



# *The Delaware Crossing Patriot*

## *Kansas Society*

### *Sons of the American Revolution*

June 2019

Metro Kansas City's Oldest & Largest Chapter, Founded 1960

#### **NEXT MEETING:**

**When:** June 15

**Where:** Hilton Garden Inn, 12080 S Strang  
Line Rd., Olathe, KS, 9:00AM

**Reservations & Cost:** For reservations, email  
[Secretary@dxsar.com](mailto:Secretary@dxsar.com) or call Preston  
Washington (816) 444-1198 by 3:00  
PM, the Wednesday before.

**Breakfast price:** \$17.00/person

Program: "Hamilton" [Play] talk.

#### **CALENDAR & COMING EVENTS**

06/12 DX EC Meeting, at Pegah's, 2122 W.87<sup>th</sup> St,  
Lenexa, KS; be there at 5:30 PM if eating dinner.  
Meeting begins at 6:00 PM.

06/15 Chapter Meeting.

07/5-11 SAR National Congress, Costa Mesa, CA

07/17 DX EC Meeting.

07/20 DX Chapter Meeting.

#### **Editor's Note (Greg Millican)**

Chapter Executive Committee approved minutes  
are available on the web site: DXSAR.com under  
"LOOK INSIDE".

Send news about your ancestor patriots, special  
events, career changes, history trips, etc., that may  
be included in the *Delaware Crossing Patriot*.

You may reach me at

[Gregory.millican@gmail.com](mailto:Gregory.millican@gmail.com)



#### **The President's Corner**

By Kirk Rush

Greetings Compatriots!

I will keep my President's Corner brief this month  
as we have a rather large edition of *The Patriot*  
this month. I will just say that May was a very  
exciting month! On May 11<sup>th</sup> we dedicated a  
permanent marker on the grave of Kansas's *ONLY*  
SAR recognized Patriot, Sarah Ruddell Davis. If  
you were there you know how rare an opportunity  
this was. Needless to say these have been very  
exciting times for our chapter. Read on!

*(End of President's Corner)*

**KS SAR Ladies Auxiliary August Project:**

The ladies are collecting school supplies for the students in the Emporia School District to donate at their August 3rd meeting in Emporia. Supplies we donate are given to students who are homeless or those students moving in during the school year. If anyone would like to contribute to the project, we would be most grateful. Supplies can be sent with Auxiliary members or men attending the Board of Governor's meeting that day. Their list includes spiral notebooks, notebook paper(college rule), 3-ring notebooks (3 inch), black or blue ballpoint pens, #2 pencils, colored pencils, facial tissues (these are most in need) and backpacks for any age. If more information is needed, please contact me at [kcnelson42@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kcnelson42@sbcglobal.net) .

Thank you for your support. Ruby Nelson

**Patriot Grave Marking Ceremony For Sarah Ruddell Davis. May 11:**

On May 11, 2019, Delaware Crossing chapter was host to the Sarah Ruddell Davis grave marking ceremony. The weather cooperated for the event, and the event opened with the color guard lead by Ken Ludwig. Kirk Rush was the Chapter host for the ceremony and John Forbes was the speaker and historian. Sandy Wurth, of the DAR, also was involved in the Sarah Ruddell Davis patriot documentation. Greg Millican gave the invocation and benediction. Davis descendants Martin Settles and Rebecca Harper unveiled the SAR grave marker at the ceremony conclusion.

Dignitaries present at the ceremony included:

- a. Outreach Representative for U.S. Congresswoman Sharice Davids: Paula Cutter-Mark.
- b. Kansas State Representative, District 14: Charlotte Esau.
- c. Johnson County Commissioner, 1st District: Becky Fast.
- d. Johnson County Commissioner, 5th District: Michael Ashcraft.
- e. Johnson County Commissioner, 6th District: Mike Brown.
- f. Johnson County Sheriff: Sheriff Calvin Hayden and wife Kelly.
- g. Mayor of Fairway, KS: Melanie Hepperley.
- h. South Central District SAR Vice President General: Dan McMurray.
- i. KSSSAR President: Bobbie Hulse.
- j. KSDAR Recording Secretary: Kimberly Patrick.
- k. KSDAR Historian: Rebecca Kline.
- l. Descendant of Sarah Ruddell Davis: Martin Settles.
- m. Descendant of Sarah Ruddell Davis: Rebecca Charlotte Harper.

