The Winter/Spring 2011 Lecture Series

The Winter/Spring 2011 lecture series is the first programmed by William P. Tatum III, Sol Feinstone Scholar of the David Library. Titled “War in Early America: Objects and Experience,” the series will examine conflict during the period 1750-1800 from the perspectives of contemporary participants and examinations of surviving artifacts.

It will begin on January 23 at 3:00 with D. A. Saguto, Master Cordwainer at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. His presentation, “Bloody Footprints in the Snow: Military Footwear in the American Revolution,” will investigate the numerous important roles played by shoes in our revolutionary struggle, from production and procurement to their impact as a “force multiplier.”

(continued on page 4)
**Staff Ride**

(continued from page 1)

weather conditions that Washington's army faced, as well as the challenges of period transportation. December 25, 1776 featured extremely cold temperatures, far worse than we experienced during our tour, with frozen roads clogged by artillery, forcing the rest of the army to march behind or along the verges. The limitations of wheeled transports, including gun carriages, caissons, and wagons, was a major delaying factor with which Washington had to contend. A short walk through the park to the boat shed showcased the steep drop to the river, which was higher than usual though without the pieces of drift ice that punctuated the scene in 1776. Examining the replicas of the Durham boats, which, as one participant pointed out, were significantly shorter than the originals, allowed us some time out of the wind to consider the other challenges that Washington faced in moving his troops across the river.

A brief ride over the Delaware via the I-95 brought the group to Washington Crossing State Park in New Jersey, where we finished the story of the December 25th movement. Nancy Carter-Ceperley, Interpreter at the Johnson Ferry House at the Park, provided an excellent overview of the army's arrival in New Jersey along with historical background on the structure that likely provided shelter for Washington and his officers while they planned the advance to Trenton. The road out of the park took us parallel to the “Continental Line,” so-named because it was the route following by the army from their land pointing out to Jacob's Creek, where the two columns diverged.

Upon leaving the park, we followed, as best as modern roads would allow, the course of General Nathanael Greene's army from their land pointing out to Jacob's Creek, where Sullivan's forces had advanced, Mercer exposed his brigade to British observation, which allowed Mawhood to set up a defensive position on high ground closer to the town. Sullivan's forces had advanced, Mercer exposed his brigade to British observation, which allowed Mawhood to set up a defensive position on high ground closer to the town. Sullivan's forces had advanced, Mercer exposed his brigade to British observation, which allowed Mawhood to set up a defensive position on high ground closer to the town.

Our next drive took us out of Trenton along the route followed by Washington after the second battle, when he evacuated his forces on January 2, 1777. We paused for lunch at Bill's Old Tavern in Hamilton, NJ, the core building of which was present at the time of Washington's march, before continuing on to Princeton. As we approached Princeton Battlefield State Park, I explained the role of topography in the advance, as well as the problem of missing roads. Cannons once again came up in reference to the army's delay in crossing Stoney Brook, which so frustrated General Hugh Mercer that he deviated from Washington's plan and marched up the Sawmill Road, whose exact path is currently lost to history. Had Mercer followed his original course, it is likely that he would have caught British Colonel Charles Mawhood's redcoats on more favorable ground near modern Route 206, which follows the approximate path of the old King's Highway. Instead, by taking the Sawmill Road after Sullivan's forces had advanced, Mercer exposed his brigade to British observation, which allowed Mawhood to set up a defensive position on high ground closer to the town.

We examined this high ground and the pivotal role of terrain features a few minutes later when we arrived at the battlefield park. This was the most walking-intensive portion of town, where participants received a short explanation of the building's history and some free time to explore.
Staff Ride (continued from page 2)
of the day and began in what was the no-man's-land between the two armies during most of the battle. From a dip in the center of the field, we saw how high ground to the east made it impossible for the British commander to truly grasp the number of men facing him, while his own position on a hill to the north, at that time occupied by an orchard, meant that the American forces could not see the redcoats until the latter fired right into their flanks. We traced the advance of General Mercer’s Brigade and its rough treatment by the British, which resulted in the General’s death, and then saw how the high ground to the east afforded Washington with enough cover to reorganize his troops and attack with overwhelming force, which drove the British from their positions in full retreat.

Following our ramble around the battlefield, we rode into Princeton and paused at Nassau Hall to cover the end of the engagement. Along the way we saw the probable locations of other British defensive positions, now occupied by a golf course and housing developments. Nassau Hall had been the headquarters and barracks of the British troops in the area, as well as a jail for suspected American partisans. When Washington’s victorious force rolled into the town on the heels of the retreating redcoats, they captured 80 British troops in the Hall, who had somehow been left behind, as well as baggage wagons and other military stores. After quickly surveying the scene, Washington moved his troops north to Morristown, where he successfully encamped on January 6, 1777, in a position that threatened all of the smaller British garrisons in the Jerseys, forcing the redcoats to withdraw to the coastal ports. Like Washington, we left the town from the north and returned to the David Library just at sun-down.

