

BROADSIDE

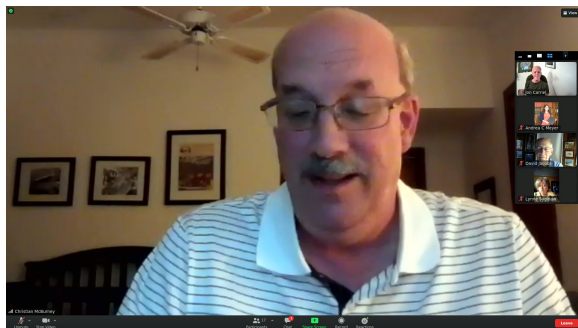
The Newsletter of the
American Revolution Round Table
<http://www.arrrt-ny.org>

October 2022

JUNE SPEAKER:

McBURNNEY: PRIVATEERS ATTACK BRIT SLAVE TRADE

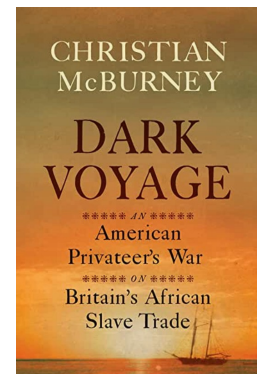
Christian McBurney, in his fifth Round Table appearance, gave a lively and informative slide show talk on John Brown of Rhode Island and his masterminding a naval offensive against the British slave trade. The Brown family – some slave traders and some abolitionists – endowed the college of Rhode Island in 1804 and it was re-named after them: Brown University.



John Brown was a slave trader himself, so he knew what was going on in the trade. Britain did the biggest slave trade in the Atlantic, bigger even than Portugal's, though

Portugal had been in the trade longer. Brown knew that the British Navy concentrated on protecting the trade routes between Britain and North America and neglected the African coast, so that is where he struck. He financed raids on the slave ships and their camps on the west African shore. Brown's skippers, like Esek Hopkins, captured hundreds of British slave ships and sold their human cargo in Charleston or to the French in Haiti.

One of Brown's privateers was the *Marlborough*, captained by George W. Babcock. This ship captured a British slave camp on the African shore, and McBurney even found a painting of the camp, which he showed in a slide. The *Marlborough* damaged the British slave trade more than any other ship. The Brits began convoying their slave ships and sending more naval vessels to Africa to guard against American privateers, but the damage was already done: investors in London stopped putting money into the slave trade, and that helped to take the profit out of that business even after the war was over. Tens of thousands in



west Africa were not sold to British slavers who otherwise would have been. The British anti-slavery movement began in 1787. The American Revolution, in this and many other ways, started to bring an end to slavery worldwide.

Rhode Island, before independence, was bigger in the slave trade than other provinces because it was so small: it had little hinterland to attract settlers away from the ports of Providence and Newport, so investment stayed in shipping, including the slave trade, more than in the bigger colonies. But the slave trade accounted for only five percent of Rhode Island's voyages and ten percent of its sea revenue.

Mr. McBurney's book, he said, will hit the stands about the end of June. He is the author of six books, and heads the Washington DC Round Table.

BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS

Member Peter Ford recommends Patrick K. O'Donnell's *THE INDISPENSABLES: MARBLEHEAD'S DIVERSE SOLDIER-MARINERS WHO SHAPED THE COUNTRY, FORMED THE NAVY, AND ROWED WASHINGTON ACROSS THE DELAWARE*. (The subtitle alone should have been divided into chapters.) Published by Atlantic Monthly Press in 2021. Peter compares this book to the Dreamworks miniseries "A Band of Brothers," on which O'Donnell served as technical consultant, having fought at Fallujah in the Second Iraq War.

Jon Carriel reviewed this same book at the June meeting. Jon found the book physically

attractive, with good maps, photos of monuments, and brief bios. But Jon found it "hagiographic and idealized." The author uses the word "indispensable" 26 times. No quotes; the author's own word. Christopher Thuilot adds that the author's previous book had unfounded claims.

Lynne Saginaw, Book Review Editrix, offered *IN THE FOUNDERS'*



FOOTSTEPS, by Adam Van Doren, which Maria Dering snapped up with alacrity.

