



**Patriots in our  
blood -  
Patriotism in  
our hearts.**

## The Godfrey Dreher Dispatch

*Honoring our Patriot ancestors - 300 to 500 words at a time.*

WINTER 2026

JIM HERRITAGE, EDITOR



### ***Tell Their Stories***

by Nelson McLeod

Godfrey Dreher Chapter • President

If you are Buddy Witherspoon and one of your Patriot ancestors is Reverend John Witherspoon — signer of the Declaration of Independence and President of the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University) — there are books, articles, and countless resources chronicling his life and legacy. Wikipedia notes that statues of Dr. Witherspoon stand in Princeton, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and Paisley, Scotland.

If you are Woody Carothers and one of your Patriot ancestors is Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Hambright, leader in the Lincoln County, North Carolina militia, hero of Kings Mountain, and known as “The Terror of the Tories,” you’ll also find a wealth of information available. Lt. Col. Hambright appears in numerous books and historical accounts.

But most of us descend from Patriots who were not the subjects of long Wikipedia entries, biographies, or scholarly works. Many were hardworking farmers, tradesmen, or laborers who served faithfully in the militia for a few months and then returned home. They may never have filled the pages of history books.

So who knows their stories best? In many cases — it’s you.

The Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) promotes patriotism, history, and education by honoring Revolutionary War ancestors, uniting their descendants, and inspiring reverence for America’s founding principles — liberty, self-governance, and civic responsibility. SAR also preserves Revolutionary history through research, memorials, and the marking of significant sites, helping foster true patriotism and safeguard American freedoms.

One of SAR’s most valuable tools is the Patriot Research System (PRS):

<https://sarpatriots.sar.org/patriot/search>

**Note: For document security, links are not live. You can cut and paste them into your browser.**

Each Patriot's page may include tabs for:

- Patriot Detail
- Grave Detail
- Biography
- Additional Information

All SAR-recognized Patriots are listed, with qualifying service, references, and the SAR members who have documented descent. (Frederick Hambright, for example, has 80 SAR descendants!)

However, most recognized Patriots do not yet have a biography in the system.

Does yours? And who can change that? You can.

## How to Create a Biography

Start gathering source material and build a narrative of your Patriot's life and service.

Good places to begin:

- References listed in the SAR Patriot Research System
- Daughters of the American Revolution Genealogical Research System

[https://services.dar.org/public/dar\\_research/search/?Tab\\_ID=1](https://services.dar.org/public/dar_research/search/?Tab_ID=1)

- Revolutionary War pension applications: <https://revwarapps.org/>

- County histories and local historical collections
- Family stories passed down through generations
- Research done by cousins or other descendants
- Carolana (especially for NC and SC Patriots)

[https://www.carolana.com/SC/Revolution/revolution\\_patriot\\_troops\\_sc.html](https://www.carolana.com/SC/Revolution/revolution_patriot_troops_sc.html)

***Note: For document security, links are not live. You can cut and paste them into your browser.***

## Then Take the Final Step

Once your narrative is written:

- 1 Locate your Patriot in the Patriot Research System
- 2 Click the Biography tab
- 3 Select "Add Biography" and follow the instructions

Your Patriot's story will then be available to researchers and to current and future SAR members.

Some Patriots have statues. Others have only us.

Let's tell their stories. 🇺🇸



## ***Drilling Deeper with DNA***

by Carl Epps

Godfrey Dreher Chapter • Secretary

I'm an analytical person, so I place a great deal of trust in data. I also have a deep love for our nation and its history, especially when the past is told accurately and factually. Lately, combining those two interests has felt like the old introduction to ABC's Wide World of Sports — "the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat."

Researching my ancestry has become a true hobby, and being able to see scientific DNA results makes this journey into the past even more rewarding. I've taken three DNA tests — AncestryDNA, 23andMe, and MyHeritage. Drawing on my experience working in chemical labs, where samples are measured in triplicate to verify accuracy, I was pleased to see that the results from all three tests aligned quite consistently.

My family tree on Ancestry started small, built around known relatives, but it continues to grow — not only through DNA-confirmed biological connections but also through the addition of solid genealogical source documents.

