

This is NewsLetter Issue No. Four ~ For the year 2018

## The Constitution

In 1754, the first attempt to create a union of the many individual colonies was made by Benjamin Franklin. He proposed his *Plan of Union* at the Albany Congress. Delegates from the New England colonies, New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland had been called together to establish a treaty with the Iroquois. Franklin saw the opportunity to try to unite the colonies in a more permanent way. That first attempt was rejected by both the colonies and the British Parliament.

The First Continental Congress was held between 05 September to 26 October 1774. A 'congress' as defined at that time, was simply the name for a meeting or a gathering together of people. This meeting of delegates from the various colonies was called to discuss what response should be given to the passage of the Intolerable Acts. After actual fighting broke out at Lexington and Concord, the delegates were called to reconvene in the spring of 1775. They met on 10 May 1775 and continued to meet thereafter for the duration of the War under the name of the Second Continental Congress.

The original purpose of the Continental Congress was to guide and direct the colonies and provinces ~ later the states ~ in a unified manner against the depredations being directed against various of them by Great Britain's Parliament. The intentions of the Second Continental Congress did not initially include the creation of a centralized government. A document approved on 09 July 1778 by the delegates

assembled in the Second Continental Congress was the *Articles Of Confederation And Perpetual Union*. The purpose of the *Articles Of Confederation* was to unite the colonies against their common foe, while ensuring that each colony remained as a sovereign state. The thirteen articles emphasized the need for all of the colonies to work together to safeguard their interests. For example, Article IX stated that no member of the union of states should engage in a war unless agreed to by the rest of the colonies in the union. During the American Revolutionary War, the *Articles* served as a sort of 'constitution': a body of fundamental principles or established precedents according to which a state or other organization is acknowledged to be governed. It was not ratified, though, by all of the thirteen states until March 1781. It is interesting to note that Article XI gave approval for the colony of Canada to join the United States if its inhabitants desired.

When the War came to a close on the 3rd of September 1783, it seemed to all intents and purposes, that the states would go their separate ways, each with its own governments and laws.

The need and desire for a *federal* constitution developed apart from any desire to form a federal, or central, government. During the three years that followed the War, a dispute over trade developed between Virginia and Maryland. In September 1786, a convention was held at Annapolis, Maryland for the purpose of mediating that dispute. Five states sent delegates. During that meeting, it was recommended

that a convention be held to determine the feasibility of a permanent body to be available to settle disputes between the states. The so-called "constitutional convention" was set for 14 May 1787 at Philadelphia.

Despite a rocky start ~ not all of the states felt a central government would be favorable ~ delegates slowly trickled into the city that had hosted the continental congresses. By 28 May, delegates from nine states had arrived, and so, with a quorum present, the convention was commenced. Seven signers of the Declaration of Independence, including Benjamin Franklin, were present. Other important figures from the American Revolutionary War period joined the convention; they included Robert Morris, a major financier of the War, and George Washington. Edmund Randolph, the then-current governor of Virginia, opened the convention with a discussion that sparked such an argument that Franklin requested a three-day recess so that the delegates could compose themselves.

Plan after plan was proposed, but each one, though appropriate for an individual state, was objected to by others. Especially bothersome to the northern states was the suggestion by the southern states that representation by three-fifths of their slave population be included. Two delegates from New York walked out when that was proposed. Eventually, the Constitution was hammered out article by article and section by section. By the 6th of August 1787, an initial draft was completed, and a committee of five were assigned the task of refining it. Gouverneur Morris was largely responsible for the final revision, which was presented to the delegates on 12 September. On 17 September 1787, thirty-nine (of the original fifty-five) delegates signed the document, and copies of it were sent to the legislatures of the states for ratification.

The pros and cons of the new Constitution immediately became the subject of debate. Advocates of the Constitution (and by extension of the creation of a *federal* government) were known as *Federalists*. Opponents became known as *Antifederalists*. The Federalist/Antifederalist debate in and of itself, nearly tore the new nation apart. Each state had proponents of both groups within its bounds. In Pennsylvania, the region that included Somerset County was Antifederalist.

Delaware, on 07 December 1787, was the first state to ratify the new Constitution, followed by Pennsylvania on 12 December and New Jersey on 18 December. Georgia became the fourth state to ratify, doing so on 02 January 1788. Connecticut ratified on 09 January. During that year of 1788, Massachusetts, Maryland, South Carolina, New Hampshire, Virginia

and New York followed suit and ratified the Constitution. North Carolina did not ratify until 21 November of the following year, 1789. And Rhode Island, which had not sent any delegates to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, when supplied with a copy of the new document, refused to hold their own convention to discuss its merits. But the state eventually, on 29 May 1790, ratified the Constitution.