Adam comes from the famous Van Doren intellectual family. He contacted me several years ago, told me about his project, and engaged my tour guide services. He teaches painting at Yale. He wanted to paint Rev scenes all over the Thirteen states. *REBELS AT SEA: PRIVATEERING IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION*, by Eric Jay Dolin, 2022, was also offered.

Maria Dering, our Facebook Page Admin, says that August is a slow news month. *Au contraire!* The dog days have produced two momentous battles: the one on August 27, 1776, and a new battle over what to call the first one.

It all began when one Board member asked the board whether anyone knew of any commemorations this year of the Battle of Brooklyn. Another member suggested that it should be called the Battle of Long Island, and gave reasons. I chimed in with a reference to John J. Gallagher's 1995 book *THE BATTLE OF BROOKLYN, 1776*, published by Da Capo Press. (The book has good, clear battle maps, and an engaging narrative.) I summarized Gallagher's reasons. Others sided with the Island

moniker. Gallagher explains his point of view in his Preface. His background was in military intelligence, not in academia. You usually call a battle after the nearest town. But Gallagher himself notes that the victor, General Howe, dated his after-action report “Long Island,” not Brooklyn. And his victory insured the quick British conquest of the entire 110-mile-long island, even though the battle itself was confined to Kings County. I always found the name Battle of Long Island confusing, though, because when I first saw the name, I asked well, *where* on this 110-mile-long island did the battle take place? But I don’t have a dog in this fight.

And yes, there were the usual commemorations of the battle. At Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn, the NYC Parks Department and the Maryland Order of the Cincinnati held an event that you can watch on You Tube. Huntington, Long Island also held a tribute.

We can only hope that no battle is ever fought anywhere near the Welsh town of Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwilllantysiliogogoch.

Member Jack Buchanan will be publishing yet another book in October. The title is THE BATTLE OF MUSGROVE MILL, 1780. The publisher is Westholme Press. Jack will tell us all about it at the LIVE! December meeting.

TEN CRUCIAL DAYS, besides being an organization, and co-host of next year’s national ARRT Congress (see below), is a book title. TEN CRUCIAL DAYS: WASHINGTON’S VISION FOR VICTORY UNFOLDS, by William L. Kidder, was published by Knox Press in 2019. It has 424

pages, lots of maps, a bibliography, and twenty chapters that take us step by step through the Trenton campaign, including the run-up and the aftermath. In the Acknowledgments you will see the familiar names Thomas Fleming and David Hackett Fischer. The cover illustration shows GW looking younger than he is usually painted: he was only 44 in 1776. Kidder has written three books on Revolutionary New Jersey.

IN THE NEWS

Long-time Round Tabler Polly Guérin died late last year. We found this out only



recently. Polly had a podcast for years, reporting on New York cultural events of all kinds. Your editor knew Polly through the Noel Coward Society as well as through the Round Table. Polly was an Adjunct Professor at the Fashion Institute of Technology and a fashion historian. She was the author of a history of the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum and a history of the General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen, New York’s very first labor organization, founded as soon as the War for Independence was over, in 1784.

We also sadly mark the death of Queen Elizabeth II. Your editor was one of the speakers at the unveiling, in 2015, of a sign at the Bowling Green naming the spot “Evacuation Day Plaza” (where the *Charging Bull* is). The British flag was lowered from the flagpole and folded and handed to a uniformed representative of the Queen, a man who works at the British Consulate in New York. He said a few appropriate words. The American flag was raised. I had a chance to speak to this official. He enthusiastically agreed with my take on Evacuation Day. I said that this day, November 25, 1783, was the last day of the War for Independence. It marked the beginning of a hundred years of gradual reconciliation between the United States and the United Kingdom. This day should be honored as the birth of the most successful alliance in world history. Together these two nations led the world into the modern age (along with France and others). Together we fought slavery, and later, two World Wars and the Cold War. We led the world against aggression, racism and totalitarianism.

Queen Elizabeth was a big participant in that long and honorable alliance.