My initial reason for joining the Sons of the American Revolution was to make the path easier for my grandchildren, should they one day choose to join. Thankfully, my SAR application was approved without a hitch. Since becoming involved in this Chapter — and with our nation's upcoming 250th anniversary — my membership has taken on much deeper meaning. I now have a strong desire to identify and document additional Patriot ancestors. I have two supplementals submitted and am working on applications to the General Society of the War of 1812 and, with Nelson's encouragement, the Huguenot Society of South Carolina.

Now comes the hard part: gathering the documentation. Records from certain places and time periods can be difficult to find. I feel close at times, but as I remind myself, "feelings are not facts." More than ever, I appreciate the work Woody did on my behalf and the help Mike Gillis continues to provide to me and so many others.

"If you're not growing, you're dying," and our Chapter is growing. I truly enjoy being a member of the Godfrey Dreher Chapter and am deeply thankful for the friendships and associations I've formed within this group.



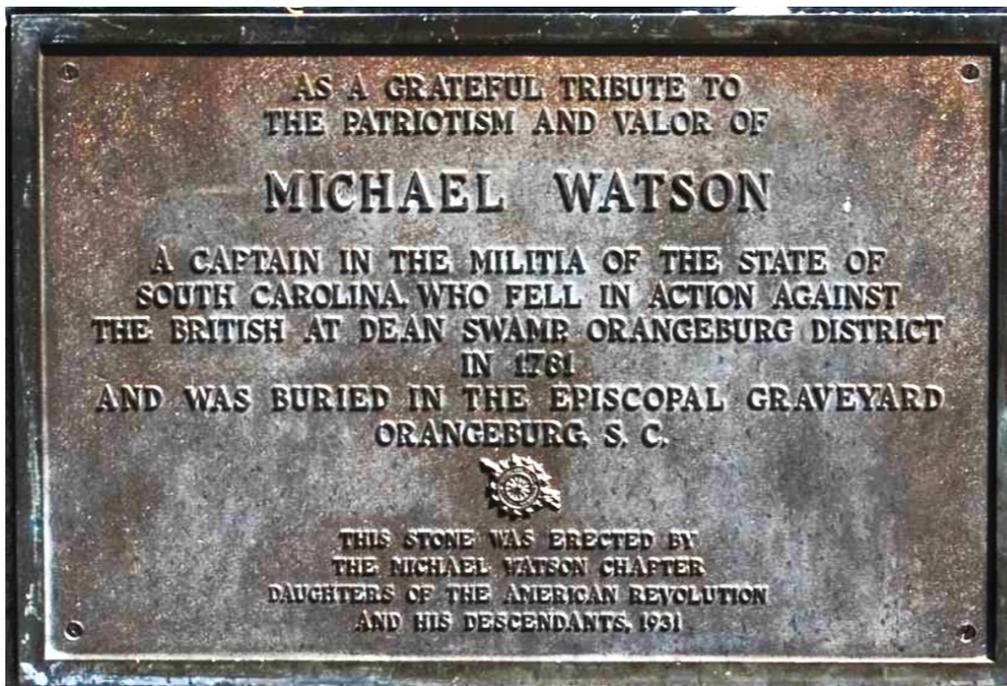
## *Let Me Tell You about My Patriot Ancestors*

by Norman Smith

Godfrey Dreher Chapter • Treasurer

Michael Watson was born in Virginia on 10 April 1726 to William and Penelope Watson. Around 1745, his parents moved to South Carolina. William, along with his brother John, settled in the Ridge Spring area on land granted by Kings George II and George III.

The Watson family was ever ready to “buckle on their swords” at the first call to arms. The following is a brief sketch of one who ultimately gave his life in the cause of American liberty.



Michael, the fifth great-grandfather of Norman Smith, married Martha Watson, daughter of his uncle John Watson. He was a prosperous and industrious planter. Michael and Martha had five children, including Keziah Watson. Keziah married Robert Willis, and they moved to present-day Barnwell County, where they established a plantation called Wildwood. The nearby town of Williston is said to have been named for Robert Willis.

Michael first saw military service during the Cherokee Expedition under Colonel Grant in 1762. He again fought against the Cherokee in 1766, serving as a captain. He rendered especially effective service at Little River, where the Indians were repulsed and the division saved—an outcome largely credited to Watson’s leadership. After the action, numerous bullet holes were found in his clothing, through which musket balls had passed without wounding him.

