

# BROADSIDE

The Newsletter of the  
American Revolution Round Table

<http://www.arrrt-ny.org>

June 2020

## ZOOM IN JUNE!

Like the April meeting, the June get-together must be canceled as we all avoid public gatherings in the face of the coronavirus pandemic. So the Round Table is organizing its first “*Zoom*” meeting!

Zoom meetings have become very popular with business and educational organizations in recent weeks. At least three of the ARRTs around the country have already had one!

How do you go to the meeting? Well, some of us have figured it out ... and some of us haven't. It's quite simple in principle. All you would have to do to join is to click on the blue-  
in the message that will be  
should be able to see (and to  
“webcam”), but at the least,  
be heard. When you want to  
on the words “Leave meeting” in the lower right corner of your screen.



highlighted *hyper-link* line conveyed to you. Then you be seen, if you have a you will *hear* and be able to leave the meeting, just click

Even if you have no computer, “smart phone,” or tablet at all, you can listen to the meeting, and participate in the Q&A, *via telephone!*

Our meeting will take place on the same date the dinner would have been on: Tuesday, June 2, at 7:00 p.m. THERE IS NO FEE FOR THIS MEETING, AND NONE FOR USING ZOOM!

*More detailed instructions—forthcoming—will be posted on the ARRT website by next Monday, May 25<sup>th</sup>. At that time, please check out <http://www.ARRT-NY.org/zoom.htm>.*

## APRIL non-SPEAKER: JOHN McCURDY

Normally the lead story in these pages would be the editor's report on the meeting just past. The Covid-19 virus made it necessary to cancel the April dinner. Our speaker was to have been John McCurdy, Ph.D. He will now be our October speaker. His topic at that time will be his book *QUARTERS: THE ACCOMMODATION OF THE BRITISH ARMY AND THE COMING OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION*. This will be his first Round Table talk.

## DR. GRASSO SPEAKS AT MANHASSETT

Our Speaker Getter, Dr. Joanne Grasso, spoke, on February 29, to a real, live crowd (those were the days) at the Manhasset Public Library, on "Long Island Women During the Revolutionary War." Thirty-five people attended, including our Treasurer,



Dr. Joanne Grasso's presentation in Manhasset  
(February 29, 2020)

Jon Carriel. Dr. Grasso was speaker under the auspices of the Gilder Lehrman Institute for American History's speaker series "Revisiting the Founding Era."

Among the Long Island women Dr. Grasso discussed was Sarah "Sally" Townsend. She was the sister of Robert Townsend, who stayed in British-held New York during the war and passed her information. They were members of the "Culper Ring" of American spies. Also highlighted was Widow Hanna

Brown, an innkeeper in Oyster Ponds. Some Redcoats banged on her door demanding entry to the room where she kept her liquor – her livelihood. They tried to intimidate her, but she intimidated them right back. And the mysterious Agent 355 was mentioned. She may have been an actress and a mistress to Major John André.

## THE BOSTON MASSACRE AT 250

Polly Guérin reports that Philadelphia's Museum of the American Revolution marked the March 5 anniversary of the Massacre with pop-up talks in the galleries, new artifacts, an author's talk in the evening, and even a Boston Massacre video game! The author was Serena Zabin, who had just published a new book on the incident called *THE BOSTON MASSACRE: A FAMILY STORY*. Zabin focuses on the wives of the Redcoats stationed in Boston. They became friends and neighbors of some Bostonians, but there was tension, even before the shoot-out. Now if we can just get some popular attention for New York's Battle of Golden Hill, which took place a month and a half earlier!

## FROM THE BOOK REVIEW MAVEN

Last ish, we mentioned a new book called *YOU NEVER FORGET YOUR FIRST: A BIOGRAPHY OF GEORGE WASHINGTON*, by Alexis Coe. Lynne Saginaw has a copy of the Coe book for someone to review. You get to keep the book! And you will enjoy the glory of reading your review at the October Round Table. Lynne also urges everyone to "Ransack your homes for review loaners you have misplaced or forgotten!" And, we might add, for any books you would like to contribute to the Round Table for auctioning. Kind of hard to auction off books by Zoom, but October will come soon enough.

## BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS

"Ben Franklin's World" podcast, Episode 184, May 1, 2018, deals with a 2016 book by Professor David

J. Silverman of George Washington University, called THUNDERSTICKS: FIREARMS AND THE VIOLENT TRANSFORMATION OF NATIVE AMERICA. Some points:

Tribes decimated by European disease stepped up their raids on other tribes and on Euros to take women and children, to replenish their numbers. The tribes wanted guns that were light, durable, and low-cost. The Iroquois wanted to buy plates with a snake design, to suggest the mythic underwater horned serpent associated with flint, or Thunderbird designs. They wanted bigger trigger guards on their muskets, for mittened fingers, for hunting in the winter. The Dutch had to pay the Mohawks for permission to settle on the Hudson in the Beverwyck (Albany) area. The Iroquois conquest of the Mingoes (tributary tribes) was made possible by European-made guns. But this process ebbed as other tribes also began buying guns.

Tribes in the Carolinas got into the slave trade, capturing slaves from unarmed tribes to trade for guns. Tribes became indebted to Carolina merchants and attacked them to prevent the Carolina governments enslaving *them*.

Britain and France sent more guns all the time, to court the tribes. There was an enormous loss of life from the armed natives conquering the unarmed natives.

