



# The Cradle of Texas Crier

Cradle of Texas Chapter # 33  
Sons of the American Revolution



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Dr. Don Pugh, Editor

## New Officers to be Inducted

### Law Professor to Speak

Dr. Mark Steiner of the South Texas School of Law in Houston will be the principal speaker at the regular meeting of the Cradle of Texas Chapter at the Wurst Haus German Deli and Restaurant at the corner of This Way and That Way in Lake Jackson on January 13, 2007 at 11:30 a.m. Professor Steiner's topic will be "An Honest Calling: The Law Practice of Abraham Lincoln."

Professor Steiner was a Fulbright Scholar in the Fall of 2005 and taught at the College of Law at the National Taiwan University in Taipei, Taiwan and at the University of Houston Law Center and the William Mitchell College of Law in St. Paul, Minnesota. He graduated from the University of Texas in 1978 and received his J. D. degree from the University of Houston in 1982 and most recently completed his Ph. D. in History in 1993, his dissertation was *Abraham Lincoln and the Antebellum Legal Profession*. He has a new book *An Honest Calling: The Law Practice of Abraham Lincoln*, published by the Northern Illinois Press in 2006.

He has many publications and guest presentations, and was recently enlisted to write the biography of James A. Baker for the Yale Biographical Dictionary of American Law.

He is licensed to practice by the State Bar of Texas and the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. He is married to Lou Helmers and there are the proud parents of twins: Emma and Hannah.

Another feature of our program will be the induction of the new officers of the chapter for 2007. Elected to serve the chapter are:

President	Dr. Tillman Daniel
Vice President	Dr. Mike Rees
Secretary	Judge Garvin Germany
Treasurer	Russell Dart
Genealogist	Tim Hall
Chaplain	Rev. Roger Byler
Executive Committeemen	Milt Wing
	Donald Mudd

### Medal Presented

Mrs. Evelyn Opaku, a naturalized American Citizen from Ghana, West Africa was presented the Bronze Good Citizenship Medal at the December meeting. Mrs. Opaku, an attorney in Brazoria County related how she and her husband recognized the opportunity that could be found in the United States and emigrated here to realize the dream. Mrs. Opaku has encouraged two of her children to attend the United States Military Academy. Her daughter, who has completed her studies is now serving on active duty in Iraq and her son is currently in his second year at the Academy.



### Minutes of the December Meeting

The Cradle of Texas Chapter of the Texas Society of the Sons of the American Revolution met at Smithhart's Texas Grille in Angleton, Texas at 11:30 AM, Saturday, December 9, 2006.

Members present were: Rev. Roger Byler, Kirk Daniel, Dr. Tillman Daniel, George Easterling, Judge Garvin Germany, George Hall, Tim Hall, Thomas Mayerle, Mark Peebler, Donald Mudd, Thomas Mudd, Dr. Don Pugh, Arnold Seidule, Robert Seidule, Clell Sechrest, Julian Taylor III, Luther Singletary, Phillip Vance, Milt Wing, Dr. Mike Rees. Wives and guests included: Elizabeth Melton, Freda Daniel, Kay Mudd, Anna Peebler, Earlene Pugh, Janice Seidule, Mary Bates Sechrest, Jerry Singletary, Janie Vance, Mary Nita Wing, Dora Bonner, Faye Gordon, Veronica Davis, Bobbie Greer, Steve Warren, Evelyn Opaku and Dr. and Mrs. Ira Gruber.



President Tillman Daniels called the meeting to order by asking Reverend Roger Byler to lead us in the Invocation.

Compatriots pledged their allegiance to the Flags and the SAR Opening.

President Daniel welcomed members, wives, DAR visitors. Mike Rees introduced special guests: Bobbie Greer from the *Brazosport Facts*, Steve Warren from the Buffalo Soldiers National Museum, and three local attorneys: Dora Bonner, Faye Gordon, and Veronica Davis.

President Daniels asked for unfinished business, of which there was none. He asked the Chapter to approve the minutes as published in the "Cradle Crier" newsletter. A motion was made, seconded and the minutes were approved as written.

It was moved and seconded that the membership vote on the changes to the President Daniels asked for the report of the Nominating Committee. The committee reported that the nominations were as follows: President: Tilman Dniel; Vice President: Mike Rees; Secretary: Garvin Germany; Treasurer: Russell Dart; Genealogist: Tim Hart, Executive Commiteemen: Milt Wing and Donald Mudd. President Daniels asked for new business and officers reports, of which there was none.

Dr. Don Pugh moved that the membership vote on the proposed amendments to Article V of Chapter's constitution and Article III of the By-laws read, distributed and discussed at the last meeting. The motion was seconded. The amendments passed.

President Daniels called on George Easterling to induct Phil Vance, Mark Keebler, Kirk Daniel and Tom Mudd. George welcomed the new members to the Cradle



of Texas Chapter with certificates and rosettes.

