



Newsletter of the *Fernando de Leyba Chapter*

*Sons of the American Revolution*

VOL. XI4 Issue 10

May, 2013

Meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of every month (except July and August) at  
Culpepper Restaurant in St. Charles, MO

---

---

### [May 25 This day during the American Revolution](#)

**May 25, 1780**

**Battle of St. Louis** was an unsuccessful British-led attack on St. Louis (a French settlement in Spanish Louisiana that had been ceded by France to Spain in 1763) on May 26, 1780, during the American Revolutionary War. A force composed primarily of Indians and led by a former British militia commander attacked the settlement.



The settlement's defenders, mostly local militia under the command of Lieutenant Governor of Spanish Louisiana - Fernando De Leyba, had fortified the town as best they could, and successfully withstood the attack. A second simultaneous attack on the American outpost at Cahokia, Illinois was also repulsed. The retreating Indians destroyed crops and took captive civilians outside the protected area. The British failure effectively ended their attempts to gain control of the Mississippi River during the war. Following the entry of Spain into the American Revolutionary War in 1779, British military planners in London wanted to secure the corridor of the Mississippi

River against both Spanish and Patriot activity. Their plans included expeditions from West Florida to take New Orleans and other Spanish targets, and several expeditions to gain control of targets in the upper Mississippi, including the small town of St. Louis. The expedition from West Florida never got off the ground, since Bernardo De Gálvez, the Governor of Spanish Louisiana, had moved rapidly to gain control of British outposts on the lower Mississippi, and was threatening action against West Florida's principal outposts of Mobile and Pensacola. The British expeditions from the north were organized by Patrick Sinclair, the military governor at Fort Michilimackinac in present-day Michigan. Beginning in February 1780 he instructed fur traders to circulate through their territories, recruiting interested tribes for an expedition against St. Louis. The fur traders were offered the opportunity to control the fur trade in the upper parts of Spanish Louisiana as an incentive to participate. Most of the force gathered at Prairie du Chien, where they were placed under the command of Emanuel Hesse, a former militia captain turned fur trader. The force numbered about two dozen fur traders and an estimated 750 to 1,000 Indians when it left Prairie du Chien on May 2. The largest contingent of the force was about 200 Sioux warriors led by Wapasha, with additional sizable companies from the Chippewa, Menominee, and Winnebago nations, and

smaller numbers of warriors from other nations. The Chippewa chief Matchekewis was given overall command of the native forces. When the force reached Rock Island they were joined by about 250 men from the Sac and Fox nations. These warriors were somewhat reluctant to attack St. Louis, but Hesse gave them large gifts to secure their participation in the venture. The diversity within the expedition included some animosity among the tribes, for the Chippewa and Sioux in particular had a history of conflict with each other. However, Wapasha and Matchekewis promoted unity during the expedition. The village of St. Louis was primarily a trading hub on the Mississippi River, but it was also the administrative capital of upper Spanish Louisiana, and it was governed by Lieutenant Governor Fernando De Leyba, who was also a captain in the Spanish Army. Leyba was warned in late March 1780 by a fur trader that the British were planning an attack on St. Louis and the nearby American-held post at Cahokia. He began developing plans for the village's defense. He had only 29 regular army soldiers of the Fijo de Luisiana Colonial Regiment and an inexperienced militia force of 168, most of whom were dispersed in the surrounding countryside. Leyba developed a grand plan of defense that included the construction of four stone towers. Without funds, or the time to get them from New Orleans, Leyba asked the villagers to contribute funds and

