



The Iowa Compatriot

The Journal of the Iowa Society, Sons of the American Revolution

July 10, 2019

We the descendants of the heroes of the American Revolution, who by their sacrifice established the United States of America, reaffirm our faith in the principles of liberty and solemnly pledge to defend them against every foe.



Compatriot Danny Crock presents “Last Great Encampment” at Civil War Roundtable

On June 19, 2019, SAR and GSW 1812 member Danny Crock, wearing the hat of the G.A.R. (Grand Army of the Republic) gave an historical talk on the "Last Great Encampment" of 1922 held in Des Moines, Iowa.

The presentation was filled with not only great historical information but was also intertwined with wonderful music, photos and videos of the era.

The talk was part of the Des Moines Civil War Roundtable's monthly forum of programs and was attended by their members and guests (crowd of over 60 people).

Quarterly Meeting Date Changed to July 30

The quarterly meeting of the IASSAR, GSW1812 in Iowa, and SUVCW Dodge Camp will be held on **Tuesday, July 30th, 7:00PM**, at the Urbandale Library.



Revolution, 1812 Compatriots March on Urbandale!



IASSAR, GSW 1812-Iowa Honor Veterans in Missing in Iowa Project

The Iowa SAR and Iowa Society of the War of 1812 color Guard units joined with hundreds of others on Friday June 28, 2019 for interment services of five veterans and one spouse of a veteran.

Their interment was the result of the action of many including Hamilton's Funeral home and members of the Missing in America project.

<https://www.miap.us/>

The purpose of the MIA Project is to locate, identify and inter the unclaimed cremated remains of American veterans through the joint efforts of private, state and federal organizations. To provide honor and respect to those who have served this country by securing a final resting place for these forgotten heroes.

It is estimated that there may be nearly 1000 unclaimed remains of veterans in Iowa alone.

The line of cars in the procession from the funeral home to the Iowa Veteran's Cemetery was estimated to be over a mile long.

Hamilton's Funeral Home, in partnership with the Missing in America Project, formally invites you to help honor and recognize five veterans, and one spouse, whose cremated remains are unclaimed.

We strive to provide honor and respect to those who have served this country by securing a final resting place for these heroes. A memorial service will be held at 9:30 a.m. Friday, June 28, 2019 at Hamilton's on Westown Parkway, 3601 Westown Parkway, West Des Moines, Iowa. A procession will follow the service to Iowa Veterans Cemetery.

Verl Anderson was born on December 11, 1923. He served in the Navy during WWII, and died on March 25, 2002 at the age of 78. Verl worked for the U.S. Post Office.

Howard Duncan was born on December 21, 1921 in Bagley, Iowa. He served in the United States Army during WWII and was awarded the Purple Heart. He died on December 15, 2005 at the age of 84 at the VA hospital in Jacksonville, TN. He was employed by Iowa Prosthetics and most recently, Western International as a forklift operator. Howard had a great love for sports, which included coaching baseball and playing pool.

Larry Gardner was born on December 22, 1962 in Des Moines, Iowa. He served in the United States Army. He passed away at the age of 40, on December 18, 2003. Larry worked for the United States Post Office.