On the night of the 2nd of March 1789, the guns of the battery at New York Harbor fired a salute to mark the end of the Confederation of the states, and the following morning the same guns fired a salute heralding the beginning of the Union of the states. Then, on the 4th of March, the first session of Congress under the Constitution was called to order. Meeting in New York City, only eight Senators and thirteen Representatives attended.

The ratification of the Constitution paved the way for a *Federal* President to be elected. On February 4, Presidential electors, chosen in all of the states except New York, cast ballots for the President. On 06 April 1789 the Senate, with nine of its twenty-two members present, counted the votes that had been cast two months before. Sixty-nine votes went to George Washington and thirty-four went to John Adams. Our first President was inaugurated on 23 April 1789.

The first part of the *Constitution* deals with the delineation of government into three co-equal branches.

Article I states that Legislative Powers shall be vested in a Congress, consisting of two parts.

The House of Representatives ~ would be apportioned among the several states according to the numbers of their residents.

The Senate ~ would consist of two representatives from each state.

Article I, Section 8 ~ Lists the various powers the Congress shall have.

Article II states that Executive Powers shall be vested in a President and a Vice President.

Article II, Section 2 ~ states that the President shall be the Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States and of the Militia of the several states. The only time this power was ever enacted was during the Whiskey Rebellion in 1794.

Article III. states that Judicial Powers shall be vested in the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court's primary duty is to interpret the Constitution and decide if a situation functions within 'constitutionality'.

Article IV guarantees the rights and privileges of citizens of each state.

Article V gives the delegates assembled in Congress the right to propose Amendments to the Constitution.

Article VI includes three items to tidy up the government in anticipation of being in the control of the Constitution.

Article VII noted that ratification of the Constitution by nine states would be sufficient to establish the Constitution, and therefore a Federal government. That became official on 17 September 1787.

No sooner was the Constitution approved than delegates to the Congress began to propose amendments pursuant to Article V.

The Bill of Rights is usually the portion of the Constitution that people think is the entire document.

On Wednesday, 04 March 1789 a Congress was held in the city of New York. It was recorded that:

“The Conventions of a number of the States having at the time of adopting the Constitution, expressed a desire, in order to prevent misconstruction, or abuse of its powers, that further declaratory clauses should be added: And as extending the ground of public confidence in the Government, will best ensure the beneficent ends of its institution.”

The first ten Amendments to the Constitution, known as the *Bill of Rights*, were ratified and scheduled to take effect on 15 December 1791.

In fact there were two additional Amendments initially included in the document that was ratified in 1791. The ten amendments that we know today as the original *Bill of Rights* were, at first, amendments number three through twelve.

The First Article dealt with setting the number of Representatives to the Congress. It noted that there would be one Representative for every thirty thousand inhabitants. When the number of Representatives reached one hundred, the proportion would be regulated by the Congress so that there would not be less than one hundred, nor less than one Representative for every forty thousand inhabitants. When the number of Representatives reached two hundred, the Congress would again regulate the proportion so that there would not be less than two hundred Representatives or more than one for every fifty thousands inhabitants. That article has not been ratified to the present day.

The Second Article stated that no law that would vary the compensation for the services of Senators and Representatives would take effect until after the election of Representatives. It eventually was re-introduced as the Twenty-Seventh Amendment on 07 May 1992.

Between March 1789 and December 1791, eleven states ratified the ten amendments, number three through twelve. Certain of the states included one or both of the first two, now-forgotten, amendments

Pennsylvania ratified the Amendments on 11 March 1790. But the Pennsylvania delegates agreed to ratify only the Third through Twelfth Amendments. Then, on 21 September 1791, the original First Amendment was ratified.

The Bill of Rights became an official part of the Constitution on 15 December 1791.

It is interesting to note that Massachusetts, Georgia and Connecticut did not ratify the Amendments until the spring of 1939.

Everyone probably has a favorite Constitutional Amendment.

Gun possession advocates often quote the Second Amendment.

Individuals who are testifying in court, who fear that what they say might incriminate them will no doubt invoke the Fifth Amendment.

