

# Link to a patriot required for DAR

*Some Daughters follow their ancestry back to female patriots who supported the Colonies during the Revolution.*

Membership in the Daughters of the American Revolution requires a documented direct line to a patriot, an ancestor who gave support in the American Revolution.

No exceptions are granted. For instance, my ancestors remained in England until 1850. They were owners of woolen mills in Yorkshire, where they loomed the bright red wool worn by British soldiers in the bright green forests of the Colonies. Who, I plead, made a greater contribution to American freedom than my ancestors?

But the DAR won't let me in. And according to rules of bloodlines, George Washington is not a patriot whose name can be used to establish membership in the organization. His adopted children were the children of his wife, Martha Custis Washington. No DNA, no DAR!

Most DAR members trace to a male patriot, but some local members are among those who claim a woman whose service is memorialized in names of DAR chapters, publications and statues. Women who are patriots but not yet claimed by candidates for membership are listed in the DAR magazine.

Patriots are not only soldiers in uniform but also the women and children who made and mended uniforms, made musket balls and cartridges, followed troops as nurses, cooks, spies or couriers and were important fund-raisers.

Famed among patriots, Sybil Ludington drove her horse on oxcart paths through dark woods, carrying warnings that saved important New England



Colonel George Eskridge, d. 1735, and his wife, Rebecca Bonum Eskridge, d. 1715. PHOTOS COURTESY OF VIRGINIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Family History VIRGINIA ROLLINGS

armies. A statue of this "female Paul Revere" stands in Carmel, N.Y.

Hannah White Arnett, with the courage of Patrick Henry, braved opponents of the war as they met to organize movements to quit the war and ask England's forgiveness. Her words, "Where will you traitors be when America wins?" weakened the movement to quit the war.

Carolyn Knight, regent of the Hampton Chapter of the DAR, descends from the patriot Margaret Eskridge Kenner, who responded to the urgent need for food, providing 525 pounds of beef to Army troops in 1782.

Eskridge, who died about 1805, was a granddaughter of Col. George Eskridge, born 1735 in Westmoreland County and a deputy in the Virginia House of Burgesses. A portrait of Eskridge, with his wife, Rebecca Bonam, is prized in the Virginia Historical Museum in Richmond. Both Carolyn Knight's ancestry and that of her husband, Judge Edward Knight, connect to Jamestown, his lineage in the Digges family. But she cherishes the more rare connection to her lady patriot.



Carolyn joined the DAR in St. Louis at age 18, attending with her mother, who proved the lineage.

Martha Edwards, director of District I, names other district members who descend from a lady patriot, including LeNelle Janis, regent of the Chesapeake chapter, who traces to Ann Graves, daughter of Thomas Graves, who donated funds to the cause. Also Nancy Miller, of the Lynnhaven chapter in the district, is descended from the patriot Ann Joplin Childress.

Catherine Ritter Zeno, now 93, born in Blackstone, moved to Warwick County in 1933 to teach in Hilton Elementary School in Newport News. She intertwines her interest in ancestry with memories of children she taught: Greg Campbell, William Styron, Nelson Overton, Lelia Barkley, Grier Sheldon, Jane Denton, and others. Her patriot, Margaret Kerfoot, wife of George Kerfoot, furnished supplies to American troops. She was born in 1750 and made her will in March 1814, probated in Fauquier County in December 1816.

District member Edna Hall Edwards has the incredible ancestor Laodicea Langston. She traced her genealogy through the families of Hall, Lockhart and Springfield.

"Dicey" Langston was born in 1766 in Granville County, N.C. When she was 16, the

"Bloody Scouts," who were fierce loyalists to the English crown, invaded the Langston home to kill Dicey's frail, aged father, whose two sons were in the army. As an angry Tory pointed a rifle at her father, Dicey stepped in front of her father and would not move. A man flipped the rifle upward, and Dicey lived to run her horse many times as a courier and scout. She married Thomas Springfield at age 17 and lived until 1837. A statue in honor of Dicey stands in South Carolina.

Carolyn Knight says "the standing committees profile the goals and services of the DAR, affirming vigilance to maintain our sorely earned freedom. The Education Committee is dedicated to elevation of learning American history, especially promotion and understanding of the Constitution. For decades our Awards Committee has joined with Hampton, Phoebus, and Kecoughtan high schools and Hampton Christian School, granting annual achievement awards, scholarships, and the Bronze DAR Good Citizenship Medal."

Other committees are devoted to veterans issues, historical projects, and naturalization.

"The Genealogical Records Committee offers the world a renowned collection of genealogies available in the DAR Library in Washington, D.C., with many publications in local libraries and available on microfilm in the Family History Center. Applicants for membership will be assisted with research by DAR consultants," Knight says.



Contact the Newport News Family History Center by e-mail at [nfhcenter@juno.com](mailto:nfhcenter@juno.com). The center is open 9 a.m.-9 p.m. Tuesdays; 6p.m.-9 p.m. Wednesdays and Thursdays; and 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturdays.

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