



# Col. William Grayson Chapter

## *Sons of the American Revolution*

# —Newsletter—



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## **VSSAR Annual Meeting**

On February 7 & 8, 2020, the Virginia Society, Sons of the American Revolution (VSSAR), held its 130th Annual Meeting at the Omni Richmond Hotel in Richmond, Virginia. Chapter President Mike Weyler, Chapter Secretary Dave Button, George Ax, Thad Hartman, and Jeff Sterling represented The Colonel William Grayson Chapter.

Friday afternoon saw the Board of Managers Meeting (BOM), with Friday evening devoted to various workshops. One of those, the Americanism Workshop, was led by Michael Weyler with the assistance of Dave Button and George Ax.

Saturday morning saw the General Membership Meeting, at which the officers for the coming year were elected. The oration finals and other Youth Awards followed the BOM Meeting, where our Chapter's oration winner, Gabriella Lucchetti, and our Eagle Scout Scholarship winner, Robert Tyler Schroder, each received second place in their respective competitions.

Saturday afternoon in the Old House Chamber of the Virginia State Capitol Building was dedicated to the Public Service Awards, the Memorial Service for departed compatriots, and the Chapter Awards Presentations. Finally, Saturday evening was the formal banquet that culminated with the installation of the new VASSAR officers, the highlight being the installation of Bill Schwetke, a member of the Culpeper Minutemen Chapter, as our new VASSAR President. Congratulations, Bill!

The Colonel William Grayson Chapter did very well again this year in terms of awards and recognition. Our chapter received a total of nine streamers and stars for two existing streamers. One of those was for Best Chapter Scrapbook of the Year for 2019, which Leamon Duncan, our chapter Historian, put together for us. Congratulations, Leamon!

Two chapter streamers are of particular note. First was the Wayne & Wink Rouse Award for Youth Program participation in 2019, which we had won each year since the establishment of the award in 2017 when we were the only winner. Second, we also received the Chapter Excellence Award for 2019, the second most coveted award given to a chapter by VASSAR.

The VASSAR Annual Meeting is an excellent opportunity for any compatriot to get a big-picture view of our chapter's place within Virginia's 28 chapters. I strongly encourage all members who are looking for their place in the SAR to attend next year's Annual Meeting, as well as the VASSAR Semi-Annual Meeting later this year and get a broader view of our Society.



Left: President Michael Weyler (R) receives the Robert Tyler Schroder's Second Place Certificate and check from Ken Hawkins, VASSAR Eagle Scout Committee Chairman.



Right: President Weyler with Gabriella Lucchetti holding her Certificate and check after her Second Place finish in the VASSAR Oration Contest.

## *President's Report*

In spite of the fact that COVID-19 dominates not only the news but also our SAR plans and functions, our first quarter of 2020 saw significant activity.

Our January 11 chapter meeting featured Bill Schwetke, at that time the VASSAR First Vice President and now our current VASSAR President. He not only inducted our new members but also installed our chapter's 2020 officers. The bulk of his presentation was the 2020 Congress scheduled for July in Richmond. As president of the host society for the Congress, Bill has been and will be very busy.

On February 7 and 8, the Virginia Society, SAR, held its Annual Meeting in Richmond. A feature of the Annual meeting is the installation of the 2020 VASSAR Officers and the beginning of a new administration. This meeting was where Bill Schwetke became our new VASSAR President. As in the past, our chapter received many awards and much recognition for our contributions to the success of VASSAR programs. A fuller and more detailed description of the event appears in the article above.

On February 15, our flag and wreath were present at the annual celebration of the Crossing of the Dan. Unfortunately, since the Dan had flooded and covered the memorial site at the riverside, the presentation of wreaths was held on higher ground. Nevertheless, it was a well-attended event. A more detailed description of the event appears below.

February 17 saw two different events in which our chapter participated. In the morning, our flag and wreath were present for the ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier of the Revolutionary War in Alexandria. The featured speaker was Rear Admiral Robert Shumaker, a member of the George Mason Chapter, who had been a POW for eight years in North Vietnam.

In the afternoon, with Admiral Schumaker as the Grand Marshal, a large contingent of SAR members marched in the George Washington Birthday Parade in Alexandria. Again, our chapter colors were in the first row of flags. As before, each of these events is described in more detail in the articles below.