According to participants’ opinions voiced upon our return and in their evaluation forms, our inaugural staff ride was a complete success. We will be taking constructive criticism into account in refining certain aspects of the event plan, which will be put into practice during the tours we will offer in 2011. 

The Library has acquired a DVD viewer with two headsets so that visitors can watch documentaries, lectures and historical dramas from our growing DVD collection. Available DVDs are listed on our online catalog accessed via www.dlar.org.

Teacher Workshop

The David Library offered a workshop for K – 12 teachers on November 13, 2010 on “Women and Labor in the American Revolution.” Keynote presenter was Marla R. Miller, author of the highly acclaimed Betsy Ross and the Making of America and The Needle’s Eye: Women and Work in the Age of Revolution. Don N. Hagist, an independent scholar whose research has focused on the roles of women and common soldiers in the British Army, was co-presenter. Lectures and break-out sessions with primary source materials helped teachers devise new ways to bring history to life in the classroom. ACT 48 credits were awarded to workshop participants. Teachers wishing to be notified when the next workshop is scheduled should send an email with “Teacher Workshop” as the subject line to bob@dlar.org.

The Board of Trustees of the David Library of the American Revolution at its November 2010 Meeting. Seated, left to right: James J. Linksz, Francine Lida Stone (Secretary), Sandra A. Miller, Norval D. Reece. Standing, left to right: Yvette Taylor-Hachoose, Patrick K. Spero, Virginia M. Carter (Vice President) and Nancy L. Spears (President).

DLAR News


Chief Operating Officer Meg McSweeney
Librarian Katherine A. Ludwig
Sol Feinstone Scholar William P. Tarum III
Treasurer Barbara B. Faherty
Facilities Manager Tony Russo
Grounds Assistant Anthony DeThomas
Administrative Assistant Robert Fisher

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Nancy L. Spears, President
Virginia M. Carter, Vice President
Francine Lida Stone, Secretary
James J. Linksz
Sandra A. Miller
Norval D. Reece
Yvette Taylor-Hachoose
Patrick K. Spero

This issue of DLAR News edited by Meg McSweeney
Art Direction by KJanStudio

DLAR is located at 1201 River Road (Route 32) in Washington Crossing, Bucks County, Pennsylvania.
David Library of the American Revolution
P.O. Box 748
Washington Crossing, PA 18977
(215) 493-6776
www.dlar.org
Lecture Series... (continued from page 1)

Christian Ayne Crouch, Ph. D., Assistant Professor of History at Bard College, will follow up on February 17 at 7:30 with “Savage Nobles and Noble Savages: France’s Seven Years’ War Experience in America,” focusing on the role played by French regular soldiers, colonial militia, and their native allies in the mid-century struggle for empire.

On March 27 at 3:00 PM, Wayne E. Lee, Ph. D., Associate Professor of History at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill will provide insights into how historians use artifacts when creating their narratives in a presentation titled “Speaking through Skulls: Objects and Meanings in Eighteenth-Century North America.”

Erik R. Seeman, Ph. D., Associate Professor of History at the State University of New York at Buffalo will speak on April 10 at 3:00, investigating how mourning rituals and death practices reveal a common understanding of how conflict shaped communities during the French and Indian War. He has titled his lecture “Death in the Seven Years’ War: Cross-Cultural Encounters.”

Erik Goldstein, Curator of Mechanical Arts and Numismatics at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, will complete the series on April 28 at 7:30 with a lecture on British weapons of the French and Indian War, titled “From Brown Bess to Basket Hilt: British Arms in the French and Indian War.” Dr. Charles Thayer, Professor Emeritus of the University of Pennsylvania, will provide a small exhibition at this lecture featuring selected examples of original muskets, pistols, swords, and accoutrements from his private collection.

For reservations, call (215)493-2233 ext. 100, or email rsvp@dlar.org.

In Memoriam
Josef Seegar Stone
March 29, 1944 to September 23, 2010

History cannot give us a program for the future, but it can give us a fuller understanding of ourselves, and of our common humanity, so that we can better face the future.”

-- Robert Penn Warren

Please consider a tax-deductible contribution to the David Library of the American Revolution to help us face our future challenges. Your support keeps our programs running and our doors open by ensuring the stability of our operating fund. Your generosity supports our ongoing commitment to life-long learning. A gift from you will support the work of advanced scholars who participate in our Fellowship program. Your contribution will help us keep our collections up-to-date, and guarantee that the history of Revolutionary America will be preserved for future generations.

You can make a secure online donation via our website www.dlar.org, or by mailing a check made out to “David Library” to:

David Library of the American Revolution
P.O. Box 748
Washington Crossing, PA 18977

Thank you very much!

Social networks who love history can keep up with the latest news from the David Library by hitting the “Like” button our Facebook page, and by following us (@davidlibrary) on Twitter. This will put our updates and tweets into your newsfeed. We use social media to update our patrons about events at the David Library, announce acquisitions and share interesting articles and fun facts.