

BROADSIDE

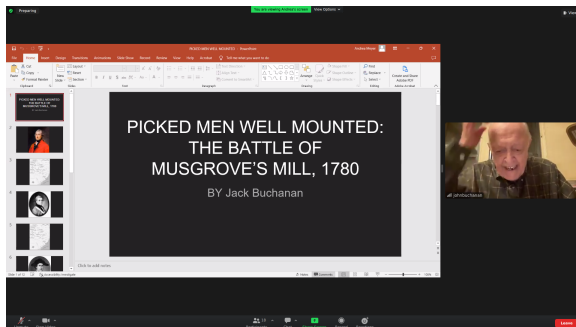
The Newsletter of the
American Revolution Round Table
<http://www.arrrt-ny.org>

February 2023

DECEMBER SPEAKER:

VICTORY AT MUSGROVE'S MILL!

The Round Table once again heard the *Bucannon* roar Tuesday night, via Zoom – as long-time Board member and frequent speaker Jack Buchanan told us all about the Battle of Musgrove's Mill, South Carolina in 1780. Eighteen attended.



Jack called his talk “Picked Men Well Mounted.” It was based on his latest book, just out, called THE BATTLE OF MUSGROVE'S MILL, 1780. The book was published in November by Westholme Publishing, as part of its “Small Battles” series, which is edited by Mark Edward Lender and James Kirby Martin. It has 144 pages and 12 illustrations. Jack showed us

some of those illustrations as slides accompanying his talk. One was the Gainsborough portrait of Lord Cornwallis.

Among our important take-aways from Jack's talk were these:

The majority of the South's white population lived in the back country. The tidewater planters may have owned lots of land and lots of slaves, but this was going to be a campaign of militia versus militia. Both sides needed to recruit large numbers of militia. So the back country could not be dismissed as unimportant in Cornwallis's Southern Campaign.

The Loyalist militia suffered from the same problem as the Patriot militia: poorly-trained citizen soldiers who sometimes cut and ran in battle. The Royalist side in this battle was not British, but American: Loyalist militia and “Provincial Regulars,” that is, American volunteers in the British Regular Army. Some were New Yorkers: DeLancey's Provincials, under the command of Abraham DePeyster. (There is a statue of his ancestor of the same name in Tom Paine Park, near the court buildings downtown.) The Royalist forces in the battle outnumbered the Patriots 500 to 200.

You can see just how important recruiting was to both sides by the fact that General Horatio Gates's ignominious defeat at Camden, South Carolina discouraged Patriot recruiting, while Musgrove's Mill encouraged it. The militia who volunteered after this Patriot victory made possible the greater victory at King's Mountain, which turned the tide of the Southern Campaign and led to the ultimate victory at Yorktown.

Musgrove's Mill was, in Buchanan's words, a "mini-Bunker Hill." The Royalist force advanced in line uphill against a well-prepared Patriot position and of course took heavy casualties. They never learn.

The Patriots were commanded by a committee, you might say. Three commanders led the battle with no one of them in over-all charge. They made a great team. Also, they had no choice about whether to fight or where to fight, so there was little for them to wrangle about even if they had been inclined to wrangle. One of those Colonels, Elijah Clarke, was illiterate, at the battle and for the rest of his life. He didn't learn either.

Jack shoots down the oft-repeated mistake that the battle was an ambush of the Patriots



by the Royalists. The three Colonels had been told by a farmer that the militia force they were advancing toward had recently been reinforced by Provincials. So they

knew what they were in for. "Cold steel would carry the day."

Our Chairman, Dave Jacobs, was unable to attend – a very rare occurrence! So the Zoom meeting was efficiently managed by Dr. Joanne Grasso. After Jack finished his



prepared talk, Joanne called for questions. Jon Carriel asked: How hard were the river crossings? Jack explained that the rivers of the Carolinas were not "mighty" rivers, but they were all without bridges and had to be forded. Dr. Grasso asked whether anyone at the time of the battle had called it another Bunker Hill. No. That characterization was an original Buchananism. John DiNuzzo asked whether the Royalist side was discouraged in the Southern Campaign after the big Patriot victory at Kings Mountain. No. They saw no reason not to be confident until Cornwallis was besieged at Yorktown. And Tom McAndrews asked Jack whether Westholme had given him guidelines for a contribution to a book series. No, they gave him a free hand. Tom had been on the Book Award Committee of the Philadelphia Round Table. He says he reads about *thirty* books on the Rev per year!

ERRATA

The two new members reported in the December Broadside were Robert Hoar, not Robert Mohr, and Barbara Johns.

BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS

Maria Dering reviewed a book of paintings at the December Zoom. It is called *IN THE FOUNDERS' FOOTSTEPS: LANDMARKS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLU-*



TION. The author, and painter, is Adam Van Doren, and yes, he is one of the famous Van Doren intellectual family. Maria finds it a “well-written and colorful travelogue.” The book is not intended to add to the knowledge of a student of the Rev, but to be enjoyed as a collection of watercolors on heavy, glossy paper. Van Doren, who teaches painting at Yale, set out to paint Rev scenes around the country as they look now. He includes in the book a few interesting Rev anecdotes, maps, a Who’s Who of Rev notables, a timeline of the Rev, and a bibliography. It would make a great gift or coffee table book. Two Round Table members are in Van Doren’s Acknowledgments: your editor, who showed Mr. Van Doren Rev sites around Manhattan, and our Chairman, Dave Jacobs, who is mentioned in connection with the siege of Yorktown.