labor to the construction of these fortifications, and paid for some of the work from his private funds. By mid-May a single round tower had been built that was about 30 feet (9.1 m) in diameter and thirty to forty feet tall. The tower, dubbed “Fort San Carlos”, provided a commanding view of the surrounding countryside. As there did not appear to be sufficient time to build more towers, trenches were dug between the tower and the river to the north and south of the village. Five cannon were placed on top of the tower, and additional cannon were placed along the trenches. When Leyba learned that Hesse’s force had reached Rock Island, he called in the outlying militia and summoned reinforcements from Ste. Genevieve. By May 13 he recorded that he been reinforced by “about 150 men, all good shots”. On May 15, Leyba was visited by John Montgomery, the American commander at Cahokia, who proposed a joint Spanish-American force to counter Hesse’s expedition, an idea that did not reach fruition. On May 23, Leyba’s scouts reported that Hesse’s force was only 14 miles (23 km) away, had landed their canoes, and were coming overland. On May 25, Hesse sent out scouting parties to determine the situation at St. Louis. These parties were unable to get close to the village due to the presence of workers, including women and children, in the fields outside the village. The next day Hesse sent Jean-Marie Ducharme and 300 Indians across the river to attack

Cahokia, while the remainder headed toward St. Louis, arriving about 1:00 pm. A warning shot was fired from the tower when they came in view, with the Sioux and Winnebagoes leading the way, followed by the Sac and Fox, and the fur traders, including Hesse, bringing up the rear. Leyba directed the defense from the tower, and opened a withering fire from there and from the trenches when the enemy force came in range. On the first volley, most of the Sac and Fox fell back, apparently unwilling to fight, leaving many of the other participants suspicious of their “treachery”. Wapasha and the Sioux persisted for several hours in attempts to draw the Spanish defenders out, going so far as brutally killing some captives they had taken in the fields. Although this angered some of the townspeople to the point where the militia requested permission to make a sortie, Leyba refused, and the attackers eventually withdrew and headed north, destroying crops, livestock, and buildings as they went. On the other side of the river, Ducharme’s attack on Cahokia was easily repulsed. The timely arrival of George Rogers Clark to lead its defense played a role; Clark’s reputation as a frontier fighter made the Indian force reluctant to pursue the attack. The village of 700 lost between 50 and 100 killed, wounded, and captured, virtually all civilians. A year later the Spaniards from St. Louis raided Fort St. Joseph,

bringing the captured British flag back to St. Louis.  
Fernando De Leyba died the following month, the subject of local criticism because he never formally recognized the efforts made by the citizenry in the town's defense. His valor earned him a promotion to lieutenant colonel from King Charles, who did not know that he had died.

**On May 26, 2013**

**18 MOSSAR Color Guard Members plus 2 additional SAR Members participated in the Commemoration of the Battle of Fort San Carlos (Battle of St. Louis) event on Sunday, May 26, 2013**



*Front Row: Wayne S. Davis - Spirit of St. Louis Chapter; William J. Jackson - Spirit of St. Louis Chapter; Stephen M. Baldwin - Fernando De Leyba Chapter, Alexander Majors Chapter, Allen Laws Oliver Chapter; William L. Grote - Spirit of St. Louis Chapter; Robert L. Grover, MOSSAR Color Guard Commander - Harry S Truman Chapter, Independence Patriots Chapter, Ozark Mountain Chapter, & KSSSAR Delaware Crossing Chapter; Roy Hutchinson - Harry S Truman Chapter; John E. Rush - Fernando De Leyba Chapter; Charles L. Lilly, MOSSAR Executive Vice President - Fernando De Leyba Chapter, Spirit of St. Louis Chapter; James L. Scott - Independence Patriots Chapter*  
*Back Row: J. Wayne Merrill, MOSSAR Chaplin - M. Graham Clark Chapter; Fred P. Kaffenberger - Alexander Majors Chapter; Robert J. Brindell - Spirit of St. Louis Chapter; Russell F. DeVenney - M. Graham Clark Chapter; Jack K. Quint - Harry S Truman Chapter, Independence Patriots Chapter; Earnest L. Mowry - Christopher Casey Chapter; Milan A. Paddock, Spirit of St. Louis Chapter, Fernando De Leyba Chapter, Ozark Patriots Chapter; Bryan P. Bradford - M. Graham Clark Chapter; William A.G. Grote - Fernando De Leyba Chapter; Alvin L. Paris - Independence Patriots Chapter*

*Missing from the photo: Douglas E. Neff - Spirit of St. Louis Chapter.*

---

Next meeting will be on June 10, 2013 and we will meet at Culpeppers 6:30 PM.

