

M I N N E S O T A

# SAR Salute



THE MINNESOTA SOCIETY SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION NEWSLETTER • [www.MinnesotaSAR.org](http://www.MinnesotaSAR.org) • SPRING 2013



*Keynote Speaker Steven J. Keillor, Ph.D., and Vice President of the Minnesota S.R. Ronald McRoberts.*

## 2013 Annual Washington Day Luncheon

February 23, 2013 – Minneapolis, MN – 45 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 Washington Day Luncheon. The total attendance was 82 – the largest MNSAR crowd in decades.

John Hallberg Jones, MNSAR Secretary-Treasurer, introduced members of the Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War, who were invited to hear the program of special interest to their group.

Jax Cafe prepared a tasty chicken picatta served with capers and green beans. A mushroom ravioli was the vegetarian alternative. The assemblage enjoyed vanilla ice cream with chocolate sauce for dessert.

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American Eagle

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Roseville Eagle Scout Honored

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"Revolutionary Heroes"  
Civil War Heroes Inspired by  
"First Minnesota Regiment:  
Dr. Steven Keillor,

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Observance and Luncheon  
Annual George Washington

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**INSIDE THE  
MNSAR SALUTE...**

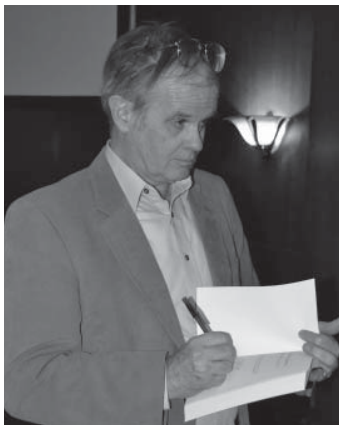
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Minnesota Society  
Sons of the American Revolution  
2700 East Minnehaha Parkway  
Minneapolis, MN 55406-3743





## DR. STEVEN KEILLOR SPEAKS ABOUT THE FIRST MINNESOTA VOLUNTEER REGIMENT



Steven J. Keillor, Ph.D., is currently Adjunct Assistant Professor of History at Bethel University College of Arts and Sciences. Dr. Keillor gave an outstanding presentation entitled, "First Minnesota Regiment: Civil War Heroes Inspired by Revolutionary Heroes."

Keillor noted that both the Union and Confederate soldiers saw an affinity with the American Revolution. The Union soldier saw themselves as defenders of the government that the Revolution created and the Confederate soldiers were rebelling against their mother country, just as the Revolutionary War soldiers did.

When the Civil War broke out Minnesota was a young frontier state of only three years. Governor Ramsey was the first Governor to offer a Volunteer Regiment for the Union. There were no railroads in Minnesota yet so the First Minnesota, mostly clad in lumberjack outfits, took a Mississippi steamer to LaCrosse, Wisconsin where

they boarded a train bound for Washington D.C.

Keillor sited many stories of James Wright. James A. Wright was an orderly sergeant in Company F of the First Minnesota Volunteer Infantry Regiment. As the First Minnesota approached the Potomac region of Virginia and Mount Vernon, thoughts of George Washington crept into James Wright's mind:

*"Swinging to the tide on the Potomac in sight of Fort Washington and with Mount Vernon and Washington's tomb not far away, we naturally thought and talked of the Father of His Country, and wondered what view he would take of the then condition of affairs. The bare idea that he could have endorsed the course that Virginia had taken seemed revolting, but someone asserted that he 'had been a rebel once' and the he 'might, if alive, do it again.' This, of course, brought on an argument, and there were a variety of opinions, which, as usual, settled nothing."*

Later, the Confederates fled Yorktown after a Union siege, an almost exact parallel of the Revolutionary War. Wright relates:

*"It was a dreary, cheerless, miserable existence for men and mules in front of Yorktown – made so to a great degree by the adverse weather conditions. We felt that we could fully sympathize with our Revolutionary ancestors and the French allies in their investment of the*

*same place eighty-odd years before. It was encouraging and sustaining to feel during the discomforts and dangers of the siege that Washington and other illustrious men had been there before us."*

Again, at the Battle of Fredericksburg, just across the Rappahannock River from Ferry Farm, where George Washington grew up, Wright recounts:

*"At the first of these disturbances, I found shelter behind a small enclosure of brickwork three or four feet high, and I think that it was Charley Berdan that was with me. We fired several times from behind this, and a number of bullets struck it. We did not know at the time that the protecting shelter marked the resting place of Mary Washington. And if we had, I have no doubt but we would have crouched down there just the same. It might have seemed a little lacking in respect for the dead to be 'scrapping' with the descendants of her old neighbors over her grave, but, if she had been conscious that we were trying to preserve what her son had fought to establish, I doubt not that she would have willingly offered the protection we found there."*

Afterwards Keillor autographed copies of his book, "No More Gallant a Deed – A Civil War Memoir of the First Minnesota Volunteers." A collection of writings of James A. Wright Edited by Steven J. Keillor.