Lynne Saginaw advises us that the New-York Historical Society will host a talk on November 16 (the date of the Battle of Fort Mifflin in 1776), by noted author Stacy Schiff, on “The Revolutionary: Samuel Adams.” Historian Joseph Ellis will moderate. This will be one of a series of talks on biography. You can find more information at www.nyhistory.org.

Member Jon Carriel reports that the Eighth Congress of American Revolution Round Tables has been set for Friday, November 17 through Sunday, November 19, 2023.

Fourteen months from now. It will be held at the Morven Museum, Princeton, New Jersey. The hosts will be the Washington Crossing ARRT and Ten Crucial Days. This last is an organization in Lawrence Township, NJ and is connected with the Princeton-Mercer Convention and Visitors Bureau. It is also the name of a book (see BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS, above).

Morven was the estate of Richard Stockton, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. He was later captured by the Redcoats and taken to the Provost Prison in New York City. That was the British Army’s name for the New Jail, on the New York City Commons, today’s City Hall Park. There he was starved and kept in freezing cold. He was paroled, but never fully recovered.



Here is the first report on the Round Table’s new Facebook page, from the page’s Administrator, Maria Dering:

*Our ARRT-NY Facebook page is doing well! It now boasts **1,170 followers**. Some posts have received over a hundred views and ten link-clicks. For example, our August 3 post on Patriot Zephaniah Platt, in Smithtown, Long Island, reached 613 people, thanks to two shares. We have gained one new member through the Facebook page since July 4. Facebook continues to be an excellent way to inform viewers about Round Table events and membership, and it provides a quick link to our website.*

HUZZAH! To Matt Zachary Johnson for maintaining this page for many years.

Viewers like our photos at the top of each page, news about events, and photos attached to event announcements. We try to update the page at least once a week, and we welcome news from our readers. To visit the Facebook page, go to <https://www.facebook.com/arrtny/>. “Like” the page if you have your own Facebook account, and visit us often. See you there!

Member Christopher Thuilot reports from Westminster Abbey in London:

The tomb and monument to William Pitt (the Elder), Earl of Chatham (1708-1778), is a magnificent sculpture. Pitt, called “The Great Commoner,” was a masterful orator. His Last Hurrah was a speech in support of a motion to end the war in the rebellious colonies and focus once again on defeating



France in Britain’s other possessions. He dramatically collapsed after standing up to answer an objection to his speech and died some days later. Many of the monuments in the Abbey are Romanesque, and the aristocracy was certainly influenced by the Roman empire and its patricians. Pitt’s – or

rather Earl Chatham’s by this time – life-sized effigy is in the museum portion of the Abbey, clad in the crimson robe he wore in the famous Copley painting.

OCTOBER SPEAKER

Our October zoom speaker will be Dr. Andrew Porwancher, 38, the Wick Cary Associate Professor of Legal History at the University of Oklahoma. He will be telling us about his latest book, **THE JEWISH WORLD OF ALEXANDER HAMILTON**. His book was published in 2021 by Princeton University Press.



Dr. Porwancher’s thesis is that Hamilton “in all likelihood, was born and raised Jewish.”

Dr. Porwancher’s previous books include **THE DEVIL HIMSELF: A TALE OF HONOR, INSANITY, AND THE BIRTH OF MODERN AMERICA**.

DEADLINE

The deadline for submissions to the December Broadside will be midnight, Tuesday, November 15, 2022. Please send in anything that might be of interest: books and articles on the Rev, speaker dates, the discovery of previously unknown documents or artifacts from the Rev, recipes, barracks ballads, Broadway musicals about a revolutionary hero – anything! Send

submissions to Editor Fred Cookinham at fcookinham@juno.com. Thanks!

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

The Round Table is seeking a new Treasurer. The successful candidate will be good at figures and money management. The compensation will be a hearty handshake and the thanks of a grateful nation. Please send replies to the Editor at fcookinham@juno.com.

The October Round Table will be our lastoom meeting, barring the unforeseen. We will Zoom at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, October 11, 2022. Normally it would be the first Tuesday in October, but October 4 this year conflicts with Yom Kippur. We expect to meet live for the December 6 meeting – at last!

Yr obdt svt,
Dr. David Jacobs, Chairman