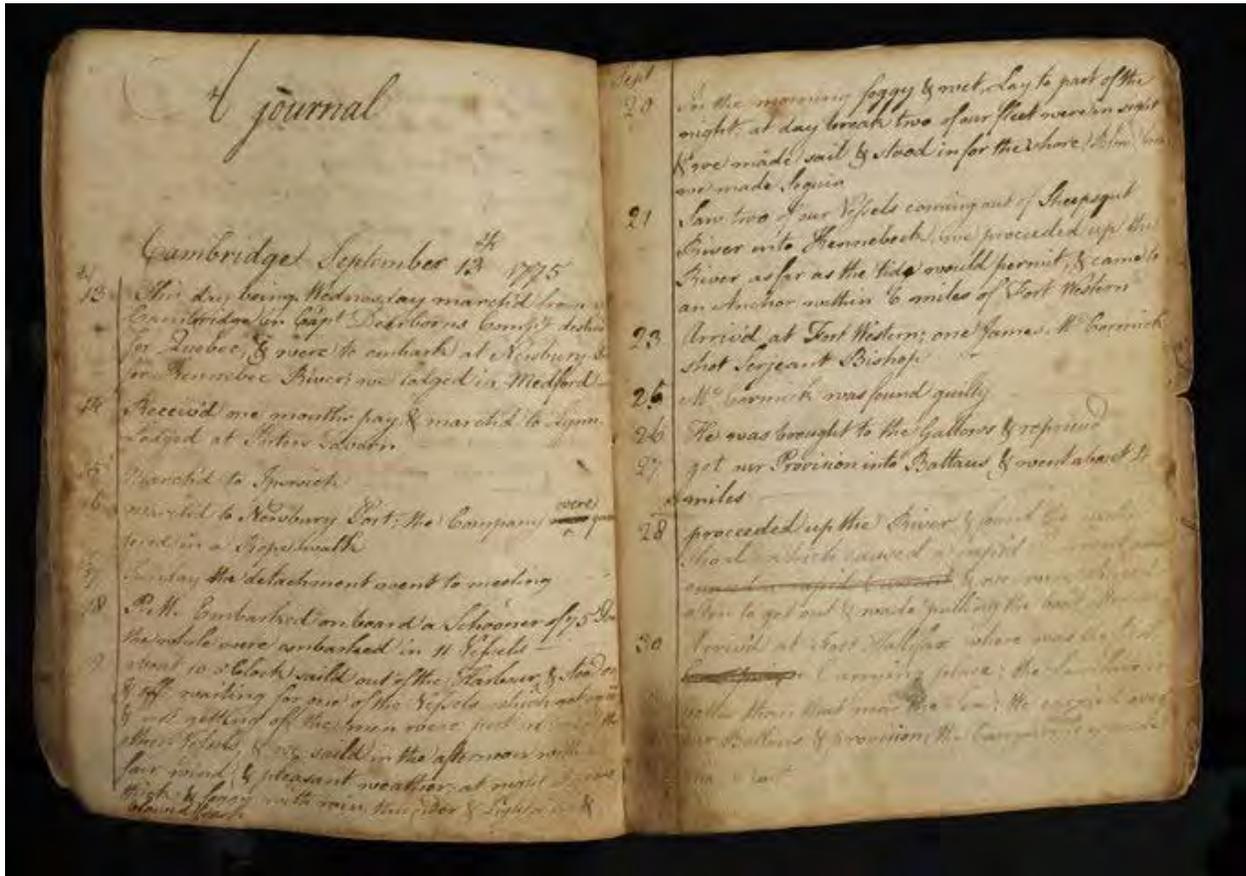
John "Jack" Thiel was born on December 20, 1933 in Nebraska. He served in the United States Army during the Korean War. He excelled in basketball, baseball, and track. He worked for the United States Post Office, and after retirement was a greens keeper at Des Moines Golf and Country Club. He died on January 3, 2002.

Victor Sundberg was born on August 4, 1921 in Sioux City, Iowa. He served in the United States Air Force during the Korean War. Victor worked with the Railroad. Victor passed away June 30, 2018 at the age of 86.

Nettie Hines was born on February 7, 1909. She was married to Raymond Hines, who proudly served his country in the United States Army. Nettie died away on May 3, 2000 at the age of 91. She will be laid to rest next to her husband.

You are not forgotten.

--contributed by Compatriot Mike Rowley



This long-lost original manuscript of James Melvin, a Massachusetts soldier, recently joined the Institute's library collections. We plan to have the manuscript conserved & digitized so that the full contents will be widely available to scholars for the first time.

A Concord Revolutionary War soldier's 'long-lost' journal is being digitized

By [Steve Annear](#) Boston Globe Staff, June 18, 2019, 9:17 a.m.

Revolutionary War soldier James Melvin feasted on a small bird and a squirrel after eating the last of his provisions the day before.

