Bouschor, Dennis G. Croonquist, Hon. William Johnson, John Hallberg Jones, Truck Morrison, LTC Dean Shepersky, Larry W. Sisk, Marvin Stonecipher, and Hon. Paul Theisen.

ROTC medals are presented to cadets or midshipmen who show a high degree of merit with respect to leadership qualities, military bearing and general excellence.

Minneapolis and St. Paul Chapter Bronze Good Citizenship Medals

The Minneapolis Chapter continued the program of Bronze Good Citizenship Medals in 2013. This chapter has one of the largest programs of any chapter in the country.

In 2013 the Minneapolis Chapter awarded the medal in 24 area high schools and one Naval Sea Cadets squadron. A second Naval Sea Cadet Squadron is expected to present the medal this fall.

Medals were also awarded to eleven St. Paul area high school students by the Saint Paul Chapter this year.

The criteria for the recipient of the Bronze Good Citizenship Medal is Scholarship, Leadership, Character, Service, and an appreciation of Patriotism.

MNSAR MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Membership Changes Since Autumn 2012

NEW MEMBERS:

Name	Patriot
Scott Neil Swisher (Memorial).....	David Minear
Kevin Bradford Hatle	Prince Soper
Andrew Dorsey Hatle	Prince Soper
Matthew Dorsey Hatle.....	Prince Soper
Leonard Arthur Leier, Jr.	Aaron Stoddard
Larry Dale Johnson.....	Abraham Reece
David Robert Brown.....	David Sayre
James Carroll Andrews.....	Joseph Knight
Patrick Carroll Andrews	Joseph Knight
Brendan James Andrews.....	Joseph Knight
Ian Zachary Halker	Jonas Barrett
Cecil Clair Roby (Memorial).....	David Sayre
John Patrick Kvistberg.....	Adam Good
Matthew Magnus Kvistberg	Adam Good
Curtis Joseph Walor.....	John Rhone
Marvin Lane Jansma.....	Cornelius Bassett
Christopher Willard Moberg.....	Samuel Selden
Samuel Benjamin Moberg	Samuel Selden
Joseph Daniel Becker	Adam Good
Keith Sheldon Hansen	Joseph Kinne, Jr.
Jere Gene Mackin	Peter Barnes
Robert Anthony Heberle.....	Christian Ober
Reid Winsor Petit.....	Abraham Winsor
Ronald Alan Erickson.....	Abel Owen
Donald Dean Litchfield	William Trowbridge
Michael Alan Wedell	Matthew Rippey
Randall George Smith	Zachariah Barber
Charles Arthur Tyler	Daniel Wardwell
Frank Donald Stachour.....	Johnny Scott
Alan Bruce Humrickhouse	John Briner

SUPPLEMENTAL PATRIOTS APPROVED:

Brian Alan Brommel.....	William R. Haynes
Brian Alan Brommel.....	William W. Haynes
Dennis Garvin Croonquist.....	James Ackerman
Arthur Louis Finnell	William Duke
Wallace William Frelander	Andrew Kincaid
Marvin Lane Jansma.....	Robert Dunlap
Stephen John Vescelus.....	Joseph W. Corpe
Stephen John Vescelus.....	John Sechler
Stephen John Vescelus.....	John Manning
Curtis John Walor	Johann Dormeyer, Jr.
Curtis John Walor	Jacob Hinds

AMERICAN EAGLE

News of Yesterday Reported Today

Tuesday September 2, 1777

FORT HENRY HOLDS AGAINST INDIAN ATTACK

Wheeling, Virginia – For the past two days Fort Henry was under attack. The failure of the first day's assault, with the reinforcements and the general alarm that was spreading throughout the country, caused the enemy to raise the siege. Except those slain on the bottoms, the defenders of the fort escaped with only one man wounded. But the cabins of the settlers were destroyed, the stock wantonly butchered, and every ravage known to savage warfare inflicted upon the settlement. The fort alone remains, and the settlers round about it have to begin all over again in the building of homes and the acquirement of the means of subsistence.

