



Message from the President



Greetings Compatriots!

I hope this message finds all of you and your families well and in good health. Planning continues for our upcoming April 12th Halifax Day celebration. This year is the 249th Anniversary of the Adoption of the Halifax Resolves and we are

expecting a large crowd again this year. The Event Registration and the Luncheon Reservations have gone live on the State Website and can be accessed using the following link: [Halifax Resolves Day Registration](#). If you would like to attend or know someone who would be interested in attending please pass this link along to them.

Unfortunately we have recently lost a couple of our former chapter members. On February 22, 2025, John Rives "Judge" Manning, Jr., 84 passed away in Wake Forest at the home of his son. On February 24, Ernest Cooper Bobbitt, 77 of Roanoke Rapids passed away with his family by his side. Our sincere condolences go out to the families of each one of these Compatriots.

Compatriot Joe Pearce has had issues with an artificial hip over the past several months. After a couple of surgeries he is now at home recovering and is doing well. He thanks the chapter and members for their prayers and concerns.

We had the honor this past meeting of presenting the winner for the Knight Essay Contest for 2025, Eliza Parker of Faith Christian School and our chapter nominee for the American History Teacher of the Year competition, Ashley Oskiera, who has advanced to the state level and will now compete for the national award. Congratulations to these two inspiring individuals.

We have a special treat coming up at our regular chapter meeting in April. Chapter Genealogist David Gammon will present another very interesting program titled, "Local Effects of the Revolution". We always look forward to a visit by David at our chapter meetings. Along with a great meal prepared by the Women of the Halifax UMC the meeting will take place on Wednesday, May 14th.

Bill Riggan

The next meeting will be held Wed., May 14, at the Halifax United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall, 150 S. King St. in Halifax, at 6:30 pm.

On the agenda: Chapter Genealogist David Gammon will present a program titled, "*Local Effects of the Revolution*".

The cost of the meal will be \$15. Reservations are required and must be in by 5:00 pm on Fri., May 9. Please contact President Riggan at (919) 495-0706 or bill.riggan.sar@gmail.com if you're coming.

Visit our chapter website at:
[Halifax Resolves Chapter website](#)

The NC SAR Newsletter:
["The Old North State"](#)

Dusty Corners

This is the fifth in a series of articles discussing the settlement of estates in 18th and 19th century North Carolina.



In our previous articles, we have discussed settling estates in early North Carolina. This article will cover the interesting topic of dower rights.

A dower right belonged to a wife. Technically she gained this right when she married her husband. It guaranteed her at least one-third of all the lands her husband owned, both preceding and during their marriage. You will often see deeds in which the wife signed away her dower right to a piece of land, meaning she gave her permission for it to be sold. Unfortunately, this rule was not enforced consistently.

At the death of her husband, the widow was still guaranteed at least one-third of his land. If he died intestate, she had to petition the court for her dower right. Such a petition typically included the death date of the deceased, the amount of acres he owned, and a physical description of the land. Several neighbors were usually appointed to lay off the widow's dower right. This land was hers for her lifetime, and she could not sell it. The widow occasionally sold the use of the dower lands, especially if she was moving away, but this use was limited to her lifetime. After her death, this land reverted to the heirs of her husband.

If the husband died testate, the situation changed. If his will left the widow at least one-third of his lands, all was well. But if he left her less than one-third, the widow had to petition the court for her dower lands, just as if her husband had died intestate. Some of these petitions are quite impassioned and accusatory, and reveal the widow felt she had been cheated. The will of James Barnes of Halifax County, who owned plenty of land, simply stated that his widow should apply to the court for her dower right! I can criticize him since he is my direct ancestor.

Remember that a dower right was for the lifetime of the widow, even if she married again. Indeed, some widows were quite adept at collecting dower rights, as there was no limit to the number of dower rights a woman could hold. Peggy Whitaker of near Scotland Neck was married four times, and had a dower right from each husband. As mentioned earlier, such dower rights were only for the widow's lifetime, so when she died, those lands were redistributed among the heirs of each of Peggy's deceased husbands. Untangling that network of lands must have been quite a task!

Researchers may have often seen confusing deeds in which a man and his wife sell land, and in which not only the husband and wife sign the deed, but also an unidentified second woman. Who could she be? In such a case, consider the possibility that she has a dower right in the land, and is signing the deed to give permission for its sale. She is possibly the widowed mother of the man or his wife, or perhaps a stepmother. She might be somebody else altogether! Identifying her might provide an important clue.

In our next article we will discuss the sticky subject of dividing estates.

Questions or comments? Contact David at dbg557377@gmail.com.

David Gammon
Chapter Genealogist

Chapter Activities

February 16, 2025 - V. P. Mark Pace presented a program titled "*A Malcontented People: Armed Insurrection in North Carolina 1677-1775*" to the Orange County Historical Society in Hillsborough, NC. An enthusiastic crowd of over 60 interested individuals attended. Mark is pictured with Chaplain Harry Albert who also attended along with his wife, Sheryll.



