



Arizona SAR Historian's Newsletter
Celebrating the 130th Year of the
Arizona Sons of the American Revolution
Instituted May 18, 1895
Chartered June 13, 1896



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AMONG THE SOCIETIES.

Sons of the American Revolution.



MAJOR H. F. ROBINSON, of Phoenix, Arizona, writes THE SPIRIT OF '76, that an enthusiastic Society, SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, is in process of formation there, twenty-five gentlemen having formed themselves into a "provisional society" while waiting to have their application papers passed upon.

Arizona Society
of the
Sons of the American
Revolution



Instituted May 18th, 1895
Organized June 13th, 1896

Welcome!

By David A. Swanson, Arizona SAR Historian

I want to welcome everyone to the first edition of the Arizona SAR Historian's Newsletter! Throughout the next year (our 130th Anniversary year which starts today, June 13th) I will be publishing information about our Arizona Society's history. This certainly won't be an exhaustive history—far from it—but hopefully, it will be informative.

The first cover page of the newsletter is taken from *The Spirit of '76* magazine which announced the institution or “provisional society” of the Arizona SAR in 1895. The magazine was the unofficial organ of the SAR (and many other organizations) from 1894 until 1906 when the SAR Annual Congress authorized the publishing of *THE OFFICIAL BULLETIN*. And, while the magazine doesn't list the specific date of the 1895 event, the local newspaper does!

The Arizona Republic

Sunday, May 19, 1895

“A number of gentlemen met at the court house last night [Saturday, May 18th] and took preliminary steps in the organization of a society of Sons of the American Revolution.”

The second cover of this newsletter is taken from our 1910 Constitution and Bylaws. I wanted to use one from our 1899 Constitution and Bylaws (the earliest that I was able to obtain) but it proudly shows that the Arizona SAR was organized (chartered) on *Flag Day June 14, 1896!*—the actual date was June 13th and I didn't want to confuse the issue—like I am now. It is interesting to note that the error occurred only three years after our organization—but records and periodicals clearly indicate the June 13th date.

There were quite a few notable events that took place in 1896: Utah entered the Union, Puccini's "La Bohème" premiered in Turin, Italy, William McKinley (the last Union Civil War Veteran to serve as president) defeated William Jennings Bryan for the presidency; however, *our* big event was the official organization of the Arizona Society Sons of the American Revolution on June 13th.

History is just plain fun and there is nothing more fun than resurrecting the accomplishments of those who were instrumental in the creation, organization, and maintenance of our Society through their membership and contributions. Who would have known that the last Arizona territorial governor, Richard Sloan, and the first state governor, George W. P. Hunt, were Arizona SAR members? And if you are new to Arizona and its history, we became the 48th state on Valentine's Day, June 14, 1912—hence one of our nicknames of the “Valentine State.” John Greenway (one of the heroes of the Spanish-American War), and Winfield Scott, the founder of Scottsdale, were also members. We had Compatriots from Arizona towns such as Silverbell, Warren, and Las Palmas.

We have a lot to cover so I will start—where else—but in 1891!

The Quest

It is appropriate to start with a newspaper article that sums up our organization and starts the quest for an Arizona Society. The Tuesday evening March 31, 1891, edition of the *Phoenix Daily Herald* contained an article presumably written by the “Father of Arizona,” Charles Debrille Poston (member of the District of Columbia Society):

Arizona's Sons of the American Revolution

There are a number of descendants of Revolutionary War heroes in this Territory. Col. C. D. Poston of the capital city [Phoenix], would like to get into communication with them, in order to organize a branch of the National Society Sons of the American Revolution.

In twenty-seven states such organizations have been effected, extending from California which led the movement by a society formed in the Centennial year, to Massachusetts; from Vermont to Louisiana.

The object of these unions is to gather and perpetuate records of every man who aided during the Revolution in achieving Independence; to foster true patriotism and love of country and secure for all mankind all the blessings of liberty. As the Rev. Dr. Leavitt, in an address upon the subject, said:

‘On our continent we have fifty republics. Let us form them through leagues of fellowship. Our hearts should embrace self government throughout the world.’

The peculiar feature of such bodies is that they admit men of all sections, political, social, and religious beliefs, up on a common platform where all can meet in fellowship, without cause for jealousy, envy or any of the feelings of rivalry that beset organized effort in so many other directions.

The badge of the order is very handsome, and was designed by Major G. B. West of Alabama. It is modeled after the cross of the ancient chivalric order of St. Louis of France that numbers among its Grand Masters Louis the XVI, who aid enabled the colonies to prevail at length against England's immensely superior armies.

Ordinarily a rosette of blue and white silk ribbon is worn in the upper left button hole of the coat, after the manner of various other modern societies.

Arizona should fall into the ranks of this rapidly extending Revolutionary Army. If those who are eligible will send their names to Col. Poston, at Phoenix, our Territory may take its place with America's most illustrious sons.