The following pictures were taken at the grave marking ceremony.



I Ken Ludwig, Commander of the color guard.



2 Ceremony color guard.

The Color Guard Participants:

Kenneth Ludwig, Commander, Delaware Crossing Chapter, Kansas

Patrick Crawford, Bennington Chapter, Kansas

Richard Cox, Delaware Crossing Chapter, Kansas

Steven French, Delaware Crossing Chapter, Kansas

Dewey Fry, Delaware Crossing Chapter, Kansas

Dennis Nelson, Delaware Crossing Chapter, Kansas

John Schatzel, Henry Leavenworth Chapter, Kansas

Vern Welkner, Henry Leavenworth Chapter, Kansas

Alan Martin, Monticello Chapter, Kansas

Lyman Miller, Monticello Chapter, Kansas

Bobbie Hulse, President KSSAR, Sons of the Plains Chapter, Kansas

James Scott, Alexander Majors Chapter, Missouri

Richard Matthews, Alexander Majors Chapter, Missouri

Stephen Sullins, Independence Patriots, Missouri



3 Wreath provided by Delaware Crossing Chapter.



4 Wreath provided by KSSAR.



5 Wreath provided by KSDAR.



7 Sarah Davis head stone and SAR grave marker.



6 Wreath provided by Benningto SAR Chapter.

**Article about Sarah R. Davis by John Forbes:**



Sarah Ruddell was captured on June 24, 1780. She, along with about 400 others were establishing a permanent presence at Ruddell's Station in the Western part of Virginia (now Kentucky) just south

of the Licking River. A combined British and Indian force under the command of Col. Byrd forced the surrender with the presence of a 6# field piece which the fortification could not withstand. The terms of the surrender specified that the women and children would be taken by the British and the men by the Indians. When the gate opened the Indians rushed in and the surrender agreement was reversed. Those considered unable to make a forced march to Detroit were killed,

including a three year old cousin of Sarah’s who was thrown on a fire and burned to death with the child’s mother forced to watch. Two of Sarah’s older brothers were also captured, but only one survived the march north. Also captured were two of her cousins both of whom did not return till after the Treaty of Greenville (1795).

In 1791 Sarah married Thomas Davis who also had survived years of captivity. Their daughter Sarah Davis married Rev. Thomas Johnson founder of the Shawnee Methodist Indian Mission. Sarah Ruddell Davis died while living with her daughter Sarah Davis Johnson and is buried with many of the family members. The Cemetery is located on the South side of Shawnee Mission Parkway, between 3 & 4 blocks east of Mission Rd. Or about 1 mile west of State Line Rd., Fairway, Kansas.

*(End of grave marking article)*

**Summary of Delaware Crossing Executive Committee (EC) meeting, May 15:**

1. Reservations have been made for Shelter 1 and the fire pit at Antioch Park for our annual picnic in September.
2. Motions were made and passed to reimburse Dewey Fry for making the picnic reservations & medal engraving; and to reimburse Kirk Rush for printing of the SRD programs.
3. A motion was also made and passed for the chapter to purchase (up to \$150) the presidential neck ribbon and SAR badge set for the new incoming president. The chapter will purchase only the ribbon if the incoming president already has his SAR badge.

*Note: The complete EC approved minutes are on DXSAR.com as they become available; under “LOOK INSIDE” -> “Executive Committee Minutes”.*

**Summary of Delaware Crossing Chapter May 18 meeting:**

**Presentation of Heroism Medal:**

*(Copied from LJWorld.com, Lawrence Journal World)* “The Kansas City Star reports that Sigma Phi Epsilon [at Kansas University] brothers Jared Cox, of Overland Park; Connor Churchill, of Olathe; and Cole Firmature, of Omaha, Nebraska, went to a beach on March 11 in Destin, Florida. They were at a beach bar when they heard a woman cry out for a lifeguard and point to the water.

“There was no lifeguard patrolling the beach at the time and the three men sprinted to the water.

