DX ANNIVERSARY PROGRAM NOVEMBER 18. 2023 BY DENNIS NELSON, HISTORIAN

THE DELAWARE CROSSING CHAPTER OF THE KANSAS SOCIETY OF THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION CELEBRATES ITS 63RD ANNIVERSARY THIS MONTH. THINK OF ORGANIZATIONS OF ANY KIND YOU BELONG TO OR DID BELONG TO THAT HAVE BEEN AROUND THAT LONG.

WHAT DID THE NSSAR HAVE TO REPORT ABOUT THE CHARTERING OF THE DELAWARE CROSSING CHAPTER ON NOVEMBER 1, 1960? I RESEARCHED THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION MAGAZINE. THE SAME ONE WE RECEIVE QUARTERLY. THESE HAVE BEEN SCANNED AND ARE ONLINE AT SAR.ORG IN THE MAGAZINE ARCHIVES. THEY ARE HARD TO READ AND ARE NOT SEARCHABLE.

IN THE JANUARY 1961 EDITION, I FOUND UNDER THE HEADING KANSAS SOCIETY, AN ARTICLE OF 7 PARAGRAPHS INCLUDING A PHOTO OF THE PRESIDENT GENERAL, PRESIDENT OF KANSAS SOCIETY AND 5 DELAWARE CROSSING OFFICERS.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ARTICLE WERE AS FOLLOWS:

THE KANSAS SOCIETY MET ON NOVEMBER 1, 1960, AT THE OLD GRINTER HOUSE IN THE KANSAS CITY AREA AND INSTALLED THE DELAWARE CROSSING CHAPTER. THE NEW CHAPTER’S AREA INCLUDES JOHNSON, WYANDOTTE AND LEAVENWORTH COUNTIES.

NSSAR PRESIDENT GENERAL HERSCHEL MURPHY MD PRESENTED THE CHARTER AND PARTICIPATED IN THE INSTALLATION CEREMONY.

THE OFFICERS OF THE NEW DELAWARE CROSSING CHAPTER WERE:

PRESIDENT – DON LITTLE (LATER BECAME A JUDGE)

HONARY VICE PRESIDENT AND SENIOR COMPATRIOT – JUDGE HUGH MEANS

SECRETARY – JUDGE FRANK THOMPSON

TREASURER – COLONEL JOHN BREITHANTHAL

CHANCELLOR – FRANK BATES

GENEALOGIST – CARYL SINNET

REGISTRAR – WILLIAM (TOM) LITTLE

PROVOST MARSHALL – FRANK EDWARDS

SENIOR COMPATRIOT JUDGE HUGH MEANS JOINED THE SOCIETY IN SEPTEMBER 1898. HE IS FORMER NATIONAL COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE MILITARY ORDER OF THE LOYAL LEGION OF THE UNITED STATES.

THE CHAPTER APPROVED AN ANNUAL DINNER COMMEMORATING THE DECEMBER 26, 1776 DELAWARE CROSSING BY GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON AT TRENTON – TO BE HELD SOMETIME DURING THE LAST 2 WEEKS OF DECEMBER.

AND THAT AN ANNUAL PICNIC COMMEMORATING THE BATTLE OF MONMOUTH TO BE HELD ABOUT THE 28TH DAY OF JUNE.

THE NAME OF THE NEW CHAPTER IS RICH IN HISTORICAL LORE. IT COMMEMORATES NOT ONLY GEORGE WASHINGTON CROSSING THE DELAWARE RIVER BUT THE DELAWARE CROSSING POST OFFICE ESTABLISHED IN THE KANSAS TERRITORY. THE FIRST 2 POST OFFICES PRECEDING WERE FORT LEAVENWORTH AND FORT SCOTT. THE INSTALLATION CEREMONY WAS HELD IN THE OLD GRINTER HOUSE, WHERE THE DELAWARE CROSSING POST OFFICE WAS ONCE LOCATED.

THAT COVERS THE KEY ITEMS IN THE ARTICLE.

THIS MEETING WAS A KANSAS SOCIETY MEETING. THE ONLY 2 ACTIVE CHAPTERS AT THIS TIME WERE THE WASHINGTON CHAPTER IN WICHITA AND THOMAS JEFFERSON CHAPTER IN TOPEKA

OF THE 12 CHAPTER MEMBERS, BASED ON THEIR APPLICATIONS, THERE WERE 4 LAWYERS, AN ACCOUNTANT, A BANKER, A DOCTOR, 3 BUSINESSMEN, A NEWSPAPER PUBLISHER FROM LEAVENWORTH AND A STUDENT.