He walked for miles at a time (at one point he conquered 20 miles in a single day) through the woods at night, his legs buried by mud and snow.

Conditions were sometimes so harsh, the Concord native recalled, that he was unable to stop to eat or find adequate housing to rest, forcing him to shelter inside a barn instead.

"The Company were 10 miles wading knee deep among Alders . . . and came to a river which had overflowed the land," he wrote in one journal entry dated Oct. 28, 1775. "We stopped some time not knowing what to do & at last were obliged to wade through it, the ground giving way at every step."

These experiences — and many more — from Melvin’s time as a private during the Revolutionary War, are detailed in the centuries-old pages of the soldier’s manuscript, a trove of firsthand accounts from the front lines of the battlefield that was recently acquired by the American Revolution Institute of the Society of the Cincinnati, in Washington, D.C.

And soon, the original contents of Melvin’s “long lost” musings will be conserved and digitized, making it more accessible to a wider audience, [the institute announced last week](#).

“I think it certainly is something to celebrate and is of great interest,” said Ellen McCallister Clark, the institute’s library director. “We are eager for it to be known that it is here, and eager for it to be used. So the digitization will be a critical step for that to happen.”

The manuscript is a day-to-day account of Melvin’s life in the Continental Army, after enlisting and marching from Cambridge in Captain Henry Dearborn’s company, and joining [Colonel Benedict Arnold’s “arduous” expedition](#) through the woods of Maine to Quebec, according to the institute’s description of the bound volume.

Clark said the organization purchased the document from a London bookseller in July of last year, and then entered it into its online catalog shortly thereafter. But last week marked the first time that the [institute announced the acquisition on social media](#).

“It’s very neat,” said Clark, who has pored through the passages in the manuscript. “We have been spending time understanding it and cataloging it.”

Transcriptions of Melvin’s journal have been published and made available from three separate editions published [between 1857 and 1902](#), according to the institute. But the whereabouts of the original document — handwritten by Melvin — had been largely unknown to scholars, Clark said.

“Generally the published texts follow this manuscript document in content, but there are differences among them that are telling,” she said in a follow-up message to the Globe. “The editors . . . regularized Melvin’s spelling, capitalizations and punctuation — having the original document allows us to read it exactly as he had written it, complete with crossed-out words and other internal details.”

In a post about the acquisition, the institute said a good portion of the journal focuses on the many months that Melvin spent in captivity in Canada, after being apprehended by British forces.

That experience, listed under the title “Prisoner in Quebec” in the manuscript, includes excerpts like one dated Feb. 24, 1776.

It reads, “Various Reports Concerning us: some say we shall be sent to England & sold as slaves to some Island, Others say that we shall be sent to Boston & exchanged; others say that we shall certainly be hanged; but we are in hopes that our people will release us by taking the Town.”

The first page of the bound volume is dated 1777, which could indicate that its contents were transcribed from separate journal entries kept by Melvin while he marched through the wilderness toward Canada during the war. The last entry in the document is from Aug. 5, 1776.

“Melvin could have taken a little notebook,” [author and historian J.L. Bell](#), who runs the blog “[Boston 1775](#),” about the American Revolution, said in a message to the Globe. “But the neatness of the manuscript indeed strongly suggests he wrote out the text afterwards.” likely for posterity.

Besides his day-to-day accounts about the journey north, snippets about the weather, and later, his imprisonment and release, the manuscript also features two essays — “Treatise upon Air” and “An Explanation of Scripture Taken from the Epistle of St. Paul the Apostle to the Gallatians” — penned by Melvin. These essays are not part of the other published versions of his writings, the institute said.

Bell said these additions could be of particular interest to people researching what “ordinary New Englanders” may have thought about certain topics, like religion, around the time of the war.

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"It's also good that the [American Revolution Institute] plans to digitize the diary and make the images more widely available," he said of its pending posting online.

Clark said because the institute doesn't have the equipment to digitize a multipage volume like Melvin's in-house, that process will be done by an outside conservator hired to treat the fragile document. Admittedly, she said, they've been a little slow to get the ball rolling — but with good reason. "I've been reluctant to part with it," said Clark, "it's of such interest and such an important acquisition."