Mike Rees introduced our Citizenship award recipient, Evelyn Opoku. Ms. Opoku told her story. In 1981 she immigrated to the U.S. from Ghana (Gold Coast) West Africa with her husband and three children.

Her second oldest daughter Jennifer Opoku graduated from West Point in 1999. Captain Jennifer is serving her second tour of duty in Iraq. Her youngest, Kevin is now at West Point, Class of 2008, where he plays football this weekend against Navy. She said that our country offers the best opportunities to foreigners. She is an Assistant Attorney General of the State of Texas supporting child support.

She says that her each one of her family considers their citizenship a privilege. She has always remembered President Kennedy's challenge, "ask not what your country can do for you, but ask what you can do for your country."

She said that she appreciated this honor, but was humbled by it, and that she and her family wanted to thank the Sons of the American Revolution for recognizing her family.

Mike Rees then introduced Mr. Steven Warren, who represents the Buffalo Soldiers National Museum in Houston. Mr. Warren made the membership aware of the Museum, established by Captain P. J. Matthews five years ago in the Museum District. The exhibits and many programs are devoted to the role that black men have taken in every war of this Nation. He invited our membership to visit the Museum and consider membership to support its patriotic goals.

Dr. Don Pugh talked about the induction of Professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr., professor at Harvard, into the SAR at the National Congress in Dallas this year. Dr. Pugh said that the SAR is making an outreach to locate descendants of the estimated 5,000 black soldiers in the American Revolution.

Dr. Don Pugh introduced our program, Professor Ira D. Gruber, who holds the Harris Masterson Chair, at Rice University where he received the George R. Brown award for superior teaching in 2003. Dr. Pugh noted that he is on the Revolutionary War Committee of the National Park System Advisory Board.

Professor Gruber spoke on "African Americans in the American Revolution.

The Revolutionary War created an opportunity for late eighteenth century people to think about ideals. It forced them to consider the status of their 600,000 fellow



human beings who were enslaved in British North America. The Revolution offered these people an opportunity to escape slavery by three possible means: service to the Colonies, service to the British; opportunities to escape engendered

by the conditions created by the War.

In 1800 a very high proportion of the descendants of those enslaved in 1775 failed to achieve emancipation.

In seeking an explanation of why, Dr. Gruber introduced us to the ecological and economic environment in which slavery was viable in the British Colonies.



Almost all of the slaves were in two areas: 1. both sides of the Chesapeake Bay and 2. the low countries of the Carolinas and Georgia.

The crops grown by slaves were a function of the climate. In Virginia, although wheat or livestock were subsistence and local market crops, the export crop was tobacco. Tobacco required much more supervision by the whites, but the slaves had more time for cultivation of their own allowed plots so their material welfare was higher than the slaves on the rice plantations.

In South Carolina and Georgia, it was warm enough to grow rice and indigo. Rice was a most lucrative crop, but its cultivation required much capital—at least 30 slaves for optimal economies of scale. Rice cultivation tended to be supervised only by blacks. One consequence was that the slaves in the rice colonies of South Carolina and Georgia had more “autonomy” in a relative sense, than in Virginia.

So into this setting exploded the ideals of the American Revolution. There were abolitionists in the northern and middle colonies. Several states had abolished the slave trade. The U.S. Constitution in 1787 had put a 20 year moratorium on the slave trade so as not to allow some states to operate at an economic disadvantage for an earlier abolition of the slave trade. Although it is very difficult for us to imagine, the treatment of human beings as a commodity meant that abolition was tied to the problem of compensation. Ironically, the inability of our nascent Nation’s leaders to deal with compensation meant that a horrible social cost would be later “paid” in the Civil War.

Already in 1775 there had been attacks on the slave trade. It seems incredible that the Revolutionaries, who said that they had not been heirs to “Egyptian bondage” to the British, didn’t think of the irony of the existence of slavery in their own country. The Declaration of Independence stood for the proposition that all men were endowed with inalienable rights, “natural rights” which “trumped” legal rights in property. Yet people thought they had the legal right to own slaves.

This talk of the universal natural rights of man in the Declaration of Independence inspired the slaves to think that it literally applied to them. In this vein of thought, the slaves and freemen of color of Charleston set up a “liberty pole”, only to discover that the authorities tearing it down thought themselves “more equal”.

Some slaves fled the south to the North to test the proposition that they were endowed with the right to liberty. In an act of judicial activism justified under the common law, the Supreme Court of Massachusetts in 1783 determined that in Massachusetts slaves had a constitutional right to liberty. Half of the colonies which became states had abolished slavery by Judicial or legislative means by the advent of the War Between the States. These Northern states were able to do this without considering the problem of compensation because the slaveholders were too few to protest with clout. Also,

eighteenth century legislators worried about the possible governmental deficit compensation would create.