Silverman's book was published by Harvard University Press.

Carol Berkin has not spoken to the Round Table, at least not since 2011, but she has spoken at Fraunces Tavern and the Morris-Jumel Mansion. Professor Berkin reviewed a 2016 book, for the New York Times, called THE FIRST CONGRESS: HOW JAMES MADISON, GEORGE WASHINGTON, AND A GROUP OF EXTRAORDINARY MEN INVENTED THE GOVERNMENT, by Fergus M. Bordewich. Simon & Shuster. Some points:

Fast-paced. Everything is covered, but nothing is covered in all its complexity. Fisher Ames, one of the few brilliant men in attendance, dismissed his colleagues as altogether ordinary. With the members' lack of genius, over-weaning egos, lingering provincialism, and constant bickering, it is a wonder

that they managed to accomplish much at all. There were also some trying to eviscerate the Constitution and restore the sovereignty of the states. Much of the 1790s was spent dealing with unresolved issues from the colonial era and the years of the Revolution.

The New York History email of April 14, 2020 reported that an 1897 biography of Catherine Schuyler has been re-discovered and published. The title is simply CATHERINE SCHUYLER. None of our era's long, ponderous subtitles in 1897. The author was Mary Gay Humphreys. Scribners published it. Catherine Van Rensselaer Schuyler (1734-1803) was the wife of General Philip Schuyler. She gave birth fifteen times. Three of these were a set of triplets, none of whom reached baptism. Her daughters Elizabeth, Angelica and Peggy, though, have recently enjoyed a Broadway triumph in "Hamilton: The Musical."

Speaking of Alexander Hamilton, 2020 has seen the publishing, by Kindle Direct Publishing, of a novel by Jack Casey called HAMILTON'S CHOICE. The author rejects the theory that Hamilton accepted Burr's challenge to a duel out of exaggerated notions of honor, and the "suicide by Burr" theory too. Casey is a Yale graduate who writes historical novels. This tidbit comes from the [New York Almanack](#) website.

The Almanack also advertised a new novel called WEST OF THE ALLEGHENIES: A STORY OF SURVIVAL DURING THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR. Craig Pennington self-published his novel in 2020, so it is hot off the press. A settler family moves from eastern to western Pennsylvania. The hero is captured by the Redcoats and put on a prison ship. The novel is available, like everything else, on Amazon.

Craig Pennington has a pretty lively resume: He is the author of an independently-published 2019 thriller, DEAD RECKONING. He has managed off-shore construction projects for the Navy. He has salvaged Spanish shipwrecks in the Caribbean. His wife is a museum director. They live in Sarasota.

The Historians Podcast of April 18, 2020 featured Matthew Costello's book THE PROPERTY OF THE NATION: GEORGE WASHINGTON'S TOMB, MOUNT VERNON, AND THE MEMORY

OF THE FIRST PRESIDENT. The books treats of the evolution of GW's reputation in the 1800s. Compare Garry Wills's CINCINNATUS.

## IN THE NEWS

The [New York History Blog](#) of April 1, 2020 featured an interview by Liz Covart of Don Glickstein (who has not spoken at the Round Table) on his 2016 book AFTER YORKTOWN: THE FINAL STRUGGLE FOR AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE (Westholm Publishing). Liz Covart is the Digital Projects Editor at the Omohundro Institute at the College of William and Mary. Her Ph.D. is from UC Davis. The interview can be heard on the "Ben Franklin's World" podcast. (Jon Carriel praised the book at the ARRT's October 2016 meeting; his review can be found [here](#).)

## MISCELLANEOUS

From the Editor's Diary:

Saturday, January 10, 1998: Went to Forbes Museum. Saw Major General Benedict Arnold's commission, signed by John Hancock.

Interesting fact: The defeat at Yorktown made the British military change its strategy from fighting the US to addressing France on fronts including the Mediterranean and India. The French army under Rochambeau at Yorktown outnumbered Washington's army four to one.

Nova Scotia almost joined the Revolution! Who knew? There were two good-sized battles there between Redcoats and settlers, the Battle of Fort Cumberland and the Siege of St. John.

## JUNE SPEAKER: TOM SHACHTMAN ON FOUNDING FORTUNES

Author Tom Shachtman last addressed us in October of 2017. He will be speaking about his latest book: FOUNDING FORTUNES: HOW THE WEALTHY PAID FOR AND PROFITED FROM AMERICA'S REVOLUTION. St. Martin's Press, January 2020. Kirkus Reviews says that the book provides "a provocative argument that wealthy men built America and did a good job."

Mr. Shachtman is the author or co-author of thirty-five books. He has directed documentaries for ABC, CBS, NBC, PBS and BBC. He has taught at NYU and lectured at several universities and at the Smithsonian, and at the Library of Congress. He is the former Chair of the Writers Room in Manhattan. He is a Trustee of the Connecticut Humanities Council. He is a founding Director of the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area. He is also an occasional columnist for the Lakeville Journal of northwestern Connecticut. We could tell you what he does in his spare time, but we doubt that he has any.

## AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

The Round Table will next convene in YOUR HOME! Go back up to the top for Zoom instructions. The dinner menu will be whatever you want!

Board members will Zoom the usual semi-annual meeting at 5 p.m., before the virtual dinner meeting at 7:00.

Yr. most obdt. Svt.,  
Dr. David W. Jacobs