[American Revolution Institute@AmRevInstitute](mailto:AmericanRevolutionInstitute@AmRevInstitute)

Twice denied the freedom he'd earned, black Revolutionary War hero from Maryland to be honored at last

MSN News, June 21, 2019

He fought with distinction, historians say, in two of this country's formative wars. He was given a medal for valor by one of the world's great generals. He met a president and at least one president-to-be.

Yet James Robinson, who was born into slavery in Maryland in the mid-18th century, was denied his liberty for most of his life, and he never got the military honors he'd earned.

That is to change this weekend.

Robinson, an Eastern Shore native whose 1868 obituary described him as "loved by all and venerated by all," will be given a military funeral Saturday in his adopted hometown of Detroit.

Sponsored by two military legacy organizations, the event at Historic Elmwood Cemetery will include an honor guard, a flag presentation, speeches, a 21-gun salute and the dedication of two bronze emblems representing the conflicts in which he fought: the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812.



A handful of surviving references to Robinson point to him as a hero's hero: the Marquis de Lafayette pinned a gold French military medal of honor on him for his exploits at the Battle of Yorktown in 1781, and he was in the thick of the combat that helped Gen. Andrew Jackson rout the British at the Battle of New Orleans in 1814.

But as one of the more than 5,000 black people who fought in the War for Independence, and several thousand who took up arms for the U.S. in the War of 1812, his deeds were mostly lost to history, as records on African American soldiers were spottily kept.

Worse, he fought in both wars on the understanding that afterward, he'd be given the opportunity to live as a free American citizen. Instead, he returned home each time only to be sent back into the "most grievous bitter bondage" - slavery - in which he spent at least 77 of his 115 years.

One historian who helped unearth Robinson's story says it epitomizes the plight of thousands of black troops who fought for the U.S. in two centuries' worth of wars, only to return to a land that denied them the freedoms they had secured for the nation.

"What more can you do to serve your country and to secure your rights, to secure equal citizenship, than that man did?" asks Maurice Barboza, the founding director of the National Mall Liberty Fund D.C., a nonprofit group that aims to build a monument in Washington to black veterans of the Revolutionary War.

It was two years ago that Barboza met Elijah Shalis, an official with the Michigan Society of the Sons of the American Revolution and the organizer of Saturday's event.

The two have drawn on sources - census reports, news items, a Boys' Life magazine article, a history of Elmwood, even a newly rediscovered 64-page memoir Robinson narrated in 1858 - to construct a portrait of a man who fought bravely, who became embittered at the treatment he received, and who retained a craving for freedom throughout an incredibly long life.

Details about his Maryland origins are sketchy. His narrative says he was owned by a man named Francis de Shields - or Francis Shiel, according to a different source - a colonel in Gen. George Washington's Continental Army who brought Robinson into the service with him.

Owen Lourie, a historian with the Maryland State Archives, said he could find no mention of Robinson or De Shields in the archives, but the enlistment scenario was plausible.

"We know that soldiers brought their slaves with them, and a well-off gentleman would never be seen without his body servant," Lourie said.

A private in a Maryland light infantry regiment, Robinson would have been one of about 755 black soldiers - and 95 black Marylanders - historians say served in the Continental Army.

His narrative - authored with a ghost writer and under the name James Roberts - describes Robinson scalping Indians and taking part in skirmishes on the Eastern Shore. Other accounts suggest he fought at the Battle of Brandywine in 1777 and at Yorktown, where the British surrendered in 1781.

At Yorktown, he's said to have charged up a British rampart and killed three men in hand-to-hand combat en route to overtaking the emplacement. The victorious allied leader, Lafayette, pinned on Robinson a gold medal of valor by virtue of his authority as a French nobleman.

"That was extraordinary, because very few medals were given for service in the Revolutionary War," Shalis said, adding that the moment showed "the French, even then, were more tolerant of minorities." De Shields had promised he would free Robinson after the war, but he died soon afterward.

