

General Meeting of the Members of the
Descendants of the Signers of the
Declaration of Independence, Inc.
Rotunda, University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Virginia
20 October, 1956

The meeting was called to order by the President-General, Mr. Percy Hamilton Goodsell, Jr., at 2:45 P.M.

In the absence of the Chaplain-General the President-General offered the Society Prayer.

The President-General told of our appreciation for the privilege of holding our meeting in the Rotunda and Mrs. Theodore Schultz, Hostess for the University of Virginia, extended us a cordial welcome.

As the Minutes of the previous meeting had been mailed to all members it was moved, seconded and approved that the reading of the Minutes should be dispensed with.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT-GENERAL

The President-General expressed our thanks to Mrs. Dwight Harvey Day, President; Mrs. Andrew J. Brent, Secretary and to the Virginia State Society, for their hospitality and their splendid work in making the Fall meeting such a great success. He announced with regret the resignation of Mrs. Philip Livingston Poe as a member of our Board and the appointment of Miss Juliana Tilghman Paca to replace Mrs. Poe on the Board as Governor for Maryland. Mr. Goodsell then expressed the thanks of the Society to Mr. William Cook Fitch for his gift to help defray the expenses of our meeting. Mr. Goodsell next read a resolution regarding the official designation of Lebanon, Connecticut, as a National Historic Shrine. A copy of this resolution is appended hereto. He mentioned the fact that 189 direct descendants of Thomas Jefferson were being contacted for membership and several favorable responses have been received.

The President-General called attention to the fact that the next day, Sunday, we would attend the eleven o'clock service at historic old Christ Church, Charlottesville. He also stated that the Board had approved having a cocktail party at the regular New York meeting to be held in February.

REPORT OF VICE-PRESIDENTS-GENERAL - There was no report submitted.

SUMMARY OF THE REPORT OF THE REGISTRAR-GENERAL

Mrs. Patterson reported nine new Senior members and four new Junior members. There were two resignations and one death.

REPORT OF HISTORIAN-GENERAL - report appended hereto.

SUMMARY OF TREASURER-GENERAL'S REPORT - report appended hereto.

SUMMARY OF REPORT OF SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

The President-General read letters from our two scholars, Taylor F. Turner, Jr. post graduate student, University of Virginia, and Cynthia Hawkins Darragh, first year student Mt. Holyoke. These letters indicate that our assistance has been both an inspiration and help to these fine young people.

REPORT OF GOVERNORS

Connecticut State Society - Mr. Alexander H. Scott reported on the Fourth of July celebration at Lebanon, Conn., which he attended as a member of this Society. A wreath was placed and a salute given at the graves of each of the four signers in Connecticut.

New York State Society - Mrs. Goodsell reported that the New York State Society has one death to report, that of Mrs. Guy Forbes, for many years its able and devoted Corresponding Secretary and one of its founding members. It was noted that the State Society is carrying on its usual full program of independent activities, highlighted this past May by a most delightful entertainment at the historic home of Mrs. John Kean, "Ursino", near Elizabeth, New Jersey.

New Jersey State Society - a letter from Miss Strong is appended hereto.

Maryland State Society - Miss Paca, our new member of the Board of Governors, was introduced by the President-General, Mr. Goodsell, and spoke briefly on the work of the Maryland State Society.

Virginia State Society - Mrs. Day reported one new member since the last meeting.

North Carolina State Society - Mrs. Suttentfield was unable to attend the meeting but submitted a report on the 12 names of Descendants of Thomas Jefferson received by her. She received one favorable answer and said that four or five others expressed their interest.

Georgia State Society - Mrs. Carson reported that an original portrait of Edward Rutledge by Peale was destroyed by fire which swept through the home of the former Mrs. Mary Rutledge Smith in Montgomery, Alabama early last Spring. Only a short time previously the portrait had been moved by the present owner, Mrs. Bert Henderson (Daughter of Mrs. Smith), to the landing of the steps leading to the second floor, where most of the damage was done. There was no one at home when the tragedy happened.