“They spotted a young boy drifting on a boogie board 40 yards out into the ocean. The three men swam out and brought the child to shore by pushing him on the board.”

The three young men were honored for their heroism at the May 18, 2019 chapter meeting.



*8 Ken Ludwig (left, Chapter vice president) presented Heroism Medal and certificate to Cole Fimature, Jared Cox, and Connor Churchill.*

**May 18 Chapter meeting: Mock Congressional Hearing:**

Below is a discussion topic that was presented at the meeting on May 18th, with Ken Thomas and three students from Blue Valley NW High School. The three students were: Brock Weinstein, Grant Hill, and Lauren Baumert (Lauren presented the topic questions to the panel).

One question the students answered was as follows:

In framing of a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself.” How does the system of government created by the Framers of Constitution “oblige [the government] to control itself”? Explain your position.



10 Lauren Baumert (Right) & Ken Thomas.



11 Grant Hill (left) and Brock Weinstein of the Mock Congressional panel.



9 Ken Thomas, Blue Valley NW HS teacher.

## Serapis Flag (Article by Ken Ludwig)

For this month, we will be talking about the last of the colonial flags that the chapter currently owns, the Serapis Flag.



12 Serapis Flag.

### History of the Serapis Flag

The Serapis Flag is unique because of its 8-pointed stars and because its red, white and blue stripes are organized in a pattern not found on other American historical flags. The 13 8-pointed stars are arranged in 3 rows of 4, 5 and 4 on a blue field. The flag is also square shaped rather than rectangular.

The Serapis Flag, also known as the John Paul Jones Flag, had its origin in a famous Revolutionary War sea battle called the Battle of Flamborough Head, which was fought just off the east coast of England on September 23, 1779. In the battle, Jones' small fleet of ships challenged the *HMS Serapis*, a 44 gun British warship that was protecting a massive merchant convoy of 50 ships returning to England from the Baltic Sea.

During the battle, the *Serapis*, captained by Richard Pearson, and the *USS Bonhomme*

*Richard*, Jones' flagship, became entangled side by side and proceeded to blast holes in one another until both ships were severely damaged.

The *Bonhomme Richard* had so many holes in it you could see right through from one side to the other and British cannonballs were flying right through without hitting anything!

Captain Pearson asked Captain Jones if he was ready to surrender and Jones famously replied, "I have not yet begun to fight!"

In spite of the fact that the *Bonhomme Richard* was severely damaged and taking on water fast, Captain Pearson is the one who finally had to surrender. Another ship in Jones' fleet called the *Alliance* had joined her and was blasting the *Serapis* as well. Pearson finally decided to surrender because his main mission, protecting the merchant fleet, had been successful because they all escaped unharmed and because he could not survive with two ships blasting him much longer.

Captain Jones boarded the *Serapis* and his crew tried to save the *Bonhomme Richard* over the next 2 days, but eventually they gave up and the ship sank on the 25th. Captain Jones then sailed the severely damaged *Serapis* to the Dutch port of Texel to make repairs.

### Creation of the Serapis Flag

When John Paul Jones arrived at Texel, a diplomatic crisis arose. The Netherlands were officially neutral in the British-American war and the Netherlands had not yet officially recognized the United States as a sovereign country. The *Serapis* was not flying an American flag because the flag from the *Bonhomme Richard* had been blown off during the battle and went down at sea. This led to the British Ambassador demanding that John Paul Jones be turned over to the English government as a pirate, along with the *Serapis*, because, as he was not flying the flag of any known nation and he was sailing a captured

ship, he was, according to international law, a pirate.

Great Britain had declared Jones a pirate earlier because of other attacks on British shipping and villages along the coastline. His attacks in British waters had shocked the population of England and Scotland who formerly hadn't realized that the Americans were powerful and ingenious enough to make attacks against them across the ocean. Jones had become a priority target for the British navy. If captured, his "pirate" designation would have earned him the right to be hanged.

The Dutch government was in a quandary. It did not want to support the British government, which was its longstanding maritime competitor. It also didn't want to get involved too heavily in the war between the British and the Americans. They decided to demand that Jones and his fleet leave the port by a certain date in order to make the appearance that they were not supporting the Americans, but they worked behind the scenes to find a way to recognize the ship and avoid having to turn Jones over.

