



The Collins Dispatch

February 2010

Dates to Remember

Feb 12-13 Battle of Kettle Creek, Washington GA

Feb 16 Chapter meeting at the Golden Corral, Barrett Pkwy. 6 pm to eat, 7 pm meeting. Speaker is our own **Charles Rhyme**. He will be speaking on "Major NC Battles You've Never Heard About"

Feb 26-27 Leadership Meeting, Louisville, KY

Mar 4 Sope Creek Elementary School Poster Contest Judging

Mar 13 Commemoration of Guilford Courthouse in Greensboro NC

Mar 16 Chapter meeting Cilla Tomme will speak on Colonial Clothing

Mar 18 Sope Creek Elementary School 5th Grade presentations

Apr 2 & 3 GASSAR Annual Meeting in Gwinnett County

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New Chapter Officers Installed



President Bill Coffeen, Vice President J. Allen Henson, Secretary Jason Bretch, Treasurer David Martin, Registrar Bill Teasley, Chancellor Clayton Farnham, Chaplain John Jones, Sergeant-at-Arms Rodney Pritchett, Historian Charlie Rhyme, Editor Larry Guzy

Twenty-five members and 20 guests enjoyed the Marietta Hilton location for our 9th annual meeting. This is really our 10th year, but our charter banquet was held in October 2000 and the following year we skipped the annual meeting since it would have been only three months later.

Our Officer Installer was our State President, Terry Manning. His wife, Ginny, also was present. President Manning also brought greetings and remarks.

While several members will continue in their positions, the chapter welcomed Allen Henson and Clayton Farnham as new to the officer corps. (For a list of officers see page 2.)

The speaker was Genealogist Linda Geiger who spoke on the Trail of Tears Association. This group's website contains detailed land lot

information for early Georgia as well as other Cherokee related topics. Anyone researching the relationship with Cherokee ancestry or early North Georgia will find this a valuable find.

<http://nationaltota.org>

State President Terry Manning presented a streamer to the chapter for our support of the Center for Advancing America's Heritage.



Members are asked to submit articles and photos to Larry Guzy for inclusion in the next edition of the Collins Dispatch. Deadline April 4th.

President's Message

Thomas Jefferson once said, "A morsel of genuine history is a thing so rare as to be always valuable". We are an organization that values history, partly because our ancestors played such an important part in creating it. We are pledged to share that story with the rest of the nation, to insure that it is not forgotten and to encourage our fellow citizens to remember that the values we cherish so dearly today had their origins in the revolutionary ideas of our forefathers.

It is with gratitude and a humble heart that I preside as President of the Captain John Collins chapter in this its tenth year. Oddly enough my own patriot ancestor was named "Captain John" Coffeen. Both men exemplified what was essential in those early days of the Revolution – a willingness to stand up and be counted; not once, but many times over during the course of the war.

It is in this spirit that I suggest a theme for our chapter in the year 2010. **By celebrating the past and participating today we can build tomorrow's legacy.** We can begin to do that by getting to know all of our fellow compatriots well. Those of you who were at our annual banquet certainly had an opportunity to do just that. The



new member directory reflects a great deal of work on the part of many. Please study it. You just might find another member whose ancestor served in the same unit or battle or campaign as your own ancestor. Our new membership welcome committee will encourage you to wear your nametag at monthly meetings so as to make it easier to get acquainted.

Your Board of Managers is hard at work insuring that our monthly speakers are better than ever and that chapter events outside of monthly meetings are fun and inspiring. This year, for instance, we are going to celebrate our namesake, John Collins, in recognition of Patriot's Day in the month of April. We'll maintain our chapter traditions, but will start new ones. Everyone is encouraged to participate in ways that may be new, but exciting. And finally, you'll hear about the "Challenge Coin", an opportunity to take our chapter to new heights. There's much to be done, but through many, much can be accomplished. I'm excited to work with you all as we step forward together to make a difference in our community.