On February 22, our flag and wreath were present at the celebration of the 1766 Leedstown Resolutions in Oak Grove, Virginia. The featured speaker for that event was General George Washington (a.k.a. Gregory Fisher). Again, more details in an article below.

Finally, on March 14, we held our second meeting of the year. Our guest speaker was Travis Shaw, who spoke on the famous Beeline March by Maryland and Virginia Riflemen to join Washington at the siege of Boston in 1775.

As it stands today, all VASSAR events in April have been canceled. Whether or not we have a May meeting remains to be seen. We will endeavor to keep you all up to date in the weeks ahead. As for now, each of us must exercise our own best judgment on our contacts with others.

In patriotic service,

Michael E. Weyler

## **Upcoming Events**

**Note: All events subject to change or cancellation due to the coronavirus situation.**

**9 May:** Raid on Martin's Station, Ewing, Va.

**16 May: C.W.G. Chapter Meeting**, Sat., 11 a.m. (meet & greet at 10:30) in the Mountain View Card Room at Heritage Hunt Golf & Country Club, 6901 Arthur Hills Drive, Gainesville, Va. 20155. The price of lunch is \$35 per person. The installation of the 2020 officers will be conducted.

**25 May:** National Memorial Day Parade, Washington, D. C.

**4 Jul:** March to Washington's Tomb, Mount Vernon, Va.

**10-15 July:** National SAR Congress, Richmond, Va.

## **Registrar's Report**

### **NEW MEMBERS APPROVED**

APPLICANT	DATE	PATRIOT
James Burton III, Gainesville, Va.	24 Jan. 2020	Asa Kinne, Pvt, Connecticut Militia
Stewart Gill, Oak Hill, Va.	6 March 2020	Benjamin Porter, Pvt, Connecticut Militia

## **Editor's Note**

This is the last edition of the CWG Chapter Newsletter that I will publish. After being your editor for three years, I felt that it was time to pass the job on to a younger man. I have more than enough other projects to keep me busy.

As of the next edition, Charles "Chuck" Mills will be taking over. I am sure that he will maintain the quality that you are used to seeing. I will be available to guide him when and if needed.

Doing the newsletter has been a great experience, and I want to thank all that have helped make it a success. Your articles, pictures, and other input are what made it all possible. Keep up the excellent work, and Chuck will have no problems.

Barrett Swink, Editor



## *Chapter Activities*

**15 Feb.: South Boston, Va.** To commemorate the 239<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Crossing of the Dan on 14 February 1781, a large number of patriotic organizations, including chapters from the SAR, DAR, and C.A.R., presented wreaths at a Commemoration Ceremony in Constitution Square at South Boston. Colonel William Grayson Chapter was represented by President Michael Weyler, who carried our chapter flag in the march to Constitution Square and there presented our chapter wreath.

The ceremony commemorated General Nathanael Greene's race with British General Cornwallis through North Carolina to get to the Dan River. The smaller American army won the race by a day, crossed the Dan on 14 February 1781, got reinforced and eventually re-crossed the river with a larger force to continue skirmishing with Cornwallis in North Carolina. His forces weakened by his battles with Greene, Cornwallis retreated to Yorktown where he eventually surrendered to General Washington on 19 October 1781.

This year's day of celebration began with opening ceremonies in the Prizery, an old tobacco warehouse that now includes permanent exhibits honoring the memory of the Crossing of the Dan. The opening ceremonies concluded with a music program where the American Revolution was celebrated in song and story from the period.

Following the opening ceremonies, those assembled, led by the VASSAR Color Guard, marched to Constitution Square for the wreath presentations.

While the weather was sunny and crisp, the hoped-for re-enactment of the Crossing of the Dan had to be canceled. The Dan had flooded over its banks, and the riverside Memorial was underwater. Maybe next year we will be able to see a re-enactment of that crossing. Make plans now to be there.



Left: Members of the VASSAR Color Guard.  
Right: CWGC President Michael Weyler.

**17 Feb.: Alexandria, Va.** As part of the George Washington Birthday Celebration in Alexandria, a wreath-laying ceremony was held at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier from the American Revolution located at the Old Presbyterian Meeting House Churchyard Burial Ground in Alexandria. The tomb inscription is shown below.