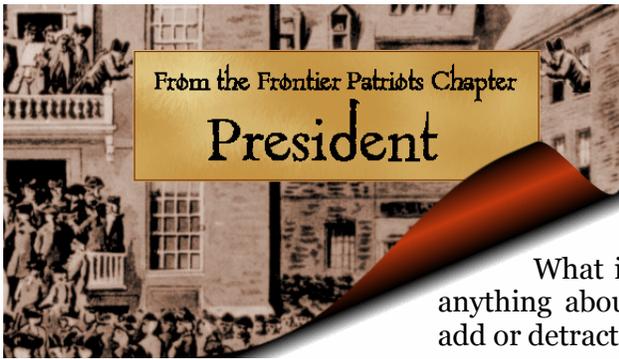
Protestors who want to make sure that their voices are heard will claim the right to free speech that the First Amendment guarantees.

All people who go to a polling station, especially women, when an election is being held are practicing, whether they know it or not, their right to vote spelled out in the Fifteenth and Nineteenth Amendments. (The Fifteenth Amendment guaranteed the right to vote regardless of race, color or previous condition of servitude. The Nineteenth guaranteed the right to vote regardless of sex.)

The last example proves that any amendment can be repealed if the majority of the nation believes it should be. Anyone who enjoys imbibing intoxicating liquors probably knows that the Eighteenth Amendment lasted only between January 1919 and December 1933. The Eighteenth Amendment brought Prohibition; it was repealed by the Twenty-First Amendment.

The foregoing article was an address presented at the Constitution Day Dinner hosted by the Forbes Road Chapter DAR at the Somerset Country Club.





The next meeting of the  
Frontier Patriots Chapter  
of the Sons of the American Revolution  
will be held on 08 December 2018 starting at 12  
Noon, ~ at Hoss's Steak & Sea restaurant, 4308  
Business 220 Bedford, PA

What is the purpose of a grave dedication? It doesn't change anything about politics. It doesn't influence the weather. It doesn't add or detract anything to the general health and well-being of anyone nor does it cause the stock market to rise or fall. The purpose of a grave dedication is to declare our respect, our admiration; more so our veneration of the deceased for acts they performed during their lives. It is intended to extend to the memory of that deceased individual the honor they deserve. A grave dedication for an American Revolutionary War patriot is intended to express our respect for the individuals who fought with actual swords and muskets, or who simply fought with the cutting power of their oaths of allegiance.

On Saturday, 6 October 2018, the Frontier Patriots Chapter participated in the grave dedication of Patriot, William Pringle. In fact, only one member of our chapter other than myself attended the ceremony at the Pringle Cemetery at Summerhill, in Cambria County. Why didn't more compatriot members attend, though? I fully understand that many members of the Frontier Patriots Chapter do not live close to central Pennsylvania, but some do. Were some of you (local members) who didn't attend the ceremony incapacitated by illness and confined to bed? Did others of you have to work that Saturday? Or did you just not feel that a grave dedication is important enough to pull you away from your daily routines? No matter the reason, please consider attending grave dedications in the future.

Section 153302, Article 1 of the Congressional Charter of the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution states that one of the purposes of the SAR is to "*perpetuate the memory of the men who, by their services or sacrifices during the war of the American Revolution, achieved the independence of the American people.*" We must not forget the men and their services and sacrifices, and one way to do that is to dedicate or rededicate their graves. They gave us a nation; we can surely give them an hour or two of our time and attention. Again, I'll say: please consider attending grave dedications in the future.



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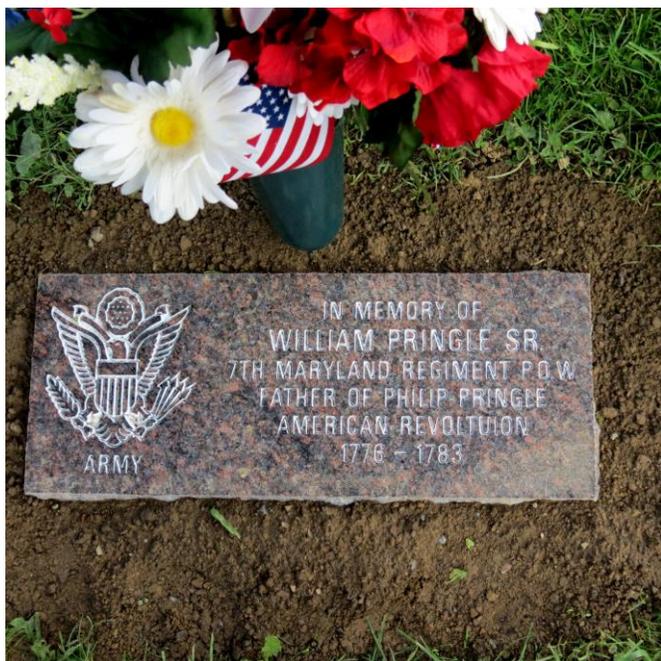
## *The American's Creed*

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"I believe in the United States of America as a government of the people, by the people, for the people; whose just powers are derived from the consent of the governed, a democracy in a republic, a sovereign Nation of many sovereign States; a perfect Union, one and inseparable; established upon those principles of freedom, equality, justice, and humanity for which American patriots sacrificed their lives and fortunes."