Treasurer's report as of May 2013:

Beginning Balance = \$2,094.94– Ending Balance = \$1,869.48

.....

Genealogist report as of March 11, 2013:

New Members: Michael Snyder, Jim Bunch, Adam Schnelting, Marvin Koechig, Adam Bell, J.D. Kirtlink

At National: David Hoffman, Ron Hauser

8 New Prospects for Membership: **“FDL 46 members strong”**

- Pat Jefferson (2 supplements)
- John Wilson (1 supplement)
- Charles Lilly (3 supplements)
- Keith Morris (1 supplement)
- Martin White (1 supplement)
- Steve White (1 supplement)
- Marvin Keochig (2 supplements)
- David Cox (1 supplemental)
- Adam Schnelting (1 supplement)
- Michael Snyder (1 supplement)

At the May 13, 2012 meeting:

Meeting Opens 7:01 pm

Introductions: John Attaway, Rich Denning, James Bunch, James “Lyle” McPherson.

Veterans report: David Christian informed us of the ROTC Programs range from Olney Ill to Mexico Mo. Pacific Mo ROTC will be featured in a “Washington Missourian” article.

1. Motion: Charles Lilly - 2<sup>nd</sup> David Christian Members would participate in the revenue opportunity at the Family Arena in St. Charles with the St. Charles Chapter of the DAR. At the May 13th Chapter Meeting it was agreed by the Members present that the Fernando De Leyba SAR Chapter – Motion Passed.
2. Dennis Hahn: MOSSAR 2012 Yearbook Award Winner is Fernando De Leyba chapter. Congratulations to FDL and Chapter Historian Jeff Sullivan for his efforts compiling our 2013 Historical logbook.
3. Dennis Hahn: MOSSAR Knight Essay Winner at the State level is our chapter winner Miss. Kimberly Hill who orated her award winning thesis “ For the Sake of Freedom”.
4. Dennis Hahn: Society of the War of 1812 has been established with many FDL members as charter members.
5. Charles Lilly: Arizona Project still on Hold.
6. Bill Grate: Color guard coming events – Pharmaceutical Society, Fort San Carlos ceremony, Cold Water Creek, University of Phoenix.
7. Milan Paddock: Membership Badge proposal- concern was presented that members would take them home and forget to bring them back to the meetings.

Old Business: NASSAR 2013 Congress will be in Kansas City July 6-11. Medals Available for Purchase. “Josiah Fog” scores due in on Friday March 15, 2013. Battle of Fort San Carlos possibly to be recognized as a National Event – criteria needs to be submitted to National. May 4 was Fernando De Leyba's 17<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a Chapter.

New Business: Battle of Fort San Carlos (National Event Candidate) celebration will be held Sunday May 26, 2013 at the Missouri History Museum. Meeting locations still being explored.

**Awards:**

Jim Borgman was presented with the “**Lamplighter Award**”.

Ed Grey presented with Missouri Silver Medal for service to FDL chapter.

Meeting Closed at 9:12 P.M.

May 13 Program: William Ray “Music as it came to the Colonies”.



**28 Members and Guest in Attendance:**

Milan Paddock, David Hoffman, John Rush, Lyle McPherson, Eunice McPherson, Michael Snyder, Jim Borgman, Diane Borgman, Jim Bunch, Charles Jefferson, John Wilson, Dennis Hahn, Charles Lilly, Stephen Baldwin, Bill Grote, Sylvia Grote, David Christian, John Attaway, Chris Attaway, Keith Morris, Barbara Morris, Martin White, Mimi White, William H. Ray, Richard Denning, Mike Zimmer, Nora Zimmer, Paul Smith

## Revolutionary War Quotes

"There! His Majesty can now read my name without glasses.  
And he can double the reward on my head!"

*John Hancock*





Yesterday is History. Tomorrow is Mystery?? Today is a Blessing!!!

Looking forward to seeing everyone on Monday...

Newsletter Editor – Paul Smith: [plaimsmith@charter.net](mailto:plaimsmith@charter.net)



*Fernando de Leyba*  
*Chapter*

15 CHASE CT.

Lake St Louis Mo  
63367