



# The Town Crier

Interim news of  
The Resolution – Chapter Newsletter



April 23, 2023

Richard Henry Lee Chapter  
Virginia Society, Sons of the American Revolution

**Sign up NOW for the May meeting!**

**Tuesday, May 9<sup>th</sup> – 11:30 am Historic Christ Church, & Museum**  
420 Christ Church Rd, Weems, VA 22576

*Guest Speakers: Compatriots Charles Belfield and Jim Russell*  
*Belfield and Russell portray two Lee family members*

To make reservation, call Stu Kramer at 804-435-1811, and leave a message, or email to [stukramer@gmail.com](mailto:stukramer@gmail.com) by reservation deadline of Thursday, May 4<sup>th</sup>. Please advise if you need a special meal. *Guests are always welcome!* Cost: \$ 20 per person

## Highlights of the April Chapter Luncheon Meeting

Our second chapter luncheon meeting of the year was held on Tuesday, April 11<sup>th</sup> in the Bayne Conference Center at Historic Christ Church, Weems, Virginia. RHLC President, Michael Rhodes, presided. Eighteen compatriots and guests were in attendance.

Following lunch, the meeting began with an awards ceremony. Those honored were compatriots Kurt Muse and James Harding, twenty-five- and ten-year membership recognition, respectively.

The keynote speaker was compatriot John S. Mason, Jr., a direct descendant of Founding Father George Mason. Compatriot Mason's career included twenty years in Latin America and Spain. This work experience led to his interest in studying the colonial history of Latin America.

Compatriot Mason's talk, *"How the Americas Won Independence with Help from an Empire"*, addressed Latin America's secession from a European empire, and how their wars for independence parallel those of our country's fight for independence. Furthermore, he spoke to how both fights for independence were in part made possible with perhaps the unlikely ally, France.

As a starting point, Mason reviewed comparative timelines of colonial history in Latin America versus North America. In 1492, Spain's Columbus first reached the Americas, specifically, Hispaniola (Santo Domingo and Haiti) and Cuba. Soon after, 1508, Ponce de León founded Puerto Rico. And then by 1519, Hernán Cortéz had discovered Mexico and conquered the Aztec empire.

Almost a century later, by the time English settlers came to Jamestown, the first permanent colony in North America, in 1607, Spain and Portugal had thriving colonies, and two-dozen imposing cities – Mexico, Guadalajara, Bogotá, Quito, Lima, Rio de Janeiro and so on. By comparison, the English colonies were very modest in their construction compared to Latin American colonial cities such as Mexico City.



Figure 1L-R Michael Rhodes, John S. Mason

In colonial times, Europe's premier super powers, France and Britain, were bitter enemies. Both countries were competing for territory and trade rights in North America. Britain was focused on the Atlantic seaboard, while France set its eyes on Canada and the Mississippi Valley.

Struggles between the two super powers in Europe were only exacerbated with their competition to claim rights to North American territories. These "world-wide" power struggles between Britain and France coalesced into what might be termed the "first world war". The Seven-Years War of 1756 to 1763, covered theatres in Europe, America, and Asia. Britain's key allies were Hanover, Prussia, Portugal, and Russia (later in the conflict). Those aligned with France included Austria, Saxony, Hesse, Spain, Sweden, and Russia (early in the conflict).

The "American" portion of this world conflict was known as the French and Indian War.

Wars cost money. Great Britain's prosperous colonies looked like a ripe source of revenue with which to pay off debts. For the next ten years, abusive new laws – the Stamp Act, the Intolerable Acts, taxation without representation – defied our best efforts to make Parliament see reason. No amount of persuasion had any effect. Finally it came to armed conflict at Bunker Hill, and then open warfare on April 19th, 1775, at Lexington and Concord.

Benjamin Franklin had spent ten years in Britain as America's spokesperson. When war with Britain became unavoidable, Franklin relocated to France. As a result of Franklin's diplomatic efforts, France came to side with the America. France's King Louis XVI at first only allowed provision of financing, arms, and material goods. He later committed French military support.

With France as our ally, America went on to declare victory over the British crown. French support was no more obvious than at the Battle of Yorktown in October 1781, with the French Navy driving away British ships to leave Cornwallis trapped, and with French troops fighting side by side with the Americans to defeat Cornwallis.

In 1789 the French Revolution erupted. The French monarchy was overthrown, with many ruling nobilities, including King Louis XVI, being executed. For ten years the infant republic struggled. Napoleon Bonaparte seized power in 1804, and crowned himself Emperor of the French, and then set out to conquer the world. Napoleon took control of all Europe, before fall at Waterloo in 1815. During his campaign, Napoleon defeated the monarchies of Spain and Portugal, even crowning his brother King of Spain.

Now back to Latin America. After three long centuries of pent-up resentment from autocratic misrule, the oppressed continent saw a ray of hope. Warfare in Iberia diminished the forces Spain and Portugal could call on to keep control of their colonies. Latin America's chance for independence appeared to have come.

Uprisings broke out everywhere. Determined, rag-tag guerrillas defeated the colonial viceroy's armies at every encounter. The revolutions spread from Mexico all the way down to South America's southern tier. Had it not been for Napoleon's war in Iberia, these rebels, like our ancestors three decades earlier, would have had no realistic chance against Europe's military might.

El Padre Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla was Mexico's, and Latin America's, Samuel Adams, Patrick Henry and Thomas Paine. His "Grito de Dolores," or outcry of pain, was Latin America saying, "give me liberty or give me death."

Simón Bolívar was Latin America's George Washington. He led campaigns of liberation from Venezuela all the way down to Bolivia, which is named for him.



Although Latin America succeeded in its fight for independence, try as they might, they were never able to achieve confederation into a united front similar to the USA.

Final score. The New World fought a dozen wars of independence – civil wars, really – against what looked like hopeless odds, and we did not lose a single one. Some call this a miracle.



*Compatriot Kurt Muse receives Twenty-five Year Membership Certificate from RHLA President Michael Rhodes*



*Ms. Terry Bain, Excellent E.A.T.s serves up BBQ, coleslaw, fruit, chocolate mousse cake*



*Compatriot Jim Harding receives Ten Year Membership Certificate from RHLA President Michael Rhodes*



*Luncheon attendees:  
Back - Guest Bob Montague, RHLA Compatriot Norm Tadlock  
At table L to R: RHLA Compatriot Jerry Thrash,  
1<sup>st</sup> VP Dr. Dennis Martin, Compatriot Mike Nickerson,  
and 2<sup>nd</sup> VP Dirk Metzger*



*Luncheon attendees L to R: RHLA 3<sup>rd</sup> VP Dick Manson, Compatriot Kurt Muse, and Registrar Wally Dawson, and guest Bob Smith*

## The back page...

Did you get your chapter challenge coin yet?  
Show pride in our chapter.  
Just \$ 10 each

Chapter lapel pins  
\$ 5 each  
(First one is free  
to RHL compatriots)



### A Note from the chapter secretary ... Stu Kramer

Sometimes your contact information changes and try as we all do, we always forget to notify somebody of the change i.e.: mailing address, home or cell phone numbers or preferred email address. These updates need to be passed on to your chapter secretary so your contact information at the chapter level, state level and at national level are current.

Our national headquarters publishes a monthly magazine that all members should be getting.

Any questions contact Stu Kramer at 435- 1811 or email: [stukramer@gmail.com](mailto:stukramer@gmail.com)



*Just can't seem to make the luncheons,  
but would like to find other ways  
to contribute to the cause?*

We have great ideas for you.  
Stay tuned for the next edition of

## The Town Crier

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