The ceremony began with the Presentation of Colors by the VASSAR Color Guard. After introductions, the main speaker, RADM Robert Shumaker, gave his remarks and then acted as the Grand Marshal for the George Washington Birthday Parade, that occurred following the wreath-laying ceremonies.

Admiral Shumaker was one of the first naval aviators shot down over Vietnam, and where he spent eight years as a Prisoner of War in North Vietnam. The Admiral is also a S.A.R. Compatriot, being a member and current vice president of the George Mason Chapter of VASSAR.

Fourteen wreaths from the SAR, DAR, and C.A.R. were presented at the tomb of the Unknown Soldier of the American Revolution. Admiral Shumaker presented the first wreath. VASSAR President Bill Schwetke led off the remaining presentations, and our President, Michael Weyler, presented the Colonel William Grayson Chapter wreath.

While most are familiar with the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery, few know of the Tomb of the Unknown from the Revolutionary War. However, based on church records from the Old Presbyterian Meeting House on South Fairfax Street in Alexandria, the Children of the American Revolution dedicated the first memorial ninety-one years ago in 1929.



VASSAR Color Guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier of the American Revolution. CWG Chapter President Michael Weyler, second from the right carrying our chapter colors.



**17 Feb.: Alexandria, Virginia.** On Monday, the City of Alexandria celebrated George Washington's Birthday with the annual parade through the streets of Old Town. The Virginia Society, Sons of the American Revolution, participates in a parade unit sponsored by the George Washington Chapter. The Colonel William Grayson Chapter was represented by President Michael Weyler, who carried our chapter flag in the VASSAR Color Guard.

All members of the Colonel William Grayson chapter should put this annual parade on their calendars since it always occurs on the official holiday and is a local event for all of us living in the Washington DC area. A uniform, while encouraged, is not a requirement for marching in the parade, so all come next year.



SAR. unit at the start of the parade, with VASSAR Color Guard leading off behind the banner.

**17 Feb.: Operation Ancestor Search.** On Monday, 17 February, Compatriot Barry Schwoerer presented an Operation Ancestor Search to U.S. Army SGT Rosa Dispennette. Sgt Dispennette was injured in a non-combat mishap and is in the recovery unit at Ft. Belvoir Community Hospital. An NSSAR Wounded Warrior coin was not appropriate for non-combat injuries.

**22 Feb.: Oak Grove, Va.** At the Ingleside Vineyards in Oak Grove, Virginia, the Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Society held its 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Commemoration of the 1766 Leedstown Resolutions. Fifteen men signed The Leedstown Resolutions on 27 Feb 1766 in protest of the 1765 Stamp Act and other intolerable acts enacted by Parliament.

The VASSAR Color Guard advanced and presented the colors for the Pledge of Allegiance. Colonel William Grayson Chapter President Michael Weyler and Chapter Historian Leamon Duncan participated in the Color Guard. Charles Belfield of the James Monroe Chapter discussed the significance of the Leedstown Resolutions and read the names of the 115 patriots who gathered from around Virginia, including William Grayson, to sign this document.

Attendance at the ceremony was 155 people, and any descendants of the 155 patriots who signed the document were asked to stand as their patriot ancestor's name was read. Many in the room rose as the names were being read.

The main speaker was General George Washington, portrayed by Gregory Fisher of Fairfax. In character, he discussed his life during the Revolution. VASSAR President Bill Schwetke gave thanks to the General following his remarks. Mike Lyman then announced the presenters of fourteen wreaths from several VASSAR and VADAR chapters, as well as the Virginia Society Order of the Founders and Patriots of America. President Weyler presented the Colonel William Grayson Chapter wreath.

The ceremony was followed by a catered lunch and a time of fellowship.



VASSAR Color Guard at the celebration of the Leedstown Resolutions.

Colonel William Grayson Chapter members present were President Michael Weyler (third from R) and Historian Leamon Duncan (C).



**29 Feb.: Louisville, Ky.** At the SAR Spring Leadership Conference/Trustees Meeting in Louisville, the Colonel William Grayson Chapter received two awards usually given to individual SAR Compatriots; the Dr. Joseph Warren Medal with Patron Bar and the Thomas Jefferson Certificate.

These awards recognize significant monetary contributions by our chapter at the Patron level to two national endowment funds.