Bill Coffeen, President

Officers and Committee

President	Bill Coffeen
Vice President	Allen Henson
Secretary	Jason Bretch
Treasurer	David Martin
Registrar	Bill Teasley
Chancellor	Clayton Farnham
Chaplain	John Jones
Sergeant-at-Arms	Rodney Pritchett
Historian	Charles Rhyne
Editor	Larry Guzy
Americanism	Charles Switzer
Cemetery	David Thompson
Dinner meetings	Allen Henson
Flags/Law/Fire	Curtis McWaters
Eagle Scouts	Bill Coffeen
JROTC & Veterans	Curtis McWaters
Membership	Bill Teasley
Patriot Grave	Brad Jones
Publicity/phone	Jason Bretch
Schools	Skip Keaton

The Collins Dispatch is published every other month. **April 4th** will be the next deadline for articles. Send articles, photos, or your bio to Larry Guzy at larry@adjustmentservices.com or regular mail at 4531 Paper Mill Rd SE, Marietta, GA 30067-4025.

If you have new member leads, contact Registrar Bill Teasley.

Collins Member News & Happenings

Two new members were approved on January 14,
 Dennis Rebman 175932 GA4914
 Terry Gibbs 175942 GA 4924
 both certificates are in the Chapter hands to award this month.

Michael Coon's, Ron Cagle's and Earl Cagle, Jr.'s applications are at National. Richard Canfield's and David Ludley's applications are being signed. Five applications are under way at this time and will be submitted soon. They include Bob and Larry Adams, Van Beasley, Ed Pierog and Doug Talley.

Chinese New Year 2-14 "A real patriot gets a parking ticket and rejoices that the system works."

Calling Post

The chapter takes advantage of an automated calling service to remind members of meetings and notify them of important news. If you want your name added or deleted from this list, call or email Jason Bretch jbretch@yahoo.com

Austin Dabney Grave Dedication - the rest of the story

On a cold, wet day in Zebulon, Georgia, a large crowd made their way into the muddy field where Austin Dabney, Black patriot of the Revolution, had been buried next to his close friend William Harris. The graves had been lost for almost 20 years before being rediscovered. Plans to honor the patriot were made with Compatriot Bob Galer and the Coweta Falls Chapter SAR of Columbus, GA taking the lead.

Pike County cut a road into the privately held land, adding gravel to ease the way through the rough terrain. After lots of rain it still was not easily reached. The grave site had been cleared and a fence installed around the tombstones.

Dabney had no children but became a trusted friend of the Harris family after the war. Many Harris descendants attended the ceremony. One of them, Carl Voelker, spoke on behalf of the family to tell the rest of the story. (see Dispatch Vol 9, issue 6 for the Revolutionary War history of this patriot.)

"This is an historic day for the descendants of Giles Harris. Let us thank our grandparents, parents, uncles, aunts, and cousins who have kept the family history alive through all the wonderful stories handed down from generation to generation. At this moment we should feel connected to them in a very special way.

"Other speakers today will emphasize, as well they should, the patriotism and bravery of Austin Dabney. Speaking for the family, I'd like to emphasize the second story – the one of extraordinary friendship, devotion and generosity between Dabney and the Harris family.

The time is 1779. Austin Dabney, an African-American man of about sixteen years old, is sent to fight as a surrogate for his master in the War for American Independence. He fights in several skirmishes but, at the Battle of Kettle Creek, he is seriously wounded.

Near the battlefield is the home of Lewis and Elizabeth Harris and their 13 year old son, Giles. The Harris family takes the wounded Dabney into their home and cares for him until he regains his health. This is a turning point in the life of Austin

Dabney and a major event for the Harris's. During the long days of Dabney's recuperation a personal relationship is formed with the family. It is decided that Dabney will stay on after his wound has healed. With that decision, their fates became intertwined in many remarkable ways.

Over the next 15 years or so, Giles Harris and Austin Dabney work together, collaborate in business transactions and relocate from Wilkes to Madison County. A special bond of friendship and mutual respect develops between them. When a son is born to Giles and Elizabeth Harris, they name him William Austin



Harris - certain evidence of the respect Giles had for his friend Austin.

With Giles son, William, Dabney takes on the role of mentor.

