

The 240th Anniversary of the Crossing of the Dan

On Saturday, February 20, 2021, in South Boston, Virginia, the Virginia Society, Sons of the American Revolution celebrated the 240th Anniversary of the Crossing of the Dan by General Nathanael Greene and his army. Governor Michael E. Weyler of the Virginia Society of The Order of the Founders and Patriots of America participated in the hybrid ceremony held in the South Boston – Halifax County Museum.



On February 14, 1781, General Nathanael Greene, commander of America's southern army, won the Race to the Dan when he and his army crossed the Dan river a day ahead of British General Cornwallis' pursuing army.

The two armies had been moving rapidly north following the British victory at the Battle of Cowen's Ford two weeks earlier on February 1st. The British pursuit of the forces of Generals Greene and Morgan, which became known as the Race to the Dan, left the pursuing British in an exhausted state when they arrived at the Dan. At that point, Cornwallis turned east, intending to make his way to the safety of the coast.

Through the summer, Greene pursued and engaged Cornwallis as he moved eastward in North Carolina. Although Cornwallis prevailed in each engagement, his forces were being systematically whittled down. Eventually Cornwallis made it to Yorktown where, on October 19, 1781, he surrendered to Washington.



L/R: Associate Jeff Thomas and Governor Weyler

The host for the 240th anniversary hybrid event, which included both in-person and virtual participants, was the Dan River Chapter of VASSAR. The chapter President, Gary Hall, led the ceremonies from the museum while VASSAR President and VA OFPA Associate Jeff Thomas managed the Zoom Meeting portion of the program.

Governor Weyler, being present in South Boston, brought greetings from the podium at the museum. He pointed out that the OFPA honors not only those who were there 240 years ago, but also their ancestors, the Founders of America, who carved a country out of a wilderness, where liberty was the heritage they gave to their descendants, our Patriot Ancestors, who a century and a half later fought to preserve that heritage of liberty.

The hybrid event was attended by 166 participants from 9 states representing 75 individual chapters and societies of descendants of American Revolution Patriots, including the SAR, the DAR, the CAR and the OFPA.