

# Saint Lucie River Chapter Sons of the American Revolution



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## Chapter History

## A HISTORY OF THE ST. LUCIE RIVER CHAPTER

### SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

The letter was dated November 27, 1988. It read, in part, "Dear Compatriot. Your presence is requested at a pre-organization meeting for the purpose of establishing a new chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) in the St. Lucie/Martin County area."

For some time, members living in St. Lucie and Martin counties had been driving to Vero Beach or to West Palm to attend SAR meetings. Either way it was a long way to go and, for some, it was too far. They simply paid their dues and didn't attend the meetings.

"The meeting time is 2:00 PM, Sunday, 11 December 1988, at the First Congregational Church in Port St. Lucie," the letter continued. It was signed by a man who is known in the Florida Society, Sons of the American Revolution, Stanley A. Evans, and Chairman of the Target Cities Committee.

Compatriot Evans' committee had been charged by the State Society to investigate certain areas in Florida, with an eye on the possibility of forming new chapters. As one of the fastest growing areas in Florida, or in the nation for that matter, the Treasure Coast seemed fertile ground.

The first pre-organization meeting was held at the appointed time and place. Present at that meeting were the following members of SAR:

Guy S. Athearn	Robert J. Lessa
Edward N. Casey	Joseph Margraf
William M. Cox, Jr.	William F. Moore
Richard T. Diekmann	William R. Stevens
Stanley A. Evans	

It should be noted that beside Compatriot Evans, two of the members in attendance were officers of the Florida Society. Compatriot Athearn was State Chaplain and Compatriot Stevens was Registrar of the State Society.

Also present at that first meeting was Martha York Clements, representing the Daughters of the American Revolution, St. Lucie River Chapter, and the following prospective members of SAR:

Russell A. Browne was accepted to membership at the first meeting of the chapter. He served the chapter well as a member and, one year, as Chapter Secretary. He is now deceased. Donald Crislip had a problem proving his eligibility for membership and has lost interest in the organization.

The third prospective member attending the first meeting has also served the chapter well. His name is Doug North and he is currently the 6<sup>th</sup> President of the St. Lucie River Chapter. Another lady also attended. Margaret Browne is a member of DAR and wife of the late Russell Browne.

Rev. Diekmann, pastor of the First Congregational Church of Port St. Lucie, served as chairman of the first meeting. He convened the meeting, offered the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. He then introduced Stan Evans and turned over the meeting to him.

The first order of business was selecting a name for the new chapter. Other names suggested were: The Indian River Chapter. However, that name wasn't considered suitable since the Indian River begins up in Brevard County; the St. Lucie Chapter seemed to neglect members and prospective members residing in Martin County. So, it was decided that the name **ST. LUCIE RIVER CHAPTER** best described the area from which the chapter would draw its members. The beautiful St. Lucie River finds its pathway to the sea through both St. Lucie and Martin counties.

It should be noted that the St. Lucie River Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution, primarily owes its existence to one man.

He is Compatriot Guy Starbuck Athearn. Although Compatriot Athearn discussed the organization of a new chapter with several other future chapter members, it was he who had the idea and began the wheels turning through his contacts in the State Society. And it was through his organizational skills and hard work, which continue today, that the chapter was formed and has grown with vigor.

The first officers of the chapter elected at the first meeting were as follows:

President – Guy S. Athearn

1st Vice-Pres. – Richard T. Diekmann

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-Pres. –William F. Moore

Secy. /Treas. – Edward N. Casey

And, as you may be sure, "a hat was passed" that day to collect enough money to get the new chapter underway. The amount collected was \$21.00.

Compatriot Stevenson discussed the proper completion of applications for membership. On behalf of the DAR, Martha Clements welcomed the new SAR chapter. After agreement to meet again at the same place, the meeting was adjourned.

At the second pre-organization meeting on February 5, 1989, Compatriot Stanley Evens reported on the motion made at the recent Florida Society Board of Management meeting.

That motion, "To present a charter to the newly formed St. Lucie River Chapter," passed without dissent. Then Compatriot Evens presented a check from FLSAR to the new chapter in the amount of \$400. That check was to help defray the costs of the American Flag, the SAR Flag, flag poles and bases and other necessary incidentals.

After discussion of some other matters of a routine nature, the second pre-organization meeting was adjourned by acting President Guy Athearn.

The St. Lucie River Chapter became an officially installed chapter of the Florida Society, Sons of the American Revolution, at the Charter Presentation Ceremony held on Saturday, February 18, 1988, almost exactly five years ago. That meeting was held at 7900 South U.S. 1 in Port St. Lucie, Florida, next to the Port St. Lucie Best Western Motel. The restaurant has since changed hands and is now called "The Sizzler."

The Charter Presentation Meeting was called to order by Raymond A. Haas, President of the Florida Society, SAR. A color guard from the J.R.O.T.C. unit at Fort Pierce Westwood High School presented the colors and the flag of the SAR.

The new chapter officers were sworn in and charged by President Haas. He also presented to Compatriot Athearn the SAR Chapter President's Medal and neck ribbon. It is interesting to note that, in the confusion of the Chapter Presentation Ceremony, the Charter, itself, was forgotten. And so, President Haas also presented to Compatriot Athearn a blank sheet of paper, in lieu of the Charter. No one was the wiser.

Barbara Ferguson and Martha Clements presented to President Athearn a new gavel on behalf of the St. Lucie River Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution. That gavel is still the one in use today by the Chapter President. New member, Compatriot Russell A. Browne, was presented with his membership certificate, card and rosette and welcomed to membership by President Haas.

Several dignitaries were present at the meeting. Besides Compatriots Stanley Evans and William R. Stevenson, previously mentioned, other Florida Society Officers in attendance were Regional Vice-President, Russell Ford and Glenn Arter. Also present was Compatriot Richard Friberg, National Vice President of the South Atlantic Division, SAR. Other dignitaries included Mrs. Nedra Bachler, Vice-Regent of the Halpatiokee Chapter, DAR, of Stuart, Florida, and William McChesney, Mayor of Port St. Lucie

Compatriot Lunsford Healy, Immediate Past President of the Florida Society gave the address which was concerned with George Washington.

A minimum of fifteen members is required for a new chapter to apply for a charter. An effort has been made to identify those fifteen "Charter Members." It has not been an easy task because of last minute transfers to and from the chapter and outright confusion, at the time, on both local and state levels. The following list of probable "Charter Members." It is thought to be reasonably accurate.

1. Rev. Guy S. Athearn
2. Robert O. Brown
3. Russell A. Browne
4. Edward N. Casey
5. William M. Cox, Jr.
6. Gen. William Hl Craig, U.S.A.
7. Rev. Dr. Richard T. Diekmann
8. Edwin L. Glasscock
9. John Kalloch
10. John E. Larkin
11. Joseph Margraf
12. William F. Moore

13. Dr. Clarence /F. Pusey

**[Please note: All of these charter members are now deceased.]**

It may, or may not, be significant that the St. Lucie River Chapter's first three Presidents were ministers of the gospel.

They were Compatriots Guy Athearn, Rick Diekmann and Steven Pillsbury. Certainly, their godly guidance established a firm foundation for the fledgling organization. And the "devil's trap" of fiscal irresponsibility was often avoided by their willingness to take up a collection.

Today, the St. Lucie River Chapter is a thriving, growing robust organization, one of the most active in the Florida Society. It shall continue in that tradition as long as its members care and are willing to work toward its worthy goals.

Written and delivered at the  
Chapter's 5<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration  
On February 12, 1994 by  
Compatriot Edward N. Casey  
St. Lucie River Chapter  
Sons of the American Revolution

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