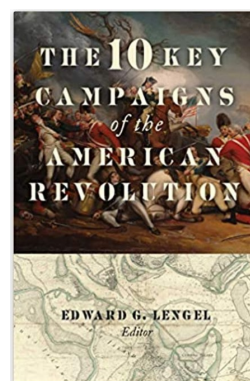
Member Richard Melnick, of Queens, reports that his new book, *LONG ISLAND CITY IN 1776: THE REVOLUTION COMES TO QUEENS*, will be published in June by The History Press, a division of Arcadia Publishing. Since Richard anticipates giving talks on this subject, he also passes along a request for advice on

how to field questions from the “Woke Left” on the American Revolution, particularly in regard to slavery. This is a good prospective topic for a general discussion among the Round Tablers, either in these pages or at the meetings, or on our Facebook page (American Revolution Round Table-Facebook).

Tom McAndrew, of the Philly Round Table, advises us that his December speaker was Bert Dunkerly, author of *DECISION AT BRANDYWINE: THE BATTLE ON BIRMINGHAM HILL*. Westholme Publishing, 2021. Tom keeps track of all Rev books to be published in the coming year, and he says there are many authors out there who would like to be invited to speak to Round Tables.

OUR ANNUAL BOOK AWARD

The winner of the American Revolution Round Table of New York’s annual Book Award for 2022 is Edward G. Lengel’s *THE TEN KEY CAMPAIGNS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION*. The publisher is Regnery History. The year of publication is 2020.



We ask all hands to be thinking about a Rev book to nominate for our 2023 Book Award. Other Rev organizations, writers, and publishers look to our annual Award with some interest, so our Award has influence beyond just our membership.

IN THE NEWS

Member Jack Buchanan tells us that the publishing companies are suffering a big paper shortage.

Joe Seliga passed away in early December. Mr. Seliga was the founder and long-time President of the Washington Crossing, PA Round Table. Bob Fanelli has been head of that Round Table for some time now.

Tom McAndrew has been sending out a weekly email, listing upcoming Rev Zoom meetings. Mr. McAndrew may be stopping his service this spring, since many meetings are going back to in-person formats again. But for now, his address is tommcan@comcast.net.

Mike Wolf sends along information from a website called "Mr. Local History." It tells of the fire beacons in New York State and New Jersey that were lit to warn the region of British movements out of New York City. <https://www.mrlocalhistory.org/signal-beacons/>.

Maria Dering, our Facebook page maintainer, reports that our page continues to attract two or three new viewers per week. We are up to 1,300 now.

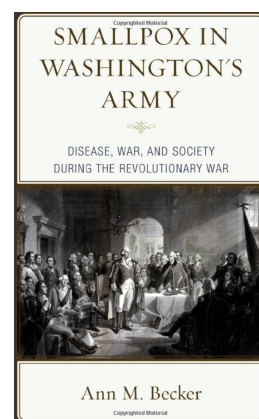
Lynne Saginaw keeps track of events at the New-York Historical Society. (They are the only ones who still use the hyphen in New-York.) On Tuesday, February 2, there will be a talk there called "Washington's Farewell: The Founding Father's Warning to Future Generations." 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. \$35.

Member Richard Melnick also frequents the Society, attending two or three lectures per year. On November 2, Richard heard a lecture by Colonel Kevin J. Weddle of the

US Army. He is the author of *THE COMPLEAT VICTORY: SARATOGA AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION* (Oxford University Press, 2021).

FEBRUARY SPEAKER

Just as well we are not meeting for dinner: our topic for the evening will be smallpox.



Our efficient Speaker Engager, Dr. Joanne Grasso, has engaged the speaking services of Dr. Ann M. Becker, Historical Studies Mentor at SUNY Empire State College. Dr. Becker lives in Selden, Long Island. Her topic will be smallpox in the

Continental army. She is the author of *SMALLPOX IN WASHINGTON'S ARMY: DISEASE, WAR, AND SOCIETY DURING THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR*. The book was published by Lexington Books on November 22, 2022. An epidemic as an historical topic is all too relevant today. An epidemic during wartime: imagine the plight of people in Ukraine and Syria in the past three years. Smallpox was everywhere in the Revolutionary era.



Dr. Becker will also be speaking in April to the Philadelphia Round Table.

DEADLINE

Midnight, Tuesday, March 14 will be the deadline for submission of any pieces you would like to write for the April Broadside. Anything of interest to the Round Table is welcome: book reviews, discovery of some Rev participant's diary or long-lost letters, tales of your travels to Rev sites, openings or closings of Rev sites, or tales of young people discovering an interest in the Rev – that would be particularly welcome!

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

One or two more Zoom meetings might do it. In February we will Zoom. April is still undetermined. We will meet in person if we can find a restaurant in time. We will let you know one way or the other in the April Broadside. In June we are hoping to meet in person. In the same email that connected you to this newsletter you will find the Zoom link for our meeting, 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, February 7, 2023.

I would like to thank the seventeen people who responded to our poll on the question: Should we return to in-person meetings? That's a 30 to 40 percent response. Similar organizations taking similar polls usually get only a five to ten percent response. Of the seventeen responses, nine were for in-person meetings. Three were for Zoom only. Four were undecided. Three members spoke well of hybrid meetings. What we want to do now, then, is to Zoom in February and *maybe* April this year, have an in-person dinner in June, and in the future we might have dinners in the warm months and Zoom

meetings in the winter. So next year, expect Zoom meetings in December and February.

Our Round Table and Tom McAndrew's Philadelphia Round Table have been successfully co-operating to find speakers for both groups, making lighter the task of Dr. Joanne Grasso, our Speaker Coordinator. Our April speaker will be **Dr. Benjamin Carp**, on the Great Fire of New York. June's will be **Dr. Christopher Minty** on Loyalist networks. October will see **George Kotlik** speaking on East Florida in the Revolutionary Era, and in December it will be **Dr. Ricardo Herrera** on feeding the army at Valley Forge.

Yr obdt svt,
Dr. David Jacobs