The Thomas Jefferson Certificate Award recognized the chapter's financial support of the Knight Essay Contest Endowment Fund. The Dr. Joseph Warren Medal and Patron Bar recognized the chapter's financial support of the Joseph S. Rumbaugh Historical Oration Contest Endowment Fund.

These endowment funds provide for the prizes given to the winners at the national level of the SAR Essay and Oration Contests, two of our national Youth Program contests.

Thanks to the generosity of our members, the Colonel William Grayson Chapter continues to be recognized at the national level for our contributions to the mission and goals of the National Society, Sons of the American Revolution.



Chapter President Michael Weyler showing the certificates and Medal at our chapter meeting on March 14.

**29 Feb.: Alexandria, Va.** Mount Vernon High School in Alexandria hosted area students as they vied for a chance to represent their schools in Richmond at the annual Virginia History Day competition on April 25-26, 2020.

Virginia History Day is a history competition for students in grades four through twelve. To qualify for the state competition, students must place first or second in their category and age division at one of eight district-level competitions held throughout Virginia. Northern Virginia is designated as District 5 and covers schools in the cities of Alexandria, Falls Church, Fredericksburg, Manassas, Manassas Park, and the counties of Arlington, Caroline, Fairfax, Fauquier, King George, Lancaster, Loudoun, Northumberland, Prince William, Richmond, Spotsylvania, Stafford, and Westmoreland.

Over seventy volunteer judges, most of whom are professional educators, historians, and authors, came to Mount Vernon High School to judge the various categories in the District 5 match up.

Many prestigious organizations recognize the importance of this event for students in Northern Virginia; such as the Mount Vernon Estate, the National Museum of the Marine Corps, the Sons of the American Revolution, and the Virginia Museum of History and Culture, each of which gave out Special Awards to outstanding students.

The top two entries in each category and age division at the state level will compete at the National History Day finals. The theme of National History Day 2020 is *Breaking Barriers in History*. Students are encouraged to examine their topic's influence on history and draw conclusions about how their subject had an impact on the course of events and individuals, communities, nations, or the world.

Students in grades four and five are assigned to the Elementary Division, students in grades six through eight are assigned to the Junior Division, and students in grades nine through twelve are assigned to the Senior Division. In the Junior and Senior Divisions, students may compete in any one of nine categories, either as an individual or in a group.

Due to the growth of the program, the state contest comprises two days this year. The Elementary and Junior Divisions will compete on April 25th, and the Senior Division will compete on April 26th. Both days of the competition will be held at the Virginia Museum of History & Culture in Richmond.

The National Contest is the final stage of a series of contests at local and state/affiliate levels. Students begin their journey by presenting their projects in classrooms, schools, and districts around the world. Top entries advance to the state/affiliate level contests. The top two entries in every category at the state/affiliate level then advance to the National Contest. The 2020 National Contest will be held June 14-18, 2020, at the University of Maryland, College Park.

Each year nearly 3,000 students with their families and teachers gather at the University of Maryland, College Park, for the week-long event. These enthusiastic groups come from all fifty United States, Washington, D.C., Guam, American Samoa, Puerto Rico, and international schools in China, Korea, and South Asia.



History judges from various local chapters of the Sons of the American Revolution.

**14 Mar.: Haymarket, Va.** At our chapter's 14 March 2020 meeting at the Heritage Hunt Golf and Country Club, chapter President Michael Weyler, and Compatriot John Callaway, our chapter's ROTC/JROTC/Sea Cadet Program Chairman, presented the SAR JROTC Chapter Award to Cadet 2Lt Jeffrey Lazar, Battlefield High School, as the Chapter's winner of the enhanced JROTC competition. Cadet Lazar was nominated by the Chapter to compete at the state level in the Virginia Society, Sons of the American Revolution (VASSAR) competition.

In 1997, the President General of the S.A.R. authorized the enhancement of the JROTC program. Since then, each S.A.R. Chapter can select an Outstanding JROTC Cadet and enter that cadet into their State Society's Outstanding JROTC Cadet program. The winner of the State competition will be entered into the National Outstanding JROTC Recognition program. The winner of the national program will receive a special award at the S.A.R. National Congress.