HOW ABOUT THEIR AGES: HUGH MEANS WAS 89, FRANK BATES 78, THERE WERE 8 MEMBERS BETWEEN AGES OF 49-64, TOM LITTLE 26, AND FRANK EDWARDS 25.

DONALD LITTLE, THE FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE CHAPTER WAS THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND THE CHAPTER. HE SPONSORED 8 OF THE 12 CHARTER MEMBERS INCLUDING HIS NEPHEW TOM.

COMPATRIOT HUGH MEANS WAS A CHAPTER MEMBER IN THE LAWRENCE CHAPTER IN 1899.

LARRY TATUM IS OUR 45TH PRESIDENT (ALTHOUGH THAT INCLUDES 2 TERMS NON-CONSECUTIVE BY JOHN BAYNE AND KES KESLER.)

THE CHARTER MEMBERS WERE THE FIRST 4 CHAPTER PRESIDENTS: DONALD LITTLE 2 YEARS, FRANK THOMPSON 1 YEAR, DR BILLINGSLY 3 YEARS, AND CHRISTOPER THOMAS 6 YEARS. TAKING THE CHAPTER TO 1972.

THE CHAPTER BY 1975 HAD 20 MEMBERS. THE CHAPTER APPARENTLY WAS MORE OF A SOCIAL CLUB, INCONSISTENT MEETING TIMES AND LITTLE PURPOSE. ALTHOUGH WE ARE NON-POLITICAL, WE ARE A PATRIOTIC ORGANZIATION. THE SIXTIES WERE A NATION IN TURMOIL: ASSASSINATIONS OF JFK, RFK, AND MLK. THERE WAS THE VIETNAM WAR, WAR PROTESTS, UNPOPULAR MILITARY DRAFT, CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT AND RELATED PROTESTS AND VIOLENCE. THIS MAY HAVE HAD AN IMPACT ON RECRUITING.

THEN IN 1975 EVERYTHING CHANGED FOR THE CHAPTER. ARTHUR MANSFIELD KING BECAME CHAPTER PRESIDENT AND THE CHAPTER GREW IN 1976 TO 80 MEMBERS. BY 1980 MEMBERSHIP WAS OVER 100. KING EVENTUALLY BECAME STATE PRESIDENT AND THEN NSSAR PRESIDENT GENERAL. I WOULD LIKE TO THINK THAT THE RAPID GROWTH IN 1976 WAS ENHANCED BY THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE. THE 250TH ANNIVERSAY WILL BE IN 2026 AND WE HAVE AN SAR FLAG TO REMIND US OF THAT EVENT.

NEXT I WOULD LIKE TO COVER MY RESEARCH ON THE DELAWARE CROSSING COLOR GUARD HISTORY:

THERE WAS NO COLOR GUARD IN 1960. THE FIRST MENTION I FOUND OF THE COLOR GUARD WAS IN THE KANSAS LIBERTY BELL IN MAY 1991. IN MARCH OF 1991, KES KESLER WAS INSTALLED AS STATE PRESIDENT WEARING THE UNIFORM I WEAR TODAY.

IN JUNE 1991 AT THE 101ST SAR CONGRESS IN KANSAS CITY AT THE CROWN CENTER HOTEL, THE NEW KANSAS COLOR GUARD PARTICIPATED WITH MASSACHUSETTS AND VIRGINIA COLOR GUARDS. JOHN SWARTS WAS IN COMMAND OF THE KANSAS COLOR GUARD OF 8, 5 FROM DELAWARE CROSSING.

IN 1993, THE CHAPTER PURCHASED TWO MUSKETS FROM DONATIONS FROM MEMBERS AND SOME CHAPTER FUNDS. THEY ARE THE FRENCH CHARVILLE AND BRITISH BROWN BESS AND NOW HAVE BEEN IN USE BY THE CHAPTER FOR 30 YEARS.