His heirs sold the married war veteran to Calvin Smith, whose plantation was either in Louisiana or Mississippi. Robinson described Smith's place as "a slaughter-house of human beings" and recalled being whipped so badly he "could not keep the vermin out of my flesh for weeks at a time."

"I will now confess that, could I have foreseen what heart-sickening ills awaited me in the future, I should have been strongly tempted to make my way to Canada," he added.

Robinson was still Smith's property in 1813 when Jackson swept through the area to enlist men of every background - slaves, free black men, privateers, Choctaw Indians - in advance of the British attack on New Orleans.

In Robinson's words, "Jackson came into the field, chose out the ones he wanted, and then addressed us thus: 'Had you not as soon go into the battle and fight, as to stay here in the cotton-field, dying and never die? If you will go, and the battle is fought and the victory gained on Israel's side, you shall be free.' This short speech seemed to us like divine revelation, and it filled our souls with buoyant expectations."

Robinson, then 61, went into battle, and he describes losing his left index finger - and reacting by "taking the heads off" six redcoats - as part of a victory in which "sixty or seventy or more of the colored men" were killed.

Afterward, he recalls, he requested his reward from Jackson.

"'Before a slave of mine should go free, I would put him in a barn and burn him alive,'" he quoted the future president as saying before returning him to Smith.

Robinson somehow obtained his freedom in the 1830s; the 1840 census lists him as a free man in Ohio. He later became a Methodist minister and married a woman named Curtilda. In Detroit, the couple lived on Lafayette Street. They had two sons, one of whom fought for the Union in the Civil War.

His last known descendant, a granddaughter named Gertrude Robinson, died in Ohio in 1983.

Robinson's memoir also has him traveling to Washington in 1856, at 103, seeking a military pension. According to the narrative, he met with President Franklin Pierce.

"He told me that I was nothing but goods and chattels, like a horse or a sheep," Robinson wrote, "that my master had got the pension, and was still receiving it, or his heirs. He said it would be a disgrace to take it from the white man and give it to the negro ☹ 'When you fought that battle, you was your master's property.'"

Lourie advises that the narratives of former slaves, while valuable sources, "need to be read cautiously," as the accounts often come filtered through those who arranged for their publication, usually abolitionists with "their own points to make."

But to those who might find it hard to believe that a former slave could have met such influential figures, Barboza and Shalis say it's likely that Robinson did, in fact, know Lafayette - one Robinson obituary says the pair met again in 1824 - and that would have opened doors for the veteran.

Shalis assembled much of the timeline of Robinson's life as part of confirming his eligibility for membership in the Sons of the American Revolution and the Michigan Society of the War of 1812, the groups sponsoring Saturday's ceremony.

Doing that research was a bittersweet experience, he says, in that a great American came into view, one who never lost his determination to be free, no matter how cruelly the country he served treated him for most of his life.

Shalis believes that 151 years after Robinson's death, his tale has as much resonance as ever.

"If someone like Robinson, as a minority, was able to accomplish all he did in the early days of our country," he says, "it shows there's no reason people should ever have been held back by prejudices. Those barriers need to come down."

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BAY BULLETIN

REVOLUTIONARY WAR SHIPWRECK DISCOVERED

June 25, 2019

Researchers have just made a major discovery in the York River: the wreckage of a previously hidden British ship from the Revolutionary War's last major battle.

After General Charles Cornwallis surrendered in 1781, some 26 ships were sunk or scuttled in the area now nationally recognized as the Yorktown Shipwrecks. Only about ten had been identified, until now.

The newly discovered ship has been buried by oyster shells, but last Wednesday a researcher from JRS Explorations found a metal object peeking out from the river bed that turned out to be an iron cannon. The find led the team to a wooden hull that they now believe may be the *Shipwright*, a British transport vessel that collided with another ship, then caught fire and sank.