The Spirit of '76

The following information was taken from *The Spirit of '76* magazine, and, as written in the September 1896 edition, "Nowhere else can a reader obtain, each month, such a complete, entertaining, and valuable collection of the news of various public hereditary Societies as the *Spirit of '76*. The reports of the ceremonies, receptions, banquets and other acts of the Societies are obtained largely from the members of the different orders and are supplemented by the diligent work of the editor of this magazine."

***The Spirit of '76* July 1895**

Major H. F. Robinson, of Phoenix Arizona, writes *The Spirit of '76*, that an enthusiastic Society, Sons of the American Revolution, is in the process of formation there, twenty-five gentlemen having formed themselves into a "provisional society" while waiting to have their application papers passed upon.

***The Spirit of '76* July 1896**

On Saturday evening June 13th, The Arizona Society, Sons of the American Revolution, was formally organized at Phoenix. Over a year ago, Major H. F. Robinson was delegated by the National Society to organize in Arizona. A meeting called by him March 18, 1885, at the Court House in Phoenix was attended by a few interested gentlemen, and a provisional Society was organized. By hard work, and after many delays (being so far distant from all records of Revolutionary times, both public and private), seventeen gentlemen at last had their papers prepared and approved, and met for organization at the residence of Mr. W. H. Robinson. A Constitution and By-laws were adopted, and the following officers elected: President, Major H. F. Robinson; Vice-President, Harry R. Barden; Secretary, W. H. Robinson; Treasurer, Capt. Lewis W. Coggins; Registrar, Omar Asa Turney; Historian, J. Ernest Walker. The officers and the following constitute the Board of Managers: J. Frank Elwell, Lloyd B. Christy and James W. Benham. The meeting then adjourned to the broad, cool porches, and refreshments suited to the summer temperature were served by the hosts, the Messrs. Robinson, and at a late hour, after informal discussions on historical topics and others pertaining to the good of the Society, "America" was sung, and the meeting adjourned.

***The Spirit of '76* April 1897**

The evening of February 22d was passed delightfully by the Arizona Society of the SONS OF THE REVOLUTION [sic] and their friends, the occasion being the first annual banquet of the Society. This was given at the Hotel Adams in Phoenix and was preceded by a business meeting

at which these officers were elected: President, Major H. F. Robinson; Vice-President, J. W. Benham; Secretary, W. H. Robinson; Treasurer, Capt. Lewis W. Coggins; Registrar, J. Ernest Walker; Historian Lloyd B. Christy; Chaplain, Rev. Lewis Halsey D.D. These gentlemen and Col. P. P. Parker, Rev. H. A. Thompson and George D. Christy are the Board of Managers. The dinner was served in the ordinary of the hotel, which was appropriately draped with National flags, Beautiful roses, smilax, and other cut flowers decorated the tables. Major Robinson presided as toast-master and in his address prophesized that the day of the annual meetings would become the red letter day of the year. Attorney Rickenbaugh spoke to the toast "Our Society," Dr. Scott Helm to "George Washington," and Col. Parker made a very clever response to "Arizona." "Our flag" elicited a burst of eloquence from W. H. Robinson, full of patriotic fervor. There were other speeches, some witty, others in serious vein, a recitation by J. W. Benham, the singing of "America," and the festivities were concluded by a dance in the main dining hall.

The actual copy of the 1899 Arizona SAR Constitution and Bylaws:

Constitution and By-Laws of the Arizona Society....



Constitution

ARTICLE I.

The name of this Society shall be "THE ARIZONA SOCIETY OF THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION."

Name

ARTICLE II.

The object of this Society shall be to perpetuate the memory of the men, who, by their services or sacrifices during the war of the American Revolution, achieved the Independence of the American people; to unite and promote fellowship among their descendants; to inspire them and the community at large with a more profound reverence for the principles of the Government founded by our forefathers; to encourage historical research in relation to the individual services of the patriots of the war, as well as documents, relics and landmarks; to mark the scenes of the Revolution by appropriate memorials; to celebrate the anniversaries of the prominent events of the war; to foster true patriotism, to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom, and to carry out the purposes expressed in the preamble of the Constitution of our country and the injunctions of Washington in his farewell address to the American people.

Objects

ARTICLE III.

MEMBERSHIP.

Any man shall be eligible to membership in this Society, who, being of the age of twenty-one years or

Qualification of
Members

over, and a citizen of good repute in the community, is the lineal descendant of an ancestor who was at all times unfailing in his loyalty to, and rendered actual service in the cause of American Independence, either as an officer, soldier, seaman, marine, militiaman or minuteman, in the armed forces of the Continental Congress or of any of the several Colonies or States; or as a signer of the Declaration of Independence; or as a member of a Committee of Safety or Correspondence; or as a member of any Continental, Provincial or Colonial Congress or Legislature; or as a civil officer, either of one of the Colonies or States, or of the National Government, or as a recognized patriot who performed actual service by overt acts of resistance to the authority of Great Britain.

ARTICLE IV.

OFFICERS AND MANAGERS.