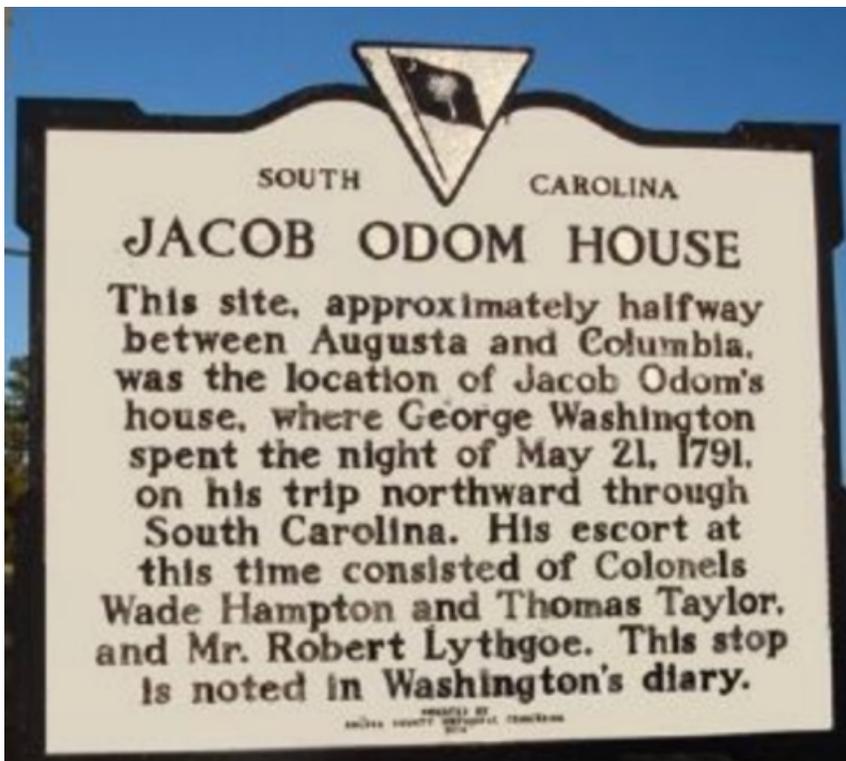
In 1767 and 1768, he played an active role in suppressing lawlessness in the region as a Regulator. In 1767, he, along with his father, his brother William, and two others, captured and killed a band of outlaws. Tragically, his father and brother were themselves killed in the conflict.

As tensions with Great Britain grew, Watson united with the Whigs for mutual defense and was chosen as a leader. In doing so, he drew the vengeance of British authorities but rose high in the confidence of leading Patriot officers. His home, located on the road from Charleston to Cambridge, was exposed to frequent hostile visits by the British and their Tory allies. His energy, courage, and the large number of active Whigs under his command made him an object of hatred. Tories surrounded his home several times in attempts to kill him, and his property was burned four times—his dwellings, mills, barns, cribs, and nearly everything he owned.

In May 1782, Captain Watson learned of a band of Tories in Dean's Swamp, near the present town of Springfield in Orangeburg County, and resolved to attack them. As Watson's men approached, two Tories were seen attempting to hide. Captain Watson, Lieutenant William Butler, Sergeant Thomas Vardell, and others rode forward to capture them. Watson quickly realized they were decoys and warned his men that the main body of Tories lay concealed in the brush. The Tories rose and delivered a well-aimed volley that brought down Captain Watson and several of the leading Whigs. Watson survived long enough to be carried to Orangeburg, where he died on 24 May 1782 and was buried with military honors.

---

### Martha Watson's Service



During the war, Martha Watson rode throughout the backcountry carrying messages and securing supplies for her husband, Captain Watson. After the war, she married Jacob Odom.

In 1791, during President George Washington's tour of the Southern states, he traveled from Augusta, Georgia, to Columbia, South Carolina, and dined at the home of Jacob and Martha Odom near present-day Monetta. Washington presented Captain Michael Watson's daughter Mary with a beautiful jewel box, which remains a treasured heirloom among her descendants.



## ***Dr. David Ramsay - Physician, Patriot, Scholar***

by Tom Elmore

Friend of the Chapter

Dr. David Ramsay was born in Pennsylvania in 1749. He graduated from Princeton University in 1765 and earned his medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1773. He then moved to Charleston, where he introduced smallpox inoculation to the Palmetto State.

