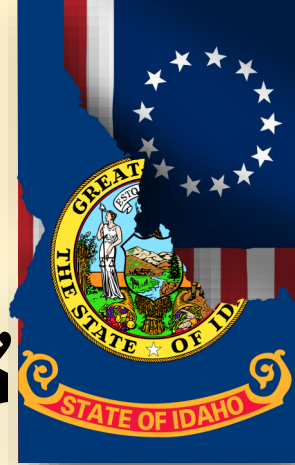




**Idaho State Society of the
Sons of the American Revolution**
Inaugural Edition



Revolutionary Times
Containing the latest news from our State Society

March 2025

Save the Date!

This year's Idaho State Society of the Sons of the American Revolution Annual Conference will be held on **May 3, 2025**. It will be held in Pocatello, Idaho this year. Com-patriots will begin meeting the night before the conference for some fellowship. Details on the Pocatello conference location and events will be announced soon, so get ready to have a good time at the conference and make our Idaho Society Annual Conference one of the best ever!

250th Anniversary of the American Revolution Begins

The Sons of the American Revolution is engaged in the celebration of its 250th anniversary of the American Revolution and founding of our country. Several events will be occurring during this year that our National Society is asking the State Societies to join and spread knowledge about the historical background leading up to and through the battles that secured our independence for England. 'In Idaho, we are asking our Compatriots to take on the challenge that the national Society has asked each member to support the anniversaries of the major military actions and diplomatic episodes that occurred that all Americans should be proud of.

Newly Appointed Board of Manager Positions

Since January, the Idaho State Society of Sons of the American Revolution (IDSSAR) has had several vacancies on the Board of Managers (BOM). At the February BOM meeting, the Board appointed members to the following positions: fulfilling the vacancy left by the passing of State President Jack Currier, the Board appointed Chris Chapman of Idaho Falls to the State Presidency of IDSSAR. To fill the vacancy of the Vice President position, the Board appointed James Elie from Post Falls. Our State Registrar position was filled with the appointment of Alan Sommercorn from Nampa. Each of these appointments will serve IDSSAR through the remaining period of the Society's term of election, until May 2026. We wish each of the appointees the best in their new assignments

45 Years as a Member of the Idaho State Society

At the George Washington Banquet in February 2025, Compatriot James Wellman was awarded his 45-Year Service Pin as a member of IDSSAR. James, who has served in almost every state board position during his membership, is has a wealth of information about the Society and its evolution. We congratulate Compatriot Wellman for his continued service to IDSSAR.



IDSSAR State Board of Managers

President Chris Chapman	Chaplain Paul Fullmer
Vice President James Elie	Historian Jesse Jones
Secretary William Flink	National Trustee Greg Lucas
Treasurer Randy Hudspeth	Alt. Nat. Trustee Ellis Rail
Registrar Alan Sommercorn	Teton Chapt. Pres. Joel Mills



Proclamation for the USS IDAHO SSN799

At the March 4th Board of Managers (BOM) meeting, in line with the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution, the BOM took a patriotic stance to support our men who serve in the United States Navy by approving a proclamation to be signed and presented to the crew of the USS IDAHO, our country's newest nuclear submarine and the Idaho Commissioning Committee that is supporting the U.S. Navy's efforts to make the crew feel that they part of the Great State of Idaho. The proclamation will be presented to the USS IDAHO Commissioning Committee in the near future and we hope it will find its way aboard the ship to recognize IDSSAR's support for the crew during their missions.

State Education Chairmen

The National Society of Sons of the American Revolution (NSSAR) recently directed each State President to appoint a State Education Chairman. This position oversees a myriad of potential education programs to advance the goals of NSSAR. On February 10th, the Idaho Board of Manager appointed Compatriot Rick Matkin as our State Education Chairman. Rick currently participates in the Ft. Boise Patriot Chest presentations and will do a tremendous job for our State Society. He's a real go-getter and is very enthusiastic about making IDSSAR recognized for its efforts to educate the public about the goals that NSSAR has set for each state. He is looking for compatriots that have an interest in serving on committees to develop several of our intended educational programs. If you have an interest in serving IDSSAR in this capacity, contact Rick at: rick.matkin@hotmail.com

Checkout Our Website

The IDSSAR website continues to be improved. As we follow the efforts of Past Presidents Kern and Currier, many new items and features are being placed on the webpages to better inform our membership of the benefits of being a member of IDSSAR.

If you have ideas for additional information to put on our website, contact Alan Sommercorn, our webmaster for Idaho, at:

alan.sommercorn@gmail.com.

Grave Markers

Once again this year, IDSSAR will be participating with the Idaho Daughters of the American Revolution to clean grave markers of deceased military veterans. Last year, this was a monumental project and every extra set of hands made the task that much easier. We will advise compatriots of the dates and locations where these volunteer effort will be taking place. We hope to have many of our

The Westminster Massacre: First Bloodshed of the American Revolution?

By *Jessie Haas*

The Westminster Massacre went from “dangerous insurrection” to forgotten incident in less than six weeks. But March 13, 1775, is still considered by many Vermonters to be the first bloodshed of the American Revolution.

[Westminster](#), though settled mostly by people from Massachusetts, was then part of Cumberland County, New York — present Vermont east of the Green Mountains, from Tunbridge to the Massachusetts border. It was a humble place, just a scattering of log cabins, taverns and a courthouse.