Marble busts of Lyman Hall, Button Gwinnett and George Walton are being executed by the eminent sculptor, Bryant Baker of New York, for the Georgia Hall of Fame. On March 7, 1955 a bill providing funds for the work was signed by Governor Marvin Griffin. The Georgia Society, Dames of the Court of Honor sponsored the undertaking and met with success with the general assembly of the State of Georgia, and they hope to have the dedication in the fall of 1957.

GOVERNORS-AT-LARGE

Mr. Walker had no report.

Major Scott had no report.

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S REPORT

The Mayor of Philadelphia appointed Miss Lee, Miss Hopkinson and Mr. Graham to the Independence Day Citizens' Committee and Mr. Graham was further appointed Chairman of the Patriotic Groups and as such he sent a letter to all similar groups urging their support and attendance. It is anticipated that we will again be represented this coming year.

At the rededication ceremonies at the grave of Benjamin Franklin, Sunday, June 10 at 2 P.M., the Black Watch of Canada was present and "piped a doleful lament"; also the First Troop, Philadelphia City Cavalry had a color guard present. Extensive alterations and improvements have taken place in the area around Franklin's grave. Since this improvement was completed our Society was the first to place a wreath on the grave on Sunday, May 13th, following the attendance of our Society at Christ Church. Our Society is a member of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and an invitation was received to attend their annual convention held in Washington and Fredericksburg October 19th-21st. Our membership is asked to cooperate in the work of preserving America's famous landmarks. Our Society is actively engaged in this work in Philadelphia not only in the restoration of old Philadelphia through the Land Marks Society but specifically through our own efforts the preservation of the Benjamin Rush Homestead on the Byberry Creek. A further report will be made on this at our next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

The resolution passed at the annual Congress in May in memory of Miss Wister was read to the meeting, and the meeting was advised that a resolution in memory of Mrs. Guy Forbes will be prepared and forwarded to her family.

The members were reminded that at the Congress in May it was voted to meet at Jamestown, Virginia on the 19th of October, 1957. This is the Tricentenary of the Founding of Jamestown and the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of our Society at Jamestown, Virginia. The President-General is working with those who are planning the celebration at Jamestown. Certainly all members of this Society who are able to do so should plan to attend this double anniversary.

Mrs. William Ward, II spoke concerning the moving of the grave of John Morton. Extracts from her letter is appended hereto.

There being no further business a motion to adjourn was made, seconded and approved at 3:55 P.M.

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The Virginia State Society arranged for a special tour of Monticello. Later in the evening the members and their guests met for cocktails at the Farmington Country Club, followed by a delicious dinner. The Speaker was Mr. William J. Norton, a member of the Advisory Board of the McGregor Library, University of Virginia.

The Secretary-General during the dinner read the names of the Signers and 35 descendants answered to the name of their ancestor as follows:

Oliver Wolcott	2	Arthur Middleton	1
John Morton	3	Richard Henry Lee	1
Samuel Adams	2	George Ross	1
Benjamin Franklin	2	William Paca	2
Carter Braxton	8	Lewis Morris	1
John Hart	2	Benjamin Harrison	1
Thomas Heyward, Jr.	6	Thomas Nelson, Jr.	1
Edward Rutledge	1	John Penn	1

In accordance with a resolution passed by the Board of Governors on July 3, 1912 the following name is to be carried forever upon the roll of the Society:

#78 Williams, Charles Duane Benjamin Franklin

Died on the S. S. Titanic April 14, 1912 to save the lives of others.

* * * * *

On the following day, Sunday, services were held at Christ Church and were attended by our members as a group. Cocktails and a luncheon were held at the Farmington Country Club.

We again wish to express our heartfelt thanks to Mrs. Day, Mrs. Brent and the members of the Virginia State Society for the wonderful time they gave us all at Charlottesville.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Graham

Secretary-General

Descendants of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence, Inc.

