



The Affair at Egg Harbor Historical Society: 2026 Special Award of Merit By Pat Johnson

The Affair at Egg Harbor Historical Society (AEHHS) has been recognized for their ongoing research and education, this time receiving a Special Award of Merit, regarding the Revolutionary War battle in Little Egg Harbor that pitted Count Casimir Pulaski against British troops. The battle is well documented as occurring on October 15, 1778 near today's Radio Road in the Mystic Island section of Little Egg Harbor. A monument to Pulaski's Defense of Egg Harbor was erected by the Society of the Cincinnati in 1894. Descendants of Revolutionary War officers make up the Society of the Cincinnati.

AEHHS President Michael Czurlanis is picking up his father's legacy – George Czurlanis (deceased in 2015) who brought the sacred battleground to the public attention in the 1980's by defending the site from development. George incorporated the AEHHS in 1982 and finally by 2002, the Pulaski Monument site was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Michael Czurlanis said the AEHHS has three goals: to preserve the site, proclaim the history and promote patriotism. The first goal has been achieved. The second and third are ongoing work by gathering in

period costume and laying a wreath at the monument on the Saturday closest to the October 15 date educating the public on the battle and importance of the site. Most years the Pulaski Legion cadets come from north Jersey dressed in their uniforms, often accompanied by student groups ranging from 5 to 50. Their color guard has a facsimile of the Pulaski Legion flag.

The second goal also includes extensive research into the battle by Czurlanis and Executive Director Dale Denda. Both point to original archive documents describing a full-blown battle, which did not reference a massacre.

"Yes, they were outnumbered," said Czurlanis, "Reports of the day by a Tory newspaper said 60 were killed; British Captain Ferguson said in his report that 40 were killed; Pulaski's report said there were 25 or 30 missing, wounded or dead. Based on research into payrolls and regimental rosters-- papers of who was there collecting pay and who was there after, we found 18 were killed including officers."

Photo above: George Czurlanis with Pulaski monument.
Photo credit: AEHHS

People often wonder why the Society is called The Affair at 'Egg Harbor' when the site is located in Little Egg Harbor. Back in the 17th and 18th centuries, when the area was first settled, 'Egg Harbor' denoted the whole area from Little Egg Harbor Inlet up to 'The Forks' on the Mullica River where goods captured from the British by privateers were sometimes shipped overland by wagon to Philadelphia and parts north.

Some estimates say up to 40% of the armaments to supply the Patriot army were sent through Little Egg Harbor port. The British were occupying New York and had blockaded the Delaware, effectively closing the ports in Philadelphia and New York. The British not only wanted to destroy the privateer 'nest of Rebel pirates', they actually wanted to destroy the entire port up the river!

"The October 15th battle, decades later dubbed 'Affair at Egg Harbor' was a really important battle," said Czurlanis. "It kept the lines of supply open."

"It was the second landing (Oct 15th) in the British expedition after they destroyed Chestnut Neck (Oct. 6-7th) on the south side of the Mullica that failed, and the enemy was again driven back—preventing them from going to march overland on this side of the river to destroy 'The Forks' where the warehouses were at Batsto.

"Continental Congress had been informed of the plans and sent Count Pulaski to Egg Harbor to stop the British—and he did," said Czurlanis.

Pulaski was born in Poland and while in France was recruited by Benjamin Franklin to come to the Americas to fight on the side of the patriots. Pulaski is known as the father of American cavalry. Pulaski's Legion included infantry, cavalry, and artillery.

"There also were French armaments and gun powder shipped from the Caribbean up the Mullica to Batsto," said Denda. "In the past two years we have found quite a bit of information from pension records about how the Oct. 15th battle was actually won."

These records were signed documents from veterans of the Revolutionary War who, decades after the war, were applying for pensions from the government.

"We have nine direct accounts from battle participants," said Denda. "Five of the accounts state the British retreated in chaotic fashion (along today's Radio Rd.) across the bridge to Osborn Island, destroying the bridge after them. Between 30 and 40 British were taken prisoner."

This was after the outpost (at the Pulaski Monument) had been attacked and Pulaski with his Legion of 60 cavalymen came to rout the attackers. "They came from Willits Farm (along Hollybrook Ln.), three quarters of a mile away, galloping down Island (Radio) Road with lances and sabers drawn. One of the reasons the British were surprised was nobody knew what his cavalry could do."

Denda also marvels at the time line. Pulaski was in Trenton when Congress ordered him to stop the British from attacking 'The Forks.'

This was on October 5 and the next day the Legion of cavalry and 90 infantrymen started the 60-mile trek at



a double-quick march. They reached the banks of the Mullica on the 7th in the vicinity of the Mathis and Tucker plantations and Chestnut Neck (near Port Republic) which had been burned by the British, but, importantly, forced the enemy away. The legion continued on to the Willits Farm where they had a view of Little Egg Harbor's anchorage of the British flotilla, and carefully watched the British ships.

Supposedly, a spy for the British alerted them that Pulaski was on the mainland and on the morning of October 15 they struck the outpost of about 30 men. Pulaski's subsequent counterattack again forced the enemy back to their ships and when the tides rose high enough to float their ships, they left the Harbor.

"Pulaski was told to save the port of Little Egg Harbor at 'The Forks' and he did," said Czurlanis.

This year to mark the 250th signing of the Declaration and the birth of the United States the historical society will be rolling out the new research in a presentation, "History as it Happened," including a special lecture on "Pulaski in American History," during the annual 248th anniversary of the 'Defense of Little Egg Harbor', as it was originally called.

"Last year we found documentation that Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia were being supplied through "The Forks," said Denda. "That's another example a lot of untold great history remains. The residents should be proud and feel lucky that it's in their backyard."

Affair at Egg Harbor battle diorama. Photo credit: AEHHS.



Members of the Polish community and the cadets. Photo credit: AEHHS.



Executive Director Dale Denda. Photo credit: AEHHS.