

## Revolutionary War Patriots Reuben and Ebenezer Tucker Honored

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By Pat Johnson



REMEMBRANCE: Mike Mangum, a member of the Colonel Richard Somers Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, gives an address at the grave site of Ebenezer Tucker with the N.J. Society SAR Color Guard standing proud. (Photos by Pat Johnson)

May 1 was a perfect day for a show of patriotism in the form of a wreath-laying on two graves of Revolutionary War veterans, Reuben Tucker and his son Ebenezer, in the Old Methodist Church graveyard on Church Street in Tuckerton.

The event brought together the Colonel Richard Somers Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, hosts of the program, along with the New Jersey Society Sons of the American Revolution Color Guard; the Captain Joshua Huddy, Great John Mathis and General Lafayette chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolution; Morven Chapter Children of the American Revolution; Boy

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PIPING: Keith Tice of Shamrock and Thistle plays patriotic songs on the bagpipes during the ceremony.

Somers Chapter, was the master of ceremonies. He remarked on how Tuckerton was fortunate to contain so much history within its borders. He gave a quick history lesson of Reuben and Ebenezer Tucker to those gathered around.

Reuben, whose grave marker is little more than a marble stump with his name, came from Orange County, New York around 1745 to build a boarding house/hotel on Tucker's Island. It's said Tucker's Island was the first seaside resort in the area. When his son Ebenezer was 8 years old, the family moved to the mainland of Little Egg Harbor.

Knowledge of Reuben's part in the Revolutionary War is sketchy, but Mangum said there is an account by Ebenezer that says his father was one of a group of early patriots who participated in the capture of a British vessel full of tea bound for the colonies. They threw the tea overboard – just like the in famous Boston Tea Party, except the South Jersey rebels did not dress as Indians. This event happened off Absecon Island.

When Ebenezer was 23, he participated in the war as a privateer and captained his own vessel, the *Kitty*, out of Chestnut Neck. In 1776, he also participated in the Battle of Long Island under Gen

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FOUNDING FATHER: The grave of Reuben Tucker, who would participate in a tea party and whose son Ebenezer would fight in the Revolutionary War.

In 1791, the Little Egg Harbor district was made an official port of entry, and Ebenezer was the first collector of customs. His father, Reuben, became postmaster, a position Ebenezer would eventually fill and hold throughout his life except when he was elected to Congress in 1824 and 1826.

In Congress, Ebenezer pleaded for the rights of veterans of the Revolutionary War to receive their pensions. He held other positions of trust, including freeholder for Burlington County (Ocean County did not yet exist), justice of the peace and chief justice of the Court of Common Pleas.

He was active in politics until his death in 1845 at age 88. Obituaries in Mount Holly and Washington, D.C. newspapers speak of his generous and gentlemanly personage. His obelisk grave marker in the Methodist churchyard attests to his Masonic ties.

It was at this obelisk that Charlie Morgan, president of the State Society SAR, Ocean County Commissioner Virginia Haines and Tuckerton Mayor Sue Marshall made remarks on patriotism. Chaplain Don Higbee of the Somers Chapter of SAR gave the blessing and benediction for the day. Keith Tice of Shamrock and Thistle played the bagpipes.

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