The discovery is a significant step in JRS Explorations's new effort to survey, map, and identify the rich history of the Yorktown Shipwrecks. JRS just confirmed the news to *Bay Bulletin* on Tuesday, asking us to share the following account of their discovery:

On June 19, 2019, researchers from JRS Explorations discovered a new shipwreck within the Yorktown Shipwrecks National Register District. The wreck appears to be an armed British transport sunk during the Siege of Yorktown in 1781.

The wreck is completely buried in oyster shells, but Bill Waldrop, an experienced volunteer member of the research team, spotted a partially-buried metal object protruding a few inches above the river bed. Upon closer examination, the object proved to be an iron cannon, almost completely covered by oyster shells. On a subsequent dive Joshua Daniel, another experienced member of the team, discovered a second, and possibly a third cannon lying nearby. He and John Broadwater, the team leader, both probed into the riverbed and located what appears to be the wooden hull of a large ship, buried from one to several feet beneath the riverbed.

The new find, located near the wreck of HMS Charon, could be the Shipwright, one of two British transport vessels that were anchored and reported to have collided with Charon and were set afire and sunk. The team recovered what appears to be a piece of charred wood that needs to be further analyzed; if verified to be a piece of timber that was charred by fire, this shipwreck would be part of that missing puzzle that has eluded researchers for nearly 238 years. Mapping and identifying this wreck will be difficult due to the deep layers of oyster shells, strong river currents, and near-zero visibility.

The shipwrecks in this historic district played an important role in the Siege of Yorktown, the last major battle of the American Revolutionary War. The battle ended on October 19, 1781 after Lord Charles Cornwallis surrendered the British army under his command. The battle was won by a combined army consisting of American Continental Army troops commanded by General George Washington, and French units commanded by Comte de Rochambeau. What many do not realize is that the battlefield in Yorktown only shares half the story, the other half remains sunken in the York River. As many as 40 or more British ships were sunk by enemy cannon fire or deliberately scuttled near shore by Cornwallis to prevent the French from landing troops on the beach behind the British position.

After nearly 238 years, JRS Explorations, Inc. is making an effort to ensure that the history buried in the York River is protected. Dr. John Broadwater, JRS Explorations vice president and chief archaeologist, an internationally known underwater archeologist, directed the Yorktown survey. John has been to the depths of Titanic with James Cameron; recovered sunken F-1 engines with Jeff Bezos from the Saturn V boosters that launched Apollo astronauts to the Moon; and oversaw the recovery of major components from the Civil War ironclad USS Monitor off the coast of North Carolina. During the 1980s John directed the excavation of the British transport Betsy from within a cofferdam (steel enclosure), recovering more

than 5,000 artifacts, some of which are on exhibit today in the new American Revolution Museum at Yorktown (Virginia).

This survey was another step in JRS Exploration's long-range research plan for this group of historically significant shipwrecks, following the very successful surveys last year. In April 2018, a sector scanning sonar survey was conducted in partnership with Portunes International, Abbott Underwater Acoustics, InterPhase Entertainment, Precon Marine, Inc., and the Watermen's Museum, which was followed in October 2018 by investigations carried out as part of a joint training operation by emergency response teams from York and James City Counties and the cities of Newport News and Hampton.

JRS Explorations' CEO Ryan Johnston stated, "JRS Explorations is grateful to everyone who made these investigations possible. We are accumulating valuable data that is helping shape our long-range research plan for these important shipwrecks." Dr. Broadwater added, "The results so far have been impressive. Techniques for remotely locating and documenting shipwrecks have improved dramatically since 1975 when we first began to search for these sunken ships. These surveys are critical to our efforts to monitor the condition of the Yorktown shipwrecks and to plan our next phase of research.

Steve Ormsby, president of both JRS Explorations, Inc. and the Watermen's Museum, said of the survey, "We are proud to support these surveys of the Yorktown shipwrecks, which are modern reminders of the cornerstone battle that led to the British colonies becoming the American nation. We hope our efforts will bring new and well-deserved attention to these shipwrecks and to the historic events that led directly to American independence."