Ramsay served in the South Carolina House of Representatives from 1776 to 1783. A firm supporter of independence, he also served as a surgeon in the Continental Army. Following the fall of Charleston on May 12, 1780, the British captured him and held him prisoner in St. Augustine for eleven months.

After the American Revolution, Ramsay represented South Carolina in the U.S. Confederation Congress (1785–1786), briefly serving as president pro tempore. He later served in the South Carolina Senate, but his opposition to slavery and his association with abolitionists eventually ended his political career.

Ramsay's greatest legacy lies in his historical scholarship. In 1785, he published *History of the Revolution in South Carolina*, followed in 1789 by *History of the American Revolution*. These works remain notable for their value as firsthand accounts. He later authored *Life of Washington* (1807) and *The History of South Carolina* (1809).

Ramsay's personal life was marked by both joy and tragedy. His first two wives died young. In 1787, he married Martha Laurens, daughter of Henry Laurens, President of the Second Continental Congress and a signer of the Treaty of Paris. Martha died in 1811 at the age of fifty-two. Six weeks after her death, Ramsay published her diary and private letters as *Memoirs of the Life of Martha Laurens*, offering a rare glimpse into a woman's perspective on life in the South during the American Revolution.

In 1789, Ramsay co-founded the Medical Society of South Carolina. In 1803, Yale University awarded him an honorary Doctor of Medicine degree, and he was elected to the American Philosophical Society, the scholarly organization founded by Benjamin Franklin to promote research and intellectual exchange.

Tragically, on May 6, 1815, Ramsay was shot in the back and hip by William Linnen. Ramsay had previously testified in court that Linnen was "deranged" and "dangerous to let him go at large." Linnen later persuaded the courts he was sane. Ramsay died of his wounds two days later.

Dr. David Ramsay is buried at the Circular Congregational Church cemetery in Charleston. His three-volume *History of the United States* was published posthumously.

Despite being a pioneering physician, a patriot of the American Revolution, an influential political figure, and a distinguished scholar, David Ramsay's name has faded from popular memory. Perhaps during the Semiquincentennial of the American Revolution, his story will receive the recognition it deserves.



## ***Don't Overlook Your Supplementals***

By Mike Gillis

Godfrey Dreher Chapter • Registrar

When researching family history, it's easy to assume every eligible Patriot ancestor has already been identified. In reality, many supplemental Patriots remain hidden in plain sight within our family trees.

A smart starting point is to review birth dates. Any known ancestor — or even an unidentified parent — born between 1730 and 1760 may have been old enough to render qualifying service during the American Revolution.

Have you checked whether your established Patriot's father was also a Patriot? What about a father-in-law? These connections occur more often than many realize. Maternal lines, in particular, are frequently overlooked, yet they often lead to previously undocumented service.

It's also important to remember that qualifying SAR service extends beyond military duty. Non-military contributions — such as providing material or medical aid, taking an oath of allegiance, or serving on certain committees — may also meet eligibility requirements. Service should never be ruled out until the historical record has been carefully examined.

One of the greatest challenges in lineage research is proving the parent-child connection between a Patriot and the next generation, especially given the scarcity of records from the late 18th and early 19th centuries. To avoid frustration, consider researching from the bottom up — confirming later generations first before investing significant time in earlier ones.

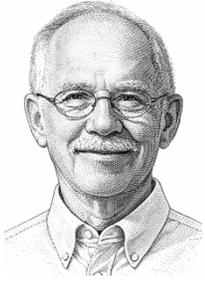


The Godfrey Dreher Dispatch

**The Godfrey Dreher Dispatch** is the official newsletter of the **Godfrey Dreher Chapter, South Carolina Society, Sons of the American Revolution**, published in the fall, winter, and spring.

The editor acknowledges the assistance of various AI platforms in the design, writing, proofreading, and layout of the material contained herein.

[jimheritage@gmail.com](mailto:jimheritage@gmail.com)



## ***Why You Should Attend a State BOG Meeting***

by Gary Blanpied

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, SCSSAR

Past President, Godfrey Dreher Chapter

One of the best ways to understand the depth, structure, and mission of the South Carolina Society, Sons of the American Revolution (SCSSAR) is to attend a Board of Governors (BOG) Meeting.

Each chapter president has a vote, along with one additional chapter delegate. That means your chapter's voice helps guide the direction of our Society.

What Happens at a BOG Meeting?