Officers

SECTION 1. The officers of this Society shall be a President, a Vice-president, a Secretary, a Treasurer, a Registrar, a Chaplain and an Historian, who shall be elected by ballot for the term of one year, and who shall continue in office until their successors are elected and qualified.

Board of Managers

SEC. 2. There shall be a Board of Managers, whose duty it shall be to conduct the affairs of the Society, to consist of the officers ex-officio and three others, who shall be elected at the same time and in the same manner as the officers of the Society.

ARTICLE V.

MEETINGS.

Annual Meeting

SECTION 1. The annual meeting of this Society shall take place on the 22d day of February in each year, unless the same shall fall on Sunday, in which case upon the day following.

SEC. 2. The hour and place for holding the annual meeting, and the time and place for holding any special meeting shall be designated by the Board of Managers.

SEC. 3. Special meetings of the Society shall be called by the President when directed to do so by the Board of Managers or at the written request of five members.

Special Meetings

SEC. 4. Special meetings of the Board of Managers may be called by the President at any time, and shall be called at the written request of three members of the Board.

SEC. 5. Seven members shall constitute a quorum of the Society at any meeting, and five members shall constitute a quorum of the Board of Managers at any meeting.

Quorums

ARTICLE VI.

AMENDMENTS.

Amendments to this constitution may be offered at any meeting of the Society, but shall not be acted upon until the next meeting. A copy of every proposed amendment shall be sent to each member by the Secretary, with a notice of the meeting at which the same is to be acted upon, at least a week prior to said meeting. A vote of two-thirds of those present shall be necessary to its adoption.

Amendments



By-Laws

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I.

MEMBERSHIP.

SECTION 1. An applicant for admission to the Society must make application in duplicate (on forms obtained from the Secretary) enumerating the services of his ancestor in the War of Independence, together with a detailed statement of the intermediate generations of his pedigree. The applicant shall make oath that the statements of his application are true to the best of his knowledge and belief. Such applicant must be nominated by a member of the Society, and may be elected a member by two-thirds vote at any meeting of the Society or of the Board of Managers.

Membership

Arrearsages

SEC. 2. Any member failing to pay his annual dues for two consecutive years may forfeit his membership upon a vote of the Board of Managers.

SEC. 3. Members in arrears shall be debarred from the privileges of membership.

SEC. 4. By recommendation of the Board of Managers and a two-thirds vote of the Society a member may be dropped from the register.

Resignation of
Members

SEC. 5. Any member may resign, if his dues are all paid, simply by notifying the Registrar in writing.

Members trans-
ferred

SEC. 6. Members in good standing may be transferred to another society, on application from the same; members in good standing in other societies, may, on application, be admitted to membership in this Society by vote of the Board of Managers.

ARTICLE II.

FEES AND DUES.

Fees and Dues

The membership fee shall be Five Dollars; the annual dues Three Dollars, to be paid in advance at the time of the annual meeting. The payment of Fifty Dollars at one time shall constitute a life member, and the member so paying shall be exempt from the payment of annual dues. In all cases of transfer of members from another State Society, or any member of the Sons of the Revolution in good standing joining this Society, the membership fee shall not be required.

ARTICLE III.

DUTIES OF OFFICERS.

Duties of Officers

President

SECTION 1. *President.*—The President, or in his absence the Vice-president, or in their absence a chairman *pro tem.*, shall preside at all meetings of the Society and the Board of Managers, and shall have a casting vote. The presiding officer shall preserve order and decide all questions of order, subject to appeal to the meeting. The president shall be the official head of the Society. He shall perform such duties as usually

pertain to that office, and as are designated in these By-laws.

In the absence of the President his duties shall be performed by the Vice-president.

Vice-president

SEC. 2. *Secretary.*—The Secretary shall receive all money from the members, and shall pay it over to the Treasurer, taking his receipt for the same. He shall conduct the general correspondence of the Society; shall notify all members of their election, and such other matters as the Society may direct. He shall have charge of the seal and such records of the Society as are not herein given especially in charge of other officers of the Society, and, together with the presiding officer, he shall certify all acts and orders of the Society. He shall, under the direction of the President or acting president, give notice of the time and place of all meetings of the Society and Board of Managers, and shall give such notice of the votes, orders and proceedings of the Society as the Board of Managers may direct.

Secretary

SEC. 3. *Treasurer.*—The Treasurer shall have charge of the funds of the Society, he shall receive all money from the Secretary, and give his receipt for the same, which money shall be deposited in the name of the Society, and shall pay out for the benefit of the Society only in such sums as the Society or the Board of Managers may direct, and upon the order of the Secretary, countersigned by the President. He shall keep a true account of the receipts and disbursements, and at each annual meeting make a full report to the Society.

Treasurer

The books of the Secretary and Treasurer shall be open to the inspection of the President and the Board of Managers at all times.

SEC. 4. *Registrar.*—The Registrar shall receive all applications and proofs of membership. He shall examine the same and shall report his opinion thereon to the Board of Managers. Imperfect