Report of the Treasurer-General

May 15, 1956 to October 1, 1956

Balance on hand May 15, 1956

Accounted for as follows:

Cash in Provident Trust Company	\$1,512.70	
(Of this amount 598.04 in Bi-Cen. Fund and 500.00 in U.S. Bond)		
U. S. Treasury Bond	500.00	
U. S. Treasury Bond	500.00	
Scholarship Fund (15 shares A.T.&T.)	<u>2,436.53</u>	<u>4,949.23</u>

Receipts May 15, 1956 to October 1, 1956

Interest and Dividends	46.25	
Miscellaneous including		
Receipts Phila. Congress	344.00	
Supplementary Scholarship	250.00	
Dues and Enrollment fees	<u>623.00</u>	<u>2,395.25</u>
	<u>1,726.00</u>	<u>7,344.48</u>

Disbursements May 15, 1956 to October 1, 1956

Printing	798.52	
Officers' Expenses	46.85	
Contributions including (2) scholarships	300.00	
Expenses Philadelphia Congress	636.25	
Miscellaneous	<u>75.39</u>	<u>1,857.01</u>
		<u>5,487.47</u>

Balance on hand October 1, 1956

Accounted for as follows:

Cash in Provident Trust Company	2,054.94	
(Of this amount 680.34 in Bi-Cen. Fund and 5.00 U. S. Bond)		
U. S. Treasury Bond	500.00	
U. S. Treasury Bond	500.00	
Scholarship Fund 15 shares (A.T.&T.)	<u>2,436.53</u>	<u>5,487.47</u>

Wentworth A. Simmons
Treasurer-General

A P P E N D I X

At the Annual Congress in Philadelphia on May 12, I reported concerning the interest aroused in the Chester area about the relocation of the John Morton Grave. Because of road widening and the previous unattractive appearance of the lot and surrounding real estate, there have been efforts made to move the body to a better location.

Mr. Joseph H. Jeffries, whose wife is a member of this Society, has been instrumental in guiding interest in the direction of relocating this grave where perpetual care can be guaranteed. Mr. Jeffries certainly has been tireless in his efforts to bring attention to this matter.

There has still not been established proof of ownership of the cemetery where John Morton is buried. It has been Mr. Jeffries' suggestion that the body be removed to the Soldiers' Circle at the Chester Rural Cemetery. Public meetings have been held and a number of patriotic individuals and organizations are now active in the problem.

A request has been made of the Prospect Park Borough Council to contact the Pennsylvania Historical Society to have the remains removed to the grounds of the John Morton Birthplace. There has even been a suggestion made to remove the grave to the Morton Mortensen House in Norwood, the home of John Morton's father. At the present time the outcome is still undecided, but Mr. Jeffries wrote me recently, "If nothing has been done in 111 years to assure the grave having perpetual care, it is time to follow through while this matter is alive and of enough interest to keep those who are able to help continuing their help. Once the matter dies again, it will be years and maybe never taken up again."

On May 17 Governor Leader of Pennsylvania signed legislation authorizing the transfer of historic Fort Mifflin to the City of Philadelphia. The 42-acre site is on the Delaware River and has been visited by this Society as one of the Spring Pilgrimages. It was ceded in 1795 by the State of Pennsylvania to the Federal Government. Philadelphia plans to develop Fort Mifflin into a Revolutionary War Memorial. The Fort was bombarded by British warships in 1777, housed a garrison in the War of 1812, served as a prison for deserters in the Civil War, and was used in both World Wars.

The Sunday prior to July 4, 1956, the Reverend Stanley Kiel Gambell, Presbyterian Minister of Philadelphia, on his television program "Stories Retold" presented a program of historical significance when he talked of the personal histories of the Signers in the Philadelphia area. I wrote to Reverend Gambell in appreciation for this telecast.

On July 4, 1956, the Government issued the 10¢ commemorative stamp honoring Independence Hall.