BOG meetings are where the Society's work comes together.

Governance & Administration

- Financial reports reviewed
- Budgets approved
- Bylaws and constitutional matters addressed

Reports

- Officers and committee chairs summarize recent activity
- Updates on statewide and national initiatives

Strategic Planning

- Membership growth and retention
- Educational outreach and youth programs
- Event and commemoration planning

Membership & Recognition

- Applications reviewed
- Awards and medals approved
- Chapter successes shared

Nominations

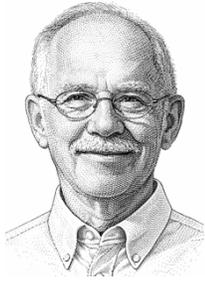
- Slate of officers presented for the coming year

If you want to see how decisions are made and where initiatives begin — this is where it happens.

Why You Should Attend

BOG meetings connect you to the larger SAR mission. You gain insight, build relationships, and return to your chapter better informed and energized.

If you've never attended, make this the year. You'll walk away with a clearer understanding of how we honor our Patriot ancestors — not just in ceremonies, but through leadership, service, and stewardship of the Society's future.



## Highlights from the January 10, 2026 BOG Meeting

by Gary Blanpied

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, SCSSAR

Past President, Godfrey Dreher Chapter

The quarterly BOG meeting was held January 10, 2026, from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. About 50 members were present at the opening gavel by President Mike Monahan. Earlier, chapter registrars met with State Registrar Tony Brice, adding about 15 more participants to the day's activities.

### Godfrey Dreher Chapter Well Represented

Norman Smith, Stephen Corley, Buck Shuler, Jim Herritage, Carl Epps, and Gary Blanpied attended.

### Recognition

Joe Babb presented Gary Blanpied an America 250 Coin for his leadership in planting and dedicating a Liberty Tree near the historic Godfrey Dreher site at River Bluff High School.

### Membership Processing Times

- New applications: 14 weeks - Supplemental applications: 30 weeks

### NSSAR Store Success

Under new management, the national store recorded \$110,000 in sales in December 2025.

### Annual Meeting – April 17–18, 2026

All certificates and medals are ready.

### The Godfrey Dreher Chapter will manage registration:

- Friday: 5:00–7:00 PM and Saturday: 8:00–10:00 AM

### Membership Health

#### Clyde Howell reported:

- 95% dues renewal rate
- New members offsetting losses
- State membership remains above 900

### Registrar Improvements

Tony Brice introduced At-Large Registrars to help speed application processing.

### SC 250 Event

Joe Babb announced a 250th Anniversary Gala on June 27, 2026, in Camden.

### Commemoration

Members attended a wreath laying on January 17 marking the 245th anniversary of the Patriot victory at the Cowpens National Battlefield.

## Full Slate of Nominated Officers

To be voted on at the Annual Meeting, April 18, 2026

Office	Nominee
President	Gary Blanpied
Senior Vice President	Calvin Griffin
VP Upstate	Joe Glavitsch
VP Piedmont	Neel Flannagan
VP Midlands	Stephen Corley
VP Pee Dee	Scott Bruton
VP Low Country	John Ethan Boyes
VP Chapter Renewal	Ted Walker
VP New Chapter Formation	Paul Cashion
Secretary	Larry Gamble
Recording Secretary	Clyde Howell
Treasurer	Gordon McCay
Registrar	Tony Brice
Chaplain	Doug Doster
Historian	Mason Daly
Chancellor	Tom Mikell
Genealogist	Tom Sharkey
Trustee	Michael Monahan
Alternate Trustee	Greg Ohanesian

## SAVE THE DATE



COLUMBIA SOUTH CAROLINA

1776 - 2026

2026 SOUTH CAROLINA SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING

Awards Banquet Friday evening April 17, 2026 and  
Annual Meeting Saturday morning April 18, 2026

HOTEL RESERVATIONS

  
Columbia/Northeast

Hilton Garden Inn • 8910 Farrow Road • Columbia, SC 29203



### *Our Upcoming March 2026 Program*

By Aric Bruggeworth

Godfrey Dreher Chapter • Vice President for Programs

We have an outstanding program planned for March. Our guest speaker will be Brett Branshaw, presenting “The Hampton Family Massacre, 1776.” Brett will explore the Cherokee attacks on Patriot settlements and the ensuing Patriot militia reprisals in the South Carolina Upcountry, sharing these pivotal events through the perspective of the Hampton family.