IN FEBRUARY 1994 THE LIBERTY BELL REPORTED THAT THE CHAPTER HAD 18 MEMBERS IN THE COLOR GUARD. ENSIGN RODNEY BURT IS IN CHARGE OF THE UNIT AND KES KESLER IS THE COORDINATOR AND HANDLES THE BOOKINGS FOR THE MARCHING SAR’S. I COULDN’T PUT MY HANDS ON IT, BUT I REMEMBER KES WRITING ABOUT WHEN THE NEXT COLOR GUARD TRAINING AND DRILLING WOULD BE – DATE TIME AND LOCATION.

HOW DOES COLOR GUARD PARTICPATION COMPARE TO 2023? SO FAR IN 2023, WE HAVE HAD 13 DX COLORGUARDSMEN PARTICIPATE IN AT LEAST ONE EVENT.

COLOR GUARD MEDALS ARE EARNED BASED ON SERVICE WHICH INDICATES THE CHAPTER’S ACTIVITY AND COMMITMENT.

IN 1998, NSSAR ESTABLISHED THE BRONZE COLOR GUARD MEDAL TO BE AWARDED BY THE CHAPTER AND SILVER COLOR GUARD MEDAL TO BE AWARED BY THE STATE.

FROM WHAT I CAN TELL AND THERE MAY BE MORE, THERE HAVE BEEN AT LEAST 24 BRONZE COLOR GUARD MEDALS AWARDED TO OUR CHAPTER MEMBERS INCLUDING KEN LUDWIG IN 2023. WE HAVE AVERAGED ALMOST 1 PER YEAR SINCE THIS MEDAL WAS ESTABLISHED.

THERE HAVE BEEN AT LEAST 9 SILVER COLOR GUARD MEDALS AWARDED TO OUR DX MEMBERS INCLUDING OUR COMMANDER STEVE FRENCH IN 2023.

IN 2012, NSSAR ESTABLISHED THE VON STUEBEN MEDAL FOR 5 YEARS OF SERVICE AFTER RECEIVING THE SILVER MEDAL. THE SERVICE REQUIREMENT IS 25 NATIONALY RECOGNIZED EVENTS. 3 OF THE 4 VON STEUBEN MEDALS IN THE STATE OF KANSAS HAVE BEEN FROM OUR CHAPTER, INCLUDING DEWEY FRY IN 2023.

THE KANSAS COLONIAL SOLDIER OF THE YEAR WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1993 BASED ON SERVICE. OF THE 31 WINNERS, 14 HAVE BEEN DX MEMBERS INCLUDING DEWEY FRY WHO HAS WON 5 TIMES. IN 2023 KIRK RUSH WAS THE WINNER.

YOU CAN’T WIN IN CONSECUTIVE YEARS. YOU ALSO CAN’T WIN IF YOU ARE COLOR GUARD COMMANDER. DEWEY WOULD HAVE WON EVEN MORE TIMES BUT HE HAS BEEN THE STATE COLOR GUARD COMMANDER THE LAST 6 YEARS.

NOW ABOUT THOSE STATE COLOR GUARD COMMANDERS: FROM 2005 TO 2023 THE COMMANDER WAS A MEMBER OF OUR CHAPTER.

AND NOW KIRK RUSH IS EASTERN KANSAS ADJUTANT, WHICH MEANS HE IS THE RANKING COLOR GUARD COMMANDER IN THE EASTERN SIDE OF THE STATE WHEN THE STATE COMMANDER IS NOT PRESENT.

ALL OF THE COLONIAL FLAGS IN THE BACK ROW HERE TODAY ARE FROM THE REVOLUTIONAY WAR ERA THAT OUR PATRIOT ANCESTORS FOUGHT UNDER.

HOPEFULLY SOME DAY WE WILL HAVE ENOUGH COLOR GUARD MEMBERS AT A MEETING TO CARRY AND POST ALL OF THEM. THEY DESERVE TO BE CARRIED IN HONOR OF OUR PATRIOT ANCESTORS.

THE CHAPTER HAS A UNIFORM INVENTORY AND THERE ARE CHAPTER AND STATE UNIFORM SUBSIDIES FOR NEW COLOR GUARD MEMBERS. PLEASE CONSIDER BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE COLOR GUARD. DON’T LET YOUR INABILITY TO WALK IN A PARADE DISCOURAGE YOU FROM BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE COLOR GUARD. WE CAN’T ALL DO IT. WE HAVE SO MANY OTHER EVENTS WE PARTICPATE IN OTHER THAN PARADES. IF YOU CAN PHYSICALLY WALK FROM THE DOOR O THE PODIUM CARRYING A FLAG, YOU QUALIFY.