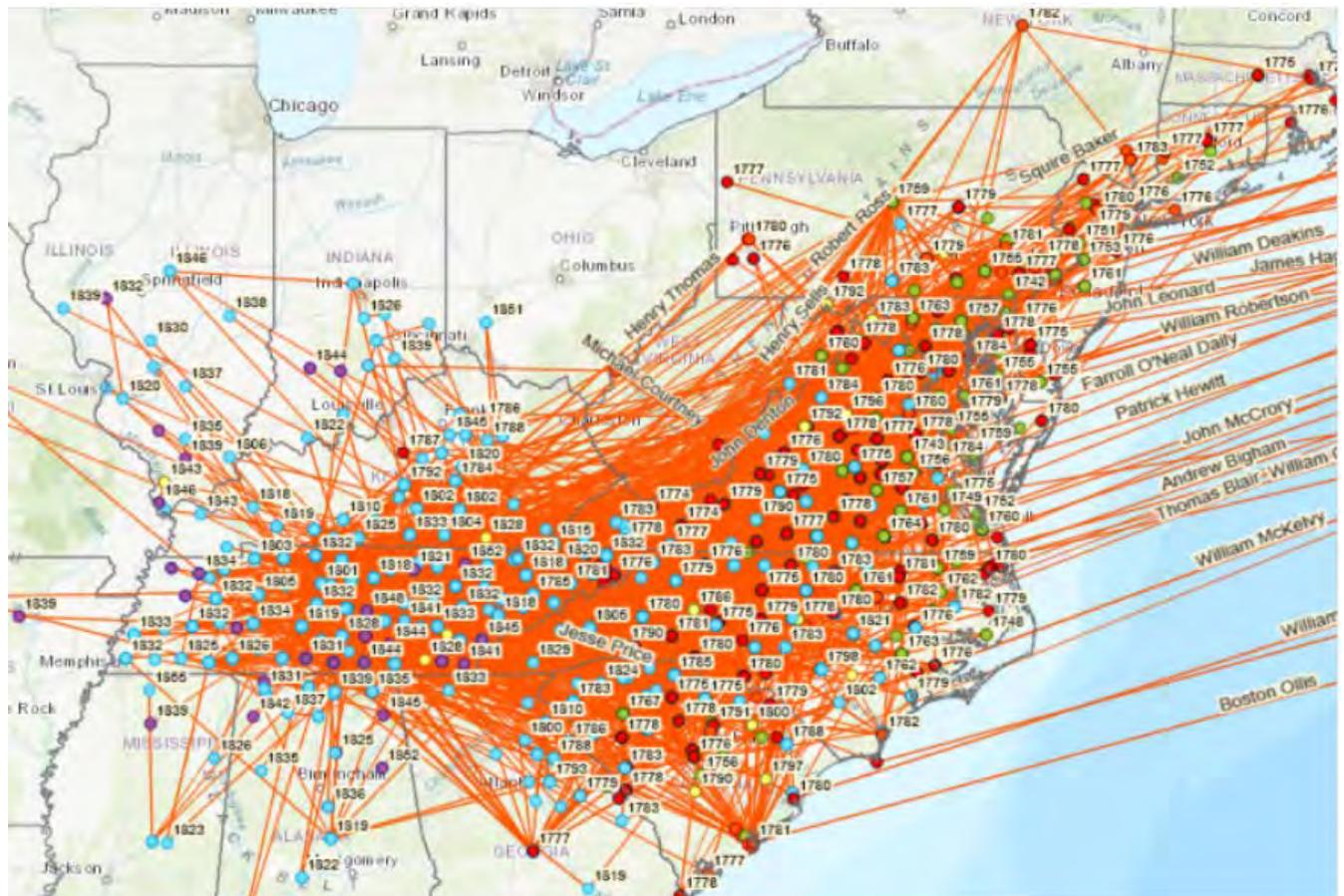
Looking ahead, this survey has given JRS the data they need to determine the extent of preservation and research potential of the Yorktown shipwrecks in order to develop a new management plan for preserving and exploring the sites.