The Revolutionary War gave slaves opportunities to serve in the U. S. or the British forces. General Washington, a prominent slave owner, had a cautious policy. In the Summer of 1775 he only wanted to recruit free African Americans who had had prior military service. By 1778 the Continentals needed more men, and several new approaches were developed. Some states allowed military service by slaves. The British promised emancipation for service, so by 1778, the Continental Congress, fearful that slaves would join the British, sent recruiters to Georgia and South Carolina offering African Americans freedom for three years’ service. Because some states offered emancipation on enlistment there were differential requirements and confusion among the African enlistees. Quotas were assigned to individual states. m.

Many slaves served the Colonies and some served the British. Both the British and the Continentals put the slaves into logistic and “support services”. Mostly out of uniform, most supplied ammunition, food, built forts, acted as teamsters, served as orderlies to officers, and did other non combat services. Both sides rarely armed slaves. But when they were armed, they were distributed so as to dilute them as a group, rarely concentrated in one unit, because of the unspoken fear that if they learned to act as a disciplined unified body they might threaten the authorities which continued to enslave their kind.

Although the story of British service was later, repressed by abolitionists, it is well documented. About 5,000 African American freemen and slaves served the colonies. Another 20,000 had escaped during the years of the Revolutionary War, only 3% of all enslaved African Americans at that time. Although almost all those who served avoided re-enslavement; getting out of slavery by military service was not always a promise that was fulfilled.

Most of the states stood up for the African American troops, but the 1790’s were retrograde for human rights because of the resurgence of the institution of slavery. Some owners in the Chesapeake made a renewed investment in slavery. The biggest factor in the resurgence of slavery was the rising market and technology for cotton as the chief export crop of slave capitalism. The sale of surplus slaves in Virginia and Maryland saw the movement of slaves to the Carolinas, and the Gulf Coast, after the Louisiana Purchase. The abolitionists hit a “stone wall” with the increasing profitability of cotton slave agriculture.

The Union was more fragile during the youth of our Constitutional republic. People were afraid that the Union would be broken over the question of slavery. The accession of Texas before 1845 was extremely controversial because of the fears of the abolitionists about the precedence of the admission of a new slave state. By the time of the Civil War the slave population had grown to reflect the health of slavery: 84% of Maryland, 95% of



Virginia, 98% of South Carolina and Georgia were enslaved.

The Revolution had come and gone with its high ideals. This discussion was a missed opportunity to peacefully apply these ideals to the peculiar institution of slavery. If our forebears had had the foresight or been aware of the future cost, they could have taken this opportunity to abolish slavery with compensation of property rights which would have been less than the horrible social cost of the War. In fact, the Union did have to come apart before slavery could be abolished.

Benjamin Franklin, the great American statesman and philosopher was deeply offended when his countrymen would not wrestle with the irony of slavery in the freed colonies. Franklin himself had sold his slaves and become an abolitionist. Professor Gruber closed by quoting a poignant parody, in which Franklin took the words of representative James Jackson of Georgia justifying slavery and put them in the mouth of an Algerian Muslim trying to legitimate the enslavement of white Christians by holy scripture.

Reverend Roger Byler led us in a brief Benediction.

The members recited the SAR closing.

President Daniels adjourned the meeting.

## Anniversary of TXSSAR

The 110<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Texas Society was celebrated on December 9 at 3 PM in Galveston at the site of the Old Tremont Hotel where J. Hobart Evans served as the organizer and first president of the Galveston Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution and the



beginning of the Texas Society in 1896. Several of our members attended including Arnold Seidule, Robert Seidule, Roger Byler, Tom Green, Don Pugh, Mike Rees, and Julian Taylor III.

There were about ten Texas Chapters in attendance and a large color guard was present to highlight the activities. The District and local DAR Representative and a representative from the Mayor of Galveston attended and presented a Proclamation from the Mayor and Council. Preceding the event about forty persons attended the

regular meeting of the Bernardo de Galvez chapter at the Pelican Club.

## Important Dates

NSSAR Leadership Meet, Louisville Feb 23-25, 2007

TXSSAR 112<sup>th</sup> State Convention

San Antonio

Mar 22-25, 2007

NSSAR Congress, Williamsburg, VA Jul 6-11, 2007

TXSSAR Board of Managers

TBA

NSSAR Leadership Meet, Louisville Sep 27-29, 2007

TXSSAR Board of Managers Meeting

Plano

Oct. 26-28, 2007

TXSSAR State Convention, Ft. Worth March, 2008

### FINANCIAL REPORT

December 31, 2006

General Fund Balance November 30 \$3,155.64

Income

Member Dues \$19.00

Newsletter Reimburse 6.00

Total Income \$3,180.64

Disbursements:

Guest Lunch \$32.85

Total Disbursements \$32.85

Balance Dec 31, 2006 \$3147.79

### Cradle of Texas Officers for 2006

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