## William Pringle Grave Dedication ~ 06 October 2018



Despite rain during most of the ceremony, the dedication of the (assumed) gravesite of William Pringle Sr., was conducted on the 6th of October. William Pringle served in Captain Thomas Mason's Company, the 2nd Company, 2nd Battalion of the Maryland Militia. His name was recorded on a roster of the company from January 1782, on which it was noted that he was "*not heard of since March muster ~ then prisoner War.*"

It might be noted that two (now deceased) compatriot members of the Frontier Patriots Chapter claimed William Pringle as their ancestral Patriot, but they both used a reference to William Pringle serving in Capt John Holaday's Company of the Bedford County Militia as their proof of Revolutionary War service. Unfortunately, that reference referred to militia service in 1788, five years after the War had ended. Also, in view of the fact that William Pringle Sr is believed to have died in 1783, which is the date placed on the marker, it would probably have been William Jr that served in John Holaday's Company in 1788.

The marker that was placed in the Pringle Hill Cemetery (on lands owned by Philip Pringle, son of the Patriot) states "In Memory Of . . ." because the exact site of Mr. Pringle's burial

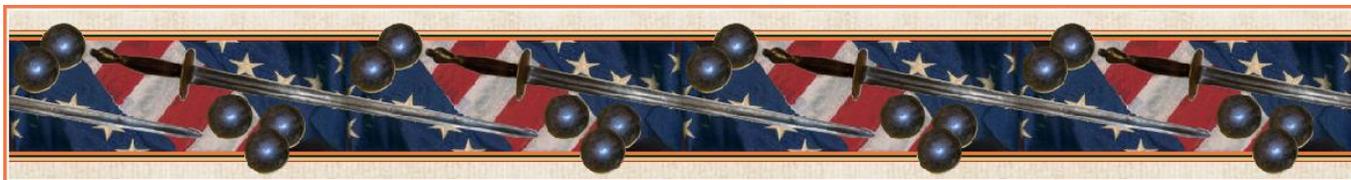
within the cemetery is unknown. In fact, the cemetery in which his remains lie is still in question. At one time the claim was made that William Pringle was buried in the Geeseytown Cemetery. Unfortunately, there was no basis for that claim. It was also suggested that the patriot might be buried in the Pressel Cemetery in the vicinity of Claysburg. Some family members were interred there, and so it was suggested that he might also have been laid there to rest. Pringle Hill Cemetery is located on lands owned by William's eldest son, Philip. That connection makes it the closest and most probable site of his grave. Tombstones or markers which state "In Memory Of . . ." denote that exact burial site of the deceased is not known.

The dedication ceremony was organized by his descendant, Brian Schilling (shown in the photo above in colonial garb). Our new Frontier Patriots Chapter compatriot, Bill Mock took the photographs above. The one on the right includes myself, Larry Smith, on the far right, a member of the Cambria-Somerset Chapter beside me, four members of the Somerset Chapter DAR and Brian Schilling and his sister, holding the folded flag.

# ANNUAL DUES



*H*opefully you have already renewed your membership dues for the year 2019. If you have not, please do so before December 31, 2018. If you wish to pay by credit card online, there is a link on the PASSAR website at <http://www.passar.org>.



## General Orders, 01 August 1779

*“Fatigue rum at the rate of a gill pr. Day pr. Man to be constantly issued to the different parties on fatigue and to the Artificers employed in carrying on the works.”*

In the 1700s, the word ‘fatigue’ referred to ‘toil’ so this Order was stating that the gill of rum was to be issued to the soldiers who were working. It should be noted, also, that a ‘gill’ equaled one-half cup, so the rum was not intended to cause drunkenness.

For those of you that receive this newsletter by US mail, if you have an email address, we would appreciate you sending it to us to use for future newsletters. Printing and mailing these newsletters is very expensive. Please send to our Secretary Melvin McDowell at [melvin.mcdowell@gmail.com](mailto:melvin.mcdowell@gmail.com)