IN NOVEMBER 1985 THE CHAPTER RECEIVED A LETTER FROM PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN. IT IS A LETTER CONGRATULATING THE CHAPTER ON OUR 25TH CHAPTER ANNIVERSARY. THERE ARE COPIES OF THE LETTER ON YOUR TABLE. RATHER THAN READING THE LETTER TO YOU, PLEASE LISTEN TO THE VOICE OF RONALD REAGAN READING THE LETTER TO US. THE PRESIDENT IMMEDIATELY STARTS TALKING ONCE WE START THE AUDIO. READY? THE 40TH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES RONALD REAGAN -

PLAY AUDIO

I KNOW YOU ARE WONDERING HOW DID I DO THAT. ITS CALLED AI OR ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE. OUR SON RYAN, A CHAPTER MEMBER THAT LIVES IN MARYLAND, USED AI TO CREATE THIS AUDIO. I SENT HIM A WORD DOCUMENT OF THE SPEECH AND HE USED REAGAN SPEECHES ONLINE AS HIS SOURCE. I HAVE 4 DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF REAGAN SPEAKING THIS LETTER.

NOW THE LETTER. HE SAID WE RENDER GREAT SERVICES, WE WORK TO HONOR, WE CHRONICLE AND WE UPHOLD THE FOUNDING PRINCIPLES. THE NSSAR COULD NOT HAVE SAID IT BETTER.

IF HE WROTE THE LETTER AGAIN TODAY, I THINK HE WOULD USE THE SAME WORDS. BUT I BELIEVE HE MIGHT AMEND ONE LINE IN THE LAST PARAGRAPH TO SAY “NOW, MORE THAN EVER”, THE PRESERVATION OF THIS PRECIOUS HERITAGE IS ESSENTIAL TO AMERICA’S FUTURE AS A FREE NATION.

ALL MEMBERS ARE SPONSORED BY ANOTHER MEMBER. MY SPONSOR WAS PETER GRASSL, WHO WAS SPONSORED BY KES KESLER, WHO WAS SPONSORED BY GENE AMOS. THAT MEMBERSHIP SPONSOR TREE REMINDS ME OF THE SAR COMMITMENT OF THOSE WHO CAME BEFORE ME AND INSPIRES ME TO DO WHAT I CAN DO TO HELP CONTINUE THE GREAT SUCCESS OF OUR CHAPTER.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF A MEMBERSHIP SPONSOR TREE IS IF YOUR SPONSOR WAS DEWEY FRY, WHO WAS SPONSORED BY BARNEY ELLIS. I ENCOURAGE YOU TO FIND OUT ABOUT YOUR MEMBERSHIP SPONSOR TREE.

LASTLY, I WANT TO COMMEND OUR CHAPTER FOUNDERS FOR HAVING THE INITIAL MEETING AT THE GRINTER HOUSE. ON THE GRINTER HOUSE DISPLAY IS A PHOTO OF THE ROOM WHERE IT HAPPENED.

MOSES GRINTER WAS A GRANDSON OF A PATRIOT SOLDIER. HIS WIFE ANNIE WAS A MEMBER OF THE DELAWARE TRIBE WHO SUPPORTED THE AMERICAN CAUSE. AS WE LEARNED EARLIER, THE DELAWARE CROSSING POST OFFICE IN THE KANSAS TERRITORY WAS AT THE GRINTER HOUSE.

 THE GRINTER HOUSE WAS A CHICKEN RESTAURANT IN 1960, WAS PURCHASED BY THE STATE OF KANSAS IN 1971 TO BECOME A HISTORICAL SITE. HOW MANY ORGANIZATIONS CAN CLAIM THEIR FOUNDING PHYSICAL LOCATION IS STILL IN EXISTENCE AND PRESERVED AS A HISTORICAL SITE. I BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE CONTINUE OUR CONNECTION TO THE GRINTER HOUSE BY SUPPORTING ITS EXISTENCE AND CONTINUE HAVING PERIODIC ANNIVERSAY CELEBRATIONS AT THAT LOCATION. CONGRATULATIONS ON 63 YEARS.