The fort at Wheeling, first named Fort Fincastle for one of Lord Dunmore's titles, was renamed Fort Henry in honor of Gov. Patrick Henry. The fort is in the shape of a parallelogram, with wooden towers or bastions at each corner, which projects over the lower story and which are pierced by port holes for the use of rifles and muskets. In case of attack the fighting was carried on almost entirely from these bastions. Between these bastions is stretched a strong and closely-connected line of oak and hickory pickets, surrounding entire enclosure, within which are located a magazine powder, barracks and cabins for sheltering those who sought refuge within the stockade. On the roof of the barracks is mounted a swivel gun captured during the French and Indian War by the British. The main entrance is on the east side, which is closed by a strong wooden gate.

In August, 1777, General Hand, of Fort Pitt, learned from spies that the Indians were collecting in large numbers for an attack on some part of the country. He believed that Wheeling would be the point assailed. Therefore, all settlers between Fort Pitt and Point Pleasant were warned of the danger.

On the evening of August 31st, Captain Ogle's scouting party came in from the Beech Bottom fort, and reported the appearance of smoke to the south, which was conjectured as rising from the Grave creek block-house. This was presumably the only thing in nature of warning against the approach of the Indians. Early the next morning a white man and a negro were dispatched to bring in some horses from the bottoms near the creek. The greater part of this bottom was in a field of corn, but a road led down from the settlement towards the mouth of the creek. While passing along this road the two men encountered six Indians, who fired and killed the white man, but apparently allowed the negro to run back toward the fort. Captain Meason at once hurried down the road to the point where the encounter had taken place. Suddenly, from the corn field, arose a large party of savages, some 400 Indians of the Shawnee, Wyandot and Mingo tribes, supplied with arms and ammunition by the English. They completely surrounded the white men. The latter made a gallant resistance and endeavored to retreat. Nearly all were shot down or overpowered, except Captain Meason, who, though wounded, escaped and finally got into the fort. During the struggle in the

corn field, Captain Ogle, with twelve of his scouts, set out to the relief of their comrades, but were likewise ambushed. Ogle made his escape, and two of the soldiers succeeded in getting away, but the total results of this bloody battle on the ground now covered by Wheeling's mercantile and wholesale center was twenty-four killed, wounded or captured. The leader of the war party was thought to be Simon Girty himself. Girty, an American colonial of Scots-Irish ancestry serves as a liaison between the British and their Native American allies.

Encouraged by success the Indians moved forward for an attack. Their first act was to demand surrender, through a "white man" stationed in a window of one of the abandoned cabins. He offered protection to those who surrendered, emphasizing that he spoke for Governor Hamilton, of Detroit, representative of the British army. The reply to the demand for surrender was answered by a shot at the announcer from a port hole, of the fort. Immediately there was a rush at the gate by the Indians, and repeated attempts to break down the wall by the use of battering rams. Failing in this they attempted to set fire to the stockade, carrying flax and other inflammable materials and piling them against the outside. This also failed. The expert riflemen inside, aided by the women who assisted in loading guns, made good use of the time the Indians were in exposed positions. After twenty-three hours of vain attempts to break down the stockade or destroy it by fire, the attackers turned their attention to destruction of houses and proper-



ty of all kinds. Every cabin was burned and all stock, including some 300 cattle, was killed.

In the meantime, Colonel Andrew Swearingen, and 14 men, from Holliday's Fort came down the Ohio River by boat and entered the fort. Major Samuel McCulloch, with 40 men, also arrived from Fort VanMeter. His men rode through the gate, which was thrown open on their approach, but McCulloch was cut off by the Indians and prevented from entering. He was followed by the enemy up Wheeling Hill where he met another body of warriors returning from a foray. Being thus hemmed in he escaped by plunging his horse 300 feet down its eastern side to safety. The Indians rushed to the edge, expecting to see the Major lying dead in a crumpled heap at the bottom of the hill. To their great surprise they instead saw McCulloch, still mounted on his white horse, galloping away from them.

Sources:

<http://wheeling.weirton.lib.wv.us/history/landmark/historic/fthenry.htm>

http://www.wvculture.org/hiStory/journal_vvvh/vvvh1-2.html

Revolutionary War Almanac
by John C. Fredriksen,
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Infobase Publishing, 2006