Natalie L. Densmore
Historian General

732 East Twentieth Street
Chester, Pennsylvania

"My dear Mr. Goodsell:

Mr. Jeffries had written letters to as many descendants of John Morton as he could find asking their reaction to moving the grave of John Morton. My brother, Mr. Crosby Black, Jr. and myself were among the few who objected to his grave being moved. After that a meeting of the Chester City Council was called to discuss the matter and the various civic clubs and Delaware County Chapter of the Daughters of the Revolution sent representatives. I was there and after a great deal of discussion it was the consensus of opinion of the Council and of those present not to move the grave.

There is to be a meeting of the St. Pauls Church Com. Monday evening to discuss the title and to what responsibility they will take. Personally I feel he should stay where he is buried. It is the old part of town of course, but the neighborhood has been improved by a slum section being taken down and a city parking lot put in its place. The two streets on the sides of the cemetery are being widened but not enough to hurt the surroundings of the grave.

Mr. Jeffries wants to move John Morton to the section called 'The Soldiers Circle' which is lovely and kept up beautifully but John Morton was not a soldier but was a Quaker, who as you know was ostracized by his family for signing the Declaration of Independence and I feel that is not the appropriate place for him to be.

I think our problem is to find some one who is willing to be responsible for the upkeep and to make the city feel their patriotic responsibility for police protection and city care.

I feel that the Descendants of John Morton who do not live near here would not know of the situation and perhaps for that reason would agree to the move.

I wanted you to know my feeling in the matter and perhaps before our meeting on the 20th something more may have been done."

Sincerely,

Marjorie Black Ward
(Mrs. William Ward, 3rd)

RESOLUTION REGARDING THE OFFICIAL DESIGNATION OF
LEBANON, CONNECTICUT, AS A NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE.

The village of Lebanon, Connecticut, occupies a place in the history of the American Revolution that should rank it with Valley Forge and Yorktown in importance and national regard. As the birthplace and lifelong residence of Governor Jonathan Trumbull, who came to office through his opposition to the Stamp Act and was the only colonial governor to espouse the cause of the colonists at the outbreak of the Revolution, Lebanon early became a focal point of the war effort. Its townsmen on April 9, 1770, issued a declaration of rights and liberties drafted by William Williams, a native who later became a signer of the Declaration of Independence. On the commencement of hostilities the town became the northern business headquarters of the Continental forces, and Governor Trumbull's law office became the War Office in which were held over eleven hundred meetings of the Council of Safety. As a result of these, Connecticut supplied more men and money to the Revolutionary war effort than any other colony except Massachusetts, leading General Washington to record in his diary, "Except for Jonathan Trumbull the war could not have been carried to a successful termination." From this fact the War Office has been called second only to Fanueil Hall and Independence Hall as the cradle of American liberty. It is said that at one time more than five hundred men from Lebanon were serving in the American army. During the winter of 1780-81, following their landing at Newport, the Duc de Lauzun and his Legion of Horse and the Comte de Rochambeau with five of his regiments were quartered in Lebanon. Among the Revolutionary figures who stayed in the town at one time or another, in addition to General Washington and the French officers already mentioned, were Generals Sullivan, Knox, Putnam and Huntington, the Marquis de Chastellux, Admiral de Ternay, General Lafayette, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and John Jay. Governor Trumbull and William Williams are both buried there, and their birthplaces and later residences are all preserved, as are the War Office and the church which was designed by Colonel John Trumbull, the painter, an Original Member of this Society. Numerous other historic and ancient buildings still stand, and the village presents much the same appearance today that it must have in the years between 1775 and 1783.

In the light of this rich heritage of American history the following resolution is respectfully offered:

RESOLVED: That the General Society of the Cincinnati at its Triennial Meeting held in Newport, Rhode Island, on June 21 and 22, 1956, wholeheartedly endorses and supports the efforts of the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Connecticut to have the village of Lebanon, Connecticut, officially designated a National Historic Site, and hereby so advises all authorities properly concerned with such action.

Passed by unanimous vote, June 21, 1956.