Participants: JRS Explorations, Inc. – JRS Explorations, Inc. is a global exploration company focusing on both marine and land exploration that specializes in research, surveying, locating and documenting cultural and historical resources to share with the world. JRS Explorations, Inc. brings history to life, working closely with local, state, and federal governments as well as private and public foundations. JRS Explorations, Inc. has built a solid foundation and has developed a proven model that is safe and efficient. JRS Explorations, Inc. was founded by Ryan Johnston, John Broadwater, and Steve Ormsby.

The Watermen's Museum – Located on the Yorktown, Virginia waterfront where the sonar survey took place, the mission of the Watermen's Museum is to demonstrate the role Chesapeake Bay watermen, from pre-colonial to modern times, have played in shaping our nation. The museum provides a historical display of exhibits, crafts and methods of their trade, and a look into their lives. The museum has been involved in continuing efforts to protect and investigate the sunken fleet at Yorktown.

Team: The project was conducted by an outstanding team of skilled and experienced volunteers. Joshua Daniel, Director, Daniel Archaeological Consulting LLC (DAC) conducted the remote sensing survey and participated in the dives. DAC's equipment for this follow-up survey consisted of a Marine Magnetics Explorer magnetometer, and a Hemisphere Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS), a state-of-the-art global positioning system (GPS), that provided locational accuracy of a few feet. Bill Waldrop returned with his 22-foot pontoon boat, which was equipped for diving operations. A 20-foot dive support vessel was provided by Randy Pryor. Mike Nusbaum also returned for this survey.

-Meg Walburn Viviano



As our nation prepares to celebrate Independence Day, the Tennessee State Library & Archives has launched Patriot Paths, a new project that uses Revolutionary War pension records to map the paths that these soldiers took before and after their service. The project, which is still in progress, was unveiled by State Librarian and Archivist Chuck Sherrill at the National Genealogical Society's recent annual convention.

Thousands of veterans flooded into Tennessee at the conclusion of the war, and about 2,000 pension files exist for those who came here. Since most of the soldiers were not eligible for a pension until they were in their 80s, the number who received a pension was relatively small compared to the number who served.

Staff and interns at the Library & Archives pored over those pension files to find the dates and places where the soldiers were born, married, enlisted and died. Soldiers who had been born throughout the colonies and even Europe ultimately made their way to Tennessee. After the war, many crossed the mountains from Virginia and North Carolina, but some came from as far away as New York and Massachusetts.

That information was added to a database and then coordinated with GIS mapping software. The result is Patriot Paths, where historians and genealogists can search for veterans and study the patterns of migration.

"Patriot Paths uses modern mapping tools to tell the stories of those who fought to secure independence at the time of our nation's founding," Secretary of State Tre Hargett said. "I'm proud of the continued efforts of the Library & Archives to find innovative ways to make records like these more accessible."

For example, Patriot Paths allows researchers to see that three pensioners who ended up in Sumner County – William Proctor, Albert Hendricks and Thomas Milbourn – all lived in Rockbridge County, Virginia, during the Revolutionary War. Moreover, all were originally from Maryland.

Sherrill asked, "What does this connection between these soldiers mean? Are they related? I don't know, but if one of them was my ancestor, I'd start learning about the other two to see what else they have in common."

Genealogists commonly use wills, deeds and other records at the Library & Archives to find more information about their ancestors.

Historians can also use Patriot Paths to learn more about this period in American history. “We learned that an unusually high number of Tennessee pensioners came from Orange County, North Carolina,” said Sherrill. “We don’t yet know why, but Patriot Paths provides the data to help us ask new questions about who came to Tennessee and what motivated them to launch into the wilderness.”

The public is invited to visit the site and conduct searches, but Sherrill asks that they remember it is a work in progress. Data has been entered on only 1,200 of the pensioners so far.

Patriot Paths can be accessed on the Library & Archives website at sos.tn.gov/tsla or by clicking here.

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*Let us remember our obligation to our forefathers, who gave us our Constitution,
The Bill of Rights, an independent Supreme Court and a nation of free men.*