Cadets must meet the following criteria to qualify to enter the enhanced competition:



- 1) Shall be a Junior (second year of a three-year program or third year in a four-year program).
- 2) Shall be in the upper 25% of their academic class and also in the top 10% of their JROTC class.
- 3) Complete an entry form detailing Academic, JROTC, extra-curricular activities, responsibilities, and awards and honors received.
- 4) Write an essay on the topic, "How JROTC has prepared me to be a better citizen of the United States of America."
- 5) Include a letter of recommendation from the Senior Military Instructor indicating the cadet's leadership strengths and the High School Principal stating the cadet's notable school activities to include G.P.A. and class rank.



Cadet 2Lt Jeffrey Lazar (C) receives the SAR JROTC Chapter Award Chapter President Michael Weyler (R), assisted by Compatriot John Callaway. The award consists of a Bronze Medallion, Certificate, and a check for \$100.00.

## *Historical Notes*

On 17 Feb. 2020 the Historic town of Dumfries, Va., and the Weems-Botts Museum, fittingly, commemorated the birthday month of George Washington with the dedication of a historical marker dedicated to George Washington and the Cherry Tree story.

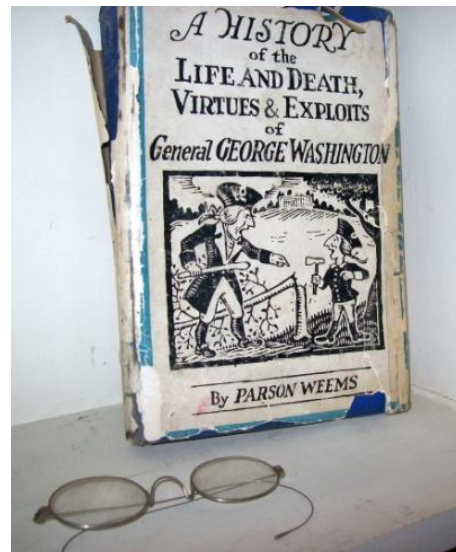
Mason Locke “Parson” Weems (1759-1825) wrote a biography to amplify his subject; “George Washington, the hero, and the demigod.” Weems also wrote biographies of Francis Marion (The Swamp Fox), Benjamin Franklin, and William Penn.



Right: Compatriot Andrew Mills (R) talks to Dumfries Mayor Derrick Wood.



Left: A group of history enthusiasts at the “George Washington and the Cherry Tree” Historical Marker Dedication.



Right: Parson Weems’ book

Thursday, 12 March 2020, marked the 230<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Prince William County, Va.'s, most famous Patriot, Col. William Grayson.

Col. William Grayson (1740–1790) was a soldier, lawyer, and statesman. Col. Grayson practiced law in Prince William County and is frequently mentioned as a guest at Mount Vernon, and as a hunting companion of George Washington. At the outbreak of the American Revolution, he served as a captain of the local militia but left the Virginia forces to become an aide-de-camp to General Washington. He later took command of one of the sixteen regiments of the Continental Army. After a bloody battle at Monmouth, New Jersey that virtually destroyed his entire regiment, Col. Grayson went on to serve on the Board of War. After the war, he served as a member of the Continental Congress and was later one of Virginia's first two Senators.

Col. Grayson died in Dumfries on 12 March 1790, the first member of the United States Congress to die in office. He was interred in the Grayson family vault in Woodbridge on a hill overlooking Marumsco Creek. The family burial vault, originally located on a one thousand acre plantation; now, less than five acres remain undeveloped. The vault now sits amid a Woodbridge residential neighborhood. It was encased in concrete in the early 1900s by the Daughters of the American Revolution, recently been repaired and made accessible to the public. The Reverend Spence Grayson, a “fighting parson” of the Revolution and lifelong friend of George Washington, is also buried in the vault.

The Colonel William Grayson Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, which serves Prince William County and western Fairfax County, periodically stages events to honor William Grayson and other patriot ancestors.

Membership in the Sons of the American Revolution is open to any male that has a lineal descendant from a Revolutionary War soldier, sailor, or Patriot. This descent includes persons who not only fought in the military or militia, but who also may have provided supplies, medical aid, signed oaths of Faith and Fidelity, and similar acts. Contact the CWG Chapter's registrar, Michael Blythe, at [mblythe@comcast.net](mailto:mblythe@comcast.net) for information and help in applying for membership.



Tomb of Col. William Grayson.