Around 1820, he offers to send William to law school at Franklin College – now the University of Georgia. After graduation, Dabney's support enables William to read law with Judge Stephen Upson in preparation for the practice of law. When William faces his bar exam, Dabney is there in the courtroom to witness the event and share with William in the celebration of his accomplishment.

In 1826 William buys the land on which we stand. When he takes residence here, Austin Dabney joins him. William's arrival makes him Pike County's first attorney. Later he becomes the State representative for this district.

Dabney and William remain friends for life. When he dies, Dabney leaves William all his worldly possessions. William honors his old mentor by naming his son - Austin Dabney Harris, and, in his last wishes, he asks to be buried beside Dabney.

What an extraordinary story! One made all the more significant by its transcendence above the racial mores of the time. The story would be more than enough if it stopped there. But it continues.

It was Dabney's generosity that enabled Harris to complete his education and acquire the means to purchase this land for \$540 – quite a lot of money in 1826! Land lot 13, the 216 acres on which we stand, has continued to affect the lives of those in Harris's extended family. The property has produced field crops and, for the last hundred years, timber – the harvest of which has served many purposes in our family. One particular harvest of timber, in the 1970's, brought a much needed disbursement of funds to my sisters, cousins and me. The check I received went directly into a college fund for my children's education. Thus, you might say, extending the Dabney/Harris legacy into future generations.

To complete our family's story we must mention Jane Harris - William's sister. She is present through it all. When William comes to Pike County, Jane accompanies him. She meets and marries neighbor Samuel Mitchell, a true Georgia pioneer and one of Zebulon's founding fathers. Their marriage produces seven children.

Samuel once operated a trading post here for the Creek Indians and early settlers. Later he erected the first building on Zebulon's town square. It is still standing today. Near the State Capitol in Atlanta you will find Mitchell Street - named in appreciation for Samuel Mitchell's gift of land to serve as a railroad terminus. In those days, Atlanta was called Terminus.

We began our story with Austin Dabney's service to his country in the fight for American Independence. A second chapter opened when Giles Harris took the wounded Dabney into his home. Dabney left no descendants but his adopted family the Harris's certainly did. "

Carl Voelker – great great grandson of Giles & Elizabeth Harris



A large contingent of color guardsmen

**CAPTAIN JOHN COLLINS CHAPTER
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Poster Contest 2010

On March 4th, David Martin will coordinate a judging of posters submitted by students at Sope Creek Elementary.

The 2010 theme is "**The Battle of Bunker Hill.**" This contest was developed to help stimulate interest in American History. The competition was designed to support the 4th or 5th grade curriculum in which American History is taught.

Judging criteria are posted on the Georgia Society website at:

<http://www.georgiasocietysar.org/postercontest/postercontest.htm> (all on one line)

A follow-up presentation will be made on March 18th to four fifth-grade classes there by Larry Guzy. If you would like to learn the how-to and can attend either event, contact David Martin.



The Chapter has had two board of managers meetings since the beginning of the year. The first was held at the Main Library on January 7th, the night of our January snow! In addition to those shown—Charlie Rhyne, Allen Henson, Bill Coffeen, David Martin, and Jason Bretch—Charles Covington and Larry Guzy made it to discuss the upcoming year.



Snowy parking lot at central library.

Meeting Location

The Chapter will continue to meet at the Golden Corral on Barrett Parkway on the third Tuesday of each month. The meeting will start at 7PM but those who want to eat and socialize can start to arrive at 6PM.

If you do not want to eat and just come for the meeting, tell the folks at the door. Otherwise you can pay the \$13 at the door to include tip.

Wedding Bells

We had not reported this before, but Charter member Brad Jones was married on November 8, 2008. His personal information was updated in the Directory.

Michelle is originally from Memphis, TN and has been practicing law in Atlanta since 2000. She holds a BA from Emory and a JD from UGA. Brad remains with the consulting firm JIG.

Chapter Website <http://www.captainjohncollins.org>

Don't forget, if you go to an historical celebratory event, make a donation of money, items, or self to a veteran's charity, or even solicit a potential new member, please send a note to an officer or let us know at the next meeting.

Those Americanism points can add up fast!