March 4, 2025 - Chaplain Harry Albert and wife Sheryll attended several events in Fayetteville relative to the 200th Anniversary of Lafayette's Tour of America. At the time, Lafayette was the last surviving major officer of the Revolution. The picture on the left was from the Lafayette Society's Annual Luncheon and the one on the right is from Lafayette's entrance on March 4th.



Chapter Activities (cont.)

March, 5, 2025 - V. P. Mark Pace in the persona of John Penn presented a program to the William R. Davie Chapter, NC DAR in Durham.



249th Anniversary of the Adoption of the Halifax Resolves

Saturday, April 12th, 2025, Old Courthouse Site in Halifax, 10:00 am. If you want lunch, you must pre-register—either by contacting President Bill Riggan or Steve Avent, or online [here](#). Hope to see you there!



March Chapter Meeting



The ladies of the Halifax UMC prepared another delicious meal for all those who attended tonight's meeting. Guests were Mrs. Hilary Cooper, Shocco Creek Chapter, NC DAR, Mrs. Sheryll Albert, Asbury Station Chapter, NC DAR and DSDI, Mr. Zach Myers of Louisburg and Mr. Will Boddie of Oxford, both are Halifax Resolves Chapter applicants. Eliza Parker of Faith Christian School and her Father. Also present was Mrs. Ashley Oskiera, American History Teacher of the Year chapter nominee and family members.



(left - right) President Riggan presented service awards to the following Compatriots: Preston Fortin, 5 Year SAR Service Award and Secretary Michael Cooper, 10 year SAR Service Award. Congratulations to both for their service to the Sons of the American Revolution.

March Chapter Meeting (cont.)



President Riggan presented the prestigious George S. & Stella M. Knight Essay Medal to the 2025 Chapter recipient, Eliza Parker **(left)** of Faith Christian School in Rocky Mount. She presented her essay titled, ***“Thomas Jefferson’s Revolutionary Impact”***. Along with Eliza, her teacher, Ashley Oskiera **(right)** was also recognized for her mentorship and support.



President Riggan announced the Chapter-level nominee from the Halifax Resolves Chapter for the Dr. Tom & Betty Lawrence American History Teacher of the Year Competition, Mrs. Ashley Oskiera of Faith Christian School. As a result of this nomination Ashley was presented the Bronze Citizenship Medal and Certificate along with a monetary award.

Following the presentation of the Chapter level nomination, Ashley received some good news from the NC Society Teacher of the Year Committee Chairman Renny Taylor. Ashley was recently advanced as the State level winner and will now be eligible for the National level contest.

Following the award presentations our Chaplain Harry Albert presented a very interesting program titled, ***“Exploring NC Postal History Connections to the American Revolution”***, which was very well received.

Chapter Activities (cont.)

March 19, 2025 - V. P Mark Pace in the persona of Granville Co native George Sims participated in a debate with Margaret Wake Tryon (portrayed by Courtney Smith) concerning the pros and cons of the Regulator Movement in North Carolina during the 1770's. They also debated the regulators' influence relative to the American Revolution. The event was attended by over 60 attendees along with many local DAR members.



March 23, 2025 - President Bill Riggan attended the 250th Reenactment of Patrick Henry's iconic ***"Give Me Liberty Or Give Me Death"*** speech at Historic St. John's Church in Richmond, VA on Sunday, April 23, 2025. This real day, real time, real place event was live streamed by PBS and was attended by many dignitaries such as Gov. Glenn Youngkin, filmmaker Ken Burns, Carly Fiorina and members of the Virginia 250 Commission. Pictured below is President Riggan with the Honorable Patrick Henry of Hanover.



The Halifax Dispatch

The Newsletter of the Halifax Resolves Chapter, NC SAR

Steve Avent, Editor

Bill Riggan, Mark Pace, Harry Albert, Contributors



Upcoming Statewide Activities

April 4th and 5th - NC SAR Annual Convention, Embassy Suites by Hilton Greensboro Airport, 204 Centreport Dr, Greensboro, NC 27409.

April 12th - 249th Anniversary of the Adoption of the Halifax Resolves, Historic Halifax, 72 Market St, Halifax, NC 27839, 10:00—11:00 am.

May 17th - Patriots' Day Celebration & 254th Commemoration of the Battle of Alamance, 10:00 AM — 4:00 PM, Alamance Battleground State Historic Site 5803 NC-62, Burlington, NC 27215. Organized by: Alamance Battleground Chapter.



The Sons of the American Revolution honors our Revolutionary War patriot ancestors by promoting patriotism, serving our communities, educating and inspiring future generations about the founding principles of our Country.

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