Do you know someone who might be interested in joining the SAR? Invite them to attend our March meeting as a guest and help our chapter grow.





## *Celebrate Your Patriot Ancestor*

by Harold Crawford

Godfrey Dreher Chapter • Vice President for Events and Development

As we all know and deeply appreciate, our Society exists to honor the memory of our Revolutionary War Patriot ancestors. Our Compatriots carry that mission forward by serving in their communities — educating, inspiring, and encouraging future generations to understand and cherish the founding principles of our Republic.

In this 250th commemoration of our Independence, what better way to honor our Patriot forebears than by attending observances that recognize their struggles and sacrifices? As we proudly note, the road to Independence ran straight through South Carolina.

More Revolutionary War skirmishes and battles took place in South Carolina than in any other colony. These clashes touched every region of our state — from the mountains to the Midlands, the Lowcountry, and the coast.

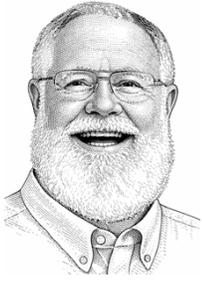
As members of the Sons of the American Revolution, how can we support our chapter in its mission to teach, to inspire, to lead by example, and to pass the flame of patriotism to present and future generations? Opportunities abound: attend ceremonies, support youth programs, and help our Society grow and thrive.

Let us ensure that the deeds of our Patriot ancestors are remembered and celebrated by those who share their blood. Let us also pledge our time and energy to help our communities recognize the hallowed ground that exists in their towns — and perhaps even in their own neighborhoods.

### Upcoming Events

- Francis Marion Memorial Observance  
Sponsored by General Marion's Brigade, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Sons of the American Revolution, with participation from the 169th Fighter Wing of the South Carolina Air National Guard and Washington Light Infantry  
February 27, 11:00 AM  
Marion's Tomb, Pineville, SC
- South Carolina Society Sons of the American Revolution Annual Membership Meeting & Awards Banquet  
April 17, 4:00 PM – April 18, 5:00 PM  
Hilton Garden Inn  
8910 Farrow Rd, Columbia, SC





## *Why Every Chapter Needs a Website*

by Jim Herritage

Godfrey Dreher Chapter • Technical VP & Webmaster

Leadership within the South Carolina Society, SAR has made a forward-thinking investment in the future by developing a new state website that provides member chapters with a tremendous benefit: free chapter websites with powerful capabilities. That should prompt an important question — why does a chapter need a website in the first place? At least five strong reasons come to mind.

**First**, outreach. A chapter website serves as the front door for men who are curious about their Patriot ancestors and the work of the Sons of the American Revolution. Many prospective members begin their journey online. A well-designed site offers them a local connection, an overview of the lineage research process, and a clear path forward. It can explain what documentation is required and, just as importantly, connect them with knowledgeable leaders such as our Registrar Mike Gillis who can guide them through mapping and proving their descent.

**Second**, member reference. For existing compatriots, a website becomes a living handbook. Instead of searching through old emails or paper files, members can quickly find chapter leadership contacts, committee descriptions, chapter history, genealogical resources, and essential SAR knowledge. It is a central, always-available knowledge base that strengthens participation and understanding.

**Third**, a reliable calendar. This is where the state society plays a pivotal role. It makes little sense for each chapter to independently track dozens of events across South Carolina. Positioned at the center of statewide activity, the state society is best equipped to publish and maintain an official calendar. Chapter websites, in turn, can share that trusted information with their members, ensuring better attendance and coordination.

**Fourth**, preservation of archives. Too often, valuable records vanish when officers change, files are misplaced, or longtime record keepers pass away. A chapter website can serve as a stable digital repository for bylaws, meeting minutes, annual reports, and other key documents. It quietly tells future members, “We were here, and we took our responsibilities seriously.”

**Fifth**, an ongoing meeting place. Today’s communication tools allow boards and committees to meet virtually and exchange ideas easily. A website provides the hub — linking members to virtual meeting spaces, shared documents, and discussion points. It extends the chapter beyond a once-a-month gathering into a continuous, collaborative community.

In short, a chapter website is not a luxury. It is an essential tool for outreach, education, coordination, preservation, and connection — all vital to our mission.