

# BROADSIDE

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

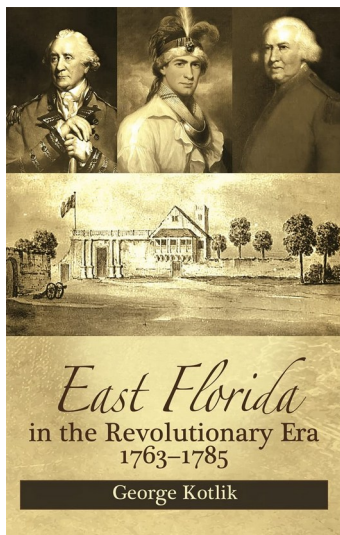
December 2023

## OCTOBER SPEAKER:

### LITTLE KNOWN REVWAR HISTORY

Addressing seventeen Round Tablers by Zoom on October 3rd was Mr. George Kotlik, author of *EAST FLORIDA IN THE REVOLUTIONARY ERA: 1765-1785*. His book was published by the University of Georgia Press in January.

At one point in Mr. Kotlik's talk there was momentary interference in our Zoom meeting from some outside source, but otherwise his talk went fine, pictures and all. What was particularly appreciated about Mr. Kotlik's slides is that there were not that many of them, and he did not race through a lot of hard-to-distinguish maps. His slides were effective as an embellishment on his talk, not a distracting Cecil B. DeMille production.



Revs fans just love to discover a previously unknown or little-known theater of the war or aspect of the revolutionary phase of our Revolution. The East Florida theater of operations is about as obscure as it gets. East Florida and West Florida were two British provinces that did not join the Revolution. The few settlers there had been there less than one generation, so they did not think of themselves as “Americans.” And they were on the receiving end of British military and other spending. They were subsidized, and so they would not bite the hand that fed them.

There were three invasions of East Florida by Georgia militia and Continental troops. All three were poorly supplied and led. General Washington authorized these invasions mainly to get his hands on the British military stores kept in the Castillo de San Marcos in Saint Augustine.

Here are some other points of interest:

The UK took possession of the province of East Florida in 1763 and gave it back to Spain in 1783. By 1785 the British government and military, and almost all the British settlers, had left the province. Saint Augustine was the capital. If the UK had kept the province, Saint Augustine might rank today as one of the major southern ports, like Charleston, Savannah or New Orleans.

Three signers of the Declaration of Independence were captured and held in the Castillo.

The first British governor was General James Grant, well known to students of the Battle of Long Island.

East Florida slaves served in the Loyalist militia (the East Florida Rangers), but were not



promised freedom. That militia was led by none other than Lieutenant Colonel Jacques Marcus Prevost, whose wife Theodosia, back in Paramus, New Jersey, married Aaron Burr as soon as her husband died in Jamaica of his war

wounds. The Rangers took Georgia and defeated Francis Marion twice in South Carolina.

Parliament believed East Florida to be worthless, and so gave it to Spain for free. The province got the chaos, on evacuation, that New York City and County averted: when the Redcoats evacuated Manhattan Island, General Putnam and his American dragoons moved into each checkpoint along the Eastern Post Road just as soon as the Redcoats pulled out, to prevent looting and reprisals in any power vacuum. Not so East Florida. There was widespread looting and shooting in the province before its own Evacuation Day, November 19, 1785. Then a Spanish government was set up.

But the province was not worthless. It exported a number of agricultural products. James Bond fans will know the name Sea Island cotton. Bond wears shirts of that make while in the Caribbean, and that type of cotton was exported by East Florida in its brief twenty years as a British colony.

Mr. Kotlik was asked:

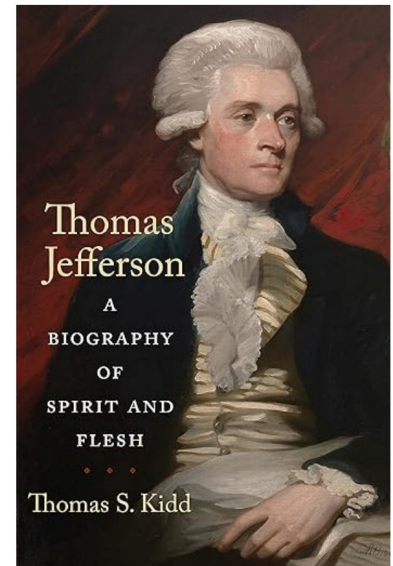
Was there any French or Spanish action in East Florida after those two nations allied with the US? No.

How did East Florida react to the Declaration of Independence? If they reacted at all, it was only to see this development as a northern, and mainly New England, aberration.

Mr. Kotlik apologized for not covering the Native American aspect of East Florida, but of course that will surely be another book.

## BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS

At the October meeting we heard Maria Dering review THOMAS JEFFERSON: A BIOGRAPHY OF SPIRIT AND FLESH, by Thomas S. Kidd. Maria writes "I always enjoy reading biographies and this was no exception." But Maria is not sure whether this book is meant for general consumption or as a reference work. The book is arranged chronologically, but Maria found it so packed with detail that she sometimes got lost in the narrative. If you want an encyclopedic work on every aspect of Jefferson's life, especially his ideas and where he got them, then this book is for you.



Maria had read elsewhere of Jefferson's huge wine and book bills and his attachment to Sally

Hemings, but new to her were Jefferson's theological discussions with Joseph Priestley, and his journey from Anglican to Unitarian. Jefferson talking with philosophers and divines could have filled a smaller but satisfying book all by themselves. Such a book would have been more focused. Kidd's book is not dull, it's just overwhelming. "I recommend this book to readers who would like to expand their knowledge of Jefferson's spiritual development as it informed Jefferson's response to the critical issues of his day, including slavery, Native American people, and revolution."

The book was published in 2022 by Yale U. Press. It includes 239 pages of text and 56 pages of footnotes, but no separate bibliography.

I got a recommendation for *CRISIS AT THE CHESAPEAKE: THE ROYAL NAVY AND THE STRUGGLE FOR AMERICA, 1775-1783*, by Quintin Bally, Helion, Warwick, England, 2020. It is in a series called *FROM REASON TO REVOLUTION, 1721-1815*, series editor Andrew Bamford. The series covers the change in military theory in the Age of Revolution caused by revolutionary change. Instead of king versus king, war was now a matter of nation versus nation, and man entered the era of total war.

## IN THE NEWS

On August 6, CNN and Newser announced that the National Park Service is asking for volunteers to transcribe Revolutionary War army records. They need "citizen archivists." To volunteer, click on the Newser article "Revolutionary War Project."

## DECEMBER SPEAKER

On Tuesday, December 5, we will be regaled through the magic of Zoom by Dr. Ricardo A. Herrera, author of *FEEDING WASHINGTON'S ARMY: SURVIVING THE VALLEY FORGE WINTER OF 1778*. His book was published by the University of North Carolina Press in June of 2022. Dr. Herrera teaches military history at the U.S. Army War College. He graduated from UCLA and did his PhD at Marquette. Before teaching, he also served as a cavalry officer. He previously wrote *For Liberty and the Republic: The American Soldier, 1775-1861*.

## Guest Editorial

The Morris-Jumel Mansion, located in Washington Heights at 65 Jumel Terrace, boasts that it is Manhattan's oldest surviving residence. That may not be true much longer.

Neglect, and a bureaucracy so slow it verges on the inert, have created a nightmare, as reported in the New York Times, appropriately on October 31st.

The City Department of Parks and Recreation is responsible for the exterior and the grounds. *(The interior is the responsibility of Morris-Jumel Inc., a non-profit group, but they cannot even do work on the interior until the Parks Department gives its say-so. – ed.)*



Over five million dollars has been set aside to make a start, but the money sits idle on the Parks Department books while the paint peels off at a touch, and one of the four columns on the facade has collapsed.

Dating from 1765 and built in the Neo-Palladian style, the Mansion was originally the summer

home of a wealthy Tory. During the Revolution, it served as George Washington's headquarters. (*-- for five weeks in the fall of 1776. -- ed.*)

Eventually it came into the possession of the notorious Eliza Jumel, who was briefly married to Aaron Burr, and who kicked him out when he spent her money like it was his. (Her lawyer was Alexander Hamilton junior. Karma.)

There's some talk of starting restoration in the spring of 2024. They'll have to hurry before there's nothing left to preserve.

What can you do? Raise hell.

Contact the New York City Council and demand they get started on this. It's almost too late already.

-- Lynne Saginaw

## WE STILL NEED AN ASSISTANT TREASURER!

Light duties. The Round Table cannot function without two financial wizards to share the handling of the money. Thank you!

## DEADLINE

Midnight on The Night of January 16<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for contributions to the February Broadside. If you have an article, a book review, a recipe that Martha Washington overlooked, an accusation against some foul traitor, anything you want to share with the Round Table, send it to editor Fred Cookinham, [fcookinham@juno.com](mailto:fcookinham@juno.com). Thank you!

## AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Our next Zoom meeting will be at 7:30 pm, Tuesday, December 5, 2023. We hope to have a live dinner for the February meeting, Tuesday, February 6, 2024, if we can find an affordable restaurant. Our best strategy may be to have one live dinner per year from now on, and Zoom the other four.

Yr most obdt svt,  
Dr. David W. Jacobs