## Washington Day Luncheon Highlights



New members, Ian Halker, Kevin Hatle, Leonard Leier, Matthew Hatle and Andrew Hatle were presented with certificates and rosettes. Another new member, Larry Johnson is not pictured.



Tom Harris, John Hallberg Jones and Tim Harris were given 25-Year, 50-Year and 25-Year member pins and certificates respectively.

On behalf of the National Society, Thomas Truxtun "Truck" Morrison was presented the Liberty Medal and certificate for being a top-line signer on ten or more SAR applications.



## MINNESOTA EAGLE SCOUT IS RUNNER-UP IN NATIONAL COMPETITION



Micah David Mueller of the Northern Star Council Boy Scouts of America, represented the MNSAR in the national competition of the Eagle Scout and Awards Program. The national winners are:

- First Place – \$8,000 – David Garrison Hager, Florida
- Second Place – \$4,000 – Micah David Mueller, Minnesota
- Third Place – \$2,000 – Chandler Joseph Burke, Texas

### **Congratulations Micah!**

Micah, from Roseville, Minnesota was honored at the annual Washington Day Luncheon held at Jax Cafe. His mother and brother were also in attendance. Micah read his patriotic essay about Benjamin Franklin which is presented in this newsletter.

Micah's application, four generation ancestor chart and his patriotic essay were sent to National SAR headquarters in Louisville, Kentucky to compete with other state winners where he won the \$4,000 scholarship.

### **Patriotic Essay, by Micah David Mueller – 2012 MNSAR Eagle Scout Contest Winner**

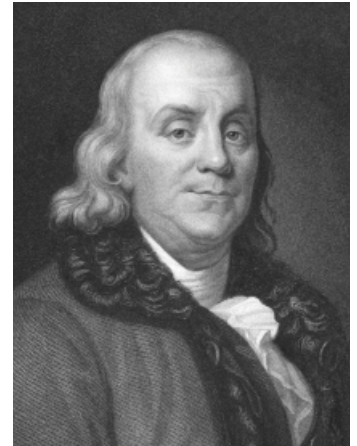
If I could spend an afternoon with any historic or public figure, I would chose Benjamin Franklin. Doctor Franklin lived from 1706 to 1790 in Boston, Philadelphia, London and Paris. I chose Benjamin Franklin as he was one of the most brilliant, talented and accomplished Americans of all time. Additionally, Franklin's fame as a signer of the Declaration of Independence and an American Revolutionary patriot as well as his work in the realms of science, writing, publishing, government and diplomacy, makes him an easy choice. Dr. Franklin was admired and trusted by common men as well as the rich, the educated and the European Royalties.

Benjamin Franklin's work influenced American life during his time and continues to impact our life today. As a scientist, Franklin discovered positive and negative charged electrical currents, serving as the foundation for electricity. As an American politician and humanitarian, he developed the first public libraries, fire departments, universities and the U.S. Post Office. Franklin's patriotic efforts are highlighted by his appointments as the American Ambassador to France during the Revolutionary war. Franklin convinced France to provide financial and military aid to General George Washington. His diplomatic skills with France were key in America's victory over England. In addition, during final

peace negotiations, Franklin obtained the territory from the Appalachian Mountains to the Mississippi River from Great Britain, without firing a shot. This additional victory demonstrated the power of Franklin's words over weapons.

Benjamin Franklin was an analytical as well as a humorous writer. His writing skills dissected and created new ideas, while at the same time entertaining, provoking, educating and changing perceptions. While shying from public speaking, writing was his voice. Franklin's prolific writing efforts created the frameworks for the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation and the U.S. Constitution. Franklin also educated and entertained the common man, writing the *Pennsylvania Gazette* and *Poor Richard's Almanac*. Even in his earliest writings, Franklin challenged Colonial Americans to reflect on their perceptions of women, through stories under his pen name *Silence Dogood*. These widely read and discussed stories demonstrated women's intelligence and wit to be equal to men. Later in life, only 26 days before his death, Franklin protested slavery through his pen name *Historicus*. Writing a satirical defense of slavery, he exposed the fallacy of any supportive arguments.

Franklin's spirit of civic virtue propelled American citizens towards a sense of common pride. For example, Franklin



created a small business loan program for young tradesmen designed to last for 20 years. When his loan program concluded, Franklin directed the remaining funds to be distributed for civic use. Dr. Franklin had a remarkable talent for seeing unmet public needs and developing methods to fulfill them.