It should be noted that historians have not been able to confirm all of the following facts, but generally they have come to the following conclusion, that within a few days, someone in the Netherlands was in contact with Benjamin Franklin, the American Ambassador, in Paris. It is not known who the contact was, but perhaps Jones had suggested they should contact Franklin, who then wrote back to the Dutch government with a description of an American flag. Franklin's description was then sketched by the Dutch government and entered in the official Dutch register of national flags. Jones quickly had a flag created based on the sketch and the result was the Serapis Flag, which was then flown on board *Serapis*. This allowed the Dutch government the right to recognize the ship officially and avoid having to deal with the piracy charges. They were

able to legally deny the English their desire to have the "pirate" Jones and their captured ship, *Serapis*, which was now a legitimate prize won in battle, turned over to them.

Historians attribute the Serapis Flag design to Benjamin Franklin because he and John Adams wrote a letter to the Sicilian Ambassador in Paris a year earlier with the same flag description. For this reason, the Serapis Flag is sometimes called the Franklin Flag.



13 Original Serapis Flag Sketch from Dutch Records.

The Serapis Flag sketch from the Dutch naval records has survived so we know exactly what the flag looked like. It is the only depiction of an American flag with this unique design. Why did Franklin design the Serapis Flag like this? Why did he use 8-pointed stars and why are there red, white and *blue* stripes?

The Flag Resolution of 1777 was passed on June 14, 1777. This resolution defined the American flag in the following way:

"Resolved, That the flag of the United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new Constellation."



Franklin had been in France since before this date. John Adams, whose name also appears on the letter to the Sicilian Ambassador, was in the US at the time of the Flag Resolution. It appears that neither of them had yet received the official description of the American flag. Franklin apparently urgently sent the same description from the earlier letter out of necessity to protect John Paul Jones from being turned over to the British.

### Questions about the Serapis Flag history

This storyline that most historians have agreed upon ignores one major factor. The entry of the Serapis Flag in the Dutch register of naval ensigns occurred one day *after* an entry was made with a drawing for a flag belonging to the *USS Alliance*, one of the other ships sailing in Jones' fleet.

The drawing entered for this flag was the 13 star flag, sometimes called the Hopkinson Flag, that *did* fit the 1777 Flag Resolution. If Franklin had not heard of the Flag Resolution, how did a flag that matched the resolution get entered for the *Alliance*? Why was the same flag not used for both the *Alliance* and the *Serapis*? Had someone else received a description of the US Flag that Franklin hadn't received? These are questions to which the answers are unknown and probably will always remain a mystery.

There is one more version of the story that varies greatly from the history given above. In this version, Franklin created the Serapis Flag before the Battle of Flamborough ever occurred, when the Dutch Ambassador requested a description of the American Flag so his nation's ships would know how to respond if they came across an American ship while at sea.

Franklin then had the Serapis Flag created in Paris and the description was given to the Dutch Ambassador. The same description was given when the Sicilian Ambassador approached him

with the same question. Later, when John Paul Jones sailed the *Serapis* into Texel, the Dutch government entered the design of the flag into the flag registry (which hadn't been done yet for some reason) and had a flag made for the ship.

This timeline makes a little more sense because it occurred only one year after the Flag Resolution, leaving little time for Franklin to have received the official US flag description. It also makes better sense with the timing of the letter to the Sicilian Ambassador because it is also dated before the battle. The question of why the Dutch hadn't entered the design of the Serapis Flag into the flag registry when they first received it from Franklin, however, instead of waiting until the Serapis incident, leaves doubt as to this story's accuracy.

One final version of the story has Franklin giving the Serapis Flag to Jones while in France before he began the mission that took him to Flamborough Head. The flag then went down with the *Bonhomme* and Jones was able to create a new one when he got to Texel.

"Serapis Flag." Revolutionary War and Beyond. Date of Publication October 24, 2011. Web. Accessed 5/19/2019.

*(End of Serapis flag article)*

*(End of Patriot newsletter)*