1774 had been tumultuous. In retaliation for the Boston Tea Party, Britain had replaced elected magistrates in Massachusetts and forbidden town meetings. Enraged, thousands of farmers armed with sticks closed every Massachusetts court. Meanwhile, the Continental Congress passed a trade embargo against Britain. It was ratified by all the colonies except New York.

Cumberland County towns voted to support the embargo, and “be it right or wrong . . . to assist the people of Boston in defense of their liberties.” Now what? They faced economic ruin, as other colonies enforced the embargo against noncompliant New York. Also, the local court officials, all Loyalists, were taking advantage of the turmoil to seize patriots’ farms through bankruptcy proceedings. To make their loyalties clear and to prevent the courts from seizing their farms, Cumberland County patriots decided to close down the court at Westminster.

A Little Visit

The court session was due to start on March 14, a Tuesday. On March 10, 40 patriots visited Chief Judge Thomas Chandler at his home. They asked him to close the court. He said he had a murder case to try on Tuesday, but if the patriots would meet him at court they could discuss it

The patriots feared that Sheriff William Paterson would bring arms against them. Chandler promised that wouldn’t happen. But the moment the patriots left, he sent messages to his fellow Loyalist officials. They decided to get to the courthouse on

Monday and shut the patriots out of the building.

Getting wind of this, 100 patriots converged on the farm of Westminster militia captain Azariah Wright on Monday, March 13. They armed themselves with sticks from his woodpile and occupied the courthouse. Twenty minutes later Sheriff Paterson arrived at the head of a 75-man posse, which included the Loyalist court justices. Despite Chandler’s promise, many were armed with muskets, swords and pistols. Paterson read the Riot Act; the protesters defied him and Paterson promised to “blow a lane” through them.

When Judge Chandler reached the courthouse late in the day, Captain Wright reminded him of his promise. Chandler vowed to take the posse’s guns away. He promised that the protesters could occupy the courthouse unmolested overnight.

But Chandler did not confiscate the weapons. The Loyalists retired to the nearby [Tory Tavern](#) to drink and lay their plans. Meanwhile the patriots drew up a list of demands, then settled down for the night, leaving guards at the doors.

The Westminster Massacre

At around 11:30 p.m. a guard spotted moonlight gleaming on a musket barrel at the east door of the courthouse. “Man the doors! Man the doors!” The patriots crowded out onto the step, armed only with sticks. The sheriff marched his posse close and roared, “Fire, god damn ye, fire! Send them to hell!”

The volley hit several protesters point-blank. According to the patriots’ report, written a few days later: “There were several men wounded; one was shot with four bullets, one of which went through his brain, of which wound he died the next day. Then they rushed in with their guns, swords and clubs, and did most cruelly maim several more; and took some that were not wounded, and those that were, and crowded them all into close prison together, and told them that they should all be in hell before the next night, and that they did wish that there were forty more in the same case with that dying man. When they put him into prison, they took and dragged him as one would a dog; and would mock him as he



lay gasping, and make sport for themselves at his dying motions.”

The dying man was William French, a young farmer from Brattleboro. As posse members tormented him, Captain Wright sent riders to alert militias in neighboring towns. By morning French lay dead on the floor of the cell. Upstairs in the courtroom, the officials wrote up a white-washed version of events.

Aftermath of the Westminster Massacre

Meanwhile, in Westminster’s one street, over 400 patriot militiamen gathered. *Now* they had their guns! They threatened to burn down the courthouse or shoot everyone inside. Capt. Benjamin Bellows of Walpole, commanding the New Hampshire militias, positioned his men around the courthouse to prevent more violence.

Late in the afternoon, two patriot leaders simply walked into the courthouse and persuaded the court officials to surrender. They were put in the cells, thus ending New York and British government in Cumberland County a month before Lexington and Concord.

The New York Assembly voted money to put down the rebellion. Acting Gov. Cadwallader Colden wrote to Lord Dartmouth of the “dangerous insurrection in Cumberland County.” But before his April 5 letter reached England, Lexington and Concord ignited revolution.

Nowadays people sometimes snicker at a “massacre” with only two deaths. But to the people who experienced it, the indiscriminate killings after months of peaceful protest were shocking. The events at Westminster were being called a massacre by the following day. Loyalty to New York and the Crown were shaken, and neither government was ever restored in what is now eastern Vermont.

The Westminster Historical Society will commemorate the Westminster Massacre with 3 events March 13-15. Details at www.westminstervthistory.org.

Jessie Haas is president of the Westminster Historical Society.

This article is presented courtesy of the Author and the New England Historical Society, newenglandhistoricalsociety.com.

Revolutionary Times, March 2025

Remembering Jack Currier

You had to know President Jack Currier to understand his passion for IDSSAR. Many of our compatriots know Jack from casual contact with him, but for those of us on the Board of Managers, we knew that he was always one to raise his hand to move our State Society a little further towards meeting the goals of NSSAR. He really enjoyed IDSSAR’s efforts to engage with the citizens of Idaho on behalf of IDSSAR and always wanted to do more. He loved supporting the 4th of July and Veteran’s Day parades, kept the Ft. Boise Patriot’s Chest presentations active.

For those who do not know, Jack was buried in his George Washington uniform, that’s how much he loved his heritage as a descendant of soldier who fought in the Revolutionary War.

Jack B. Currier

June 16, 1954—February 7, 2025



Contact IDSSAR Revolutionary Times

IDSSAR Revolutionary Times is an official publication of the Idaho State Society of the Sons of the American Revolution. For information about submitting an article for this publication, contact William Flink, State Secretary at:

idssarrevolutionarytimes@yahoo.com.