Franklin is considered by many to be the original American, or even the founding grandfather of our nation. Conversing with the original American, an afternoon would soar by. And most importantly, Franklin, the quintessential everyman, would make me a better American for the rest of my life.

### **Next Meeting**

The Constitution Day Luncheon will be held at Jax Cafe on October 5, 2013.

Watch for detailed information to be mailed to you.



# AMERICAN EAGLE

News of Yesterday Reported Today

Monday August 25, 1777

## ARNOLD'S RUSE SAVES THE MOHAWK VALLEY

Fort Stanwix, New York – Yesterday, a delighted General Benedict Arnold arrived at Fort Stanwix to discover his ruse had succeeded beyond his wildest hopes. He was all for pursuing and destroying Brigadier-General Barry St. Leger's army, until heavy rains made it impossible to do so. Still, by his wit this time, rather than by his valor, he had not only saved the Mohawk Valley but had destroyed the western end of Lord Germain's pincers.

Near Saratoga, Lieutenant General John Burgoyne, still receiving no word from General Howe, was experiencing every kind of shortage. Without reinforcements, without Indians, without enough food for his horses or men Burgoyne now faced the swarming Americans with scarcely five thousand men.

During July Congress directed Benedict Arnold to report to General Washington. He did, and was sent hurrying north to join General Philip Schuyler, (who, just last week, had been succeeded by General Horatio Gates as commander of northern forces).

Setting out on August 13, Arnold made his primary destination the settlement of German Flats, some seventy houses clustered around a pair of stockades which were teeming with settlers who had fled to them with their horses and cattle at the first rumor of St. Leger's attack.

A well-disciplined force of Indians was making a critical

difference to St. Leger's army at Oriskany. As Burgoyne inched south, New York troops were desperately holding out inside the run-down old star-shaped redoubt at Fort Stanwix while the British and the Loyalists slowly gathered strength. The rout of Herkimer's reinforcements left only the old wood fort between St. Leger and a complete sweep of the Mohawk Valley to the outskirts of Albany. St. Leger was clearly moving in to finish his siege, his zigzag and parallel trenches bringing him close to the fort's rickety walls.

At the settlement of German Flats Arnold realized that he could not hope to conquer St. Leger with frightened militia. He also realized that the enemy commander's Achilles' heel was his Mohawk Indians. From his long and varied experience with redmen, Arnold was aware that they were credulous and extremely superstitious. They also revered a demented or disturbed person as being under the protection of the Great Spirit. Thus he thought that the half-wit Tory named Hon-Yost Schuyler, whom he had arrested and condemned to death as a Loyalist plotter, might be a useful means of causing Chief Brant's Mohawks to desert. When Hon-Yost's mother and brother Nicholas came to him to plead for his life, Arnold replied that he would spare him if he agreed to go to St. Leger to spread the story that "Dark Eagle" – as the Abenakis called this dark-skinned white chief – was approaching Stanwix at

the head of a huge army. Both the mother and brother agreed, but to ensure Hon-Yost's faithful execution of the scheme, Arnold held the brother hostage. Then he removed Hon-Yost's coat to riddle it with bullet holes to support his story of a wild escape. After Hon-Yost departed, unknown to his relatives, Arnold sent a trusted Oneida to follow him to make sure he went to Chief Brant's camp and to corroborate his story.

Wild-eyed and babbling, his coat in tatters, Hon-Yost appeared among the Mohawks like an apparition. They surrounded him with leveled muskets, listening wide-eyed as he blurted out his story. Asked how many men followed Dark Eagle, he pointed dramatically to the leaves on the trees above him. Brant took Hon-Yost to St. Leger, where he reported that Arnold had two thousand men and was only a day's march away. This last news shocked the Mohawks, who had been complaining of a lengthy siege, productive of little loot and fewer scalps. When the Oneida scout told his friends among them that Dark Eagle sought to punish only the British, not their Indian allies, they began to think of desertion.

St. Leger questioned the Oneida, who not only confirmed Hon-Yost's story but further exaggerated Arnold's strength. Shaken, on August 22 the British commander tried to persuade his departing Indian's to stay one more day to attack the fort. They refused, pausing



only long enough to plunder St. Leger's supplies and steal his officer's liquor and clothing. St. Leger was compelled to raise the siege, not only by the defection of Brant's braves but by the panicky departure of his own troops, who fled into the woods, leaving behind all their tents, cannon and other equipment. After them came the whooping, laughing Indians, shouting, "Dark Eagle! Dark Eagle!" St. Leger's men did not stop until they had reached Fort Oswego on the shores of Lake Ontario. Those of them who tarried were murdered and scalped by drunken Mohawks, who later staggered into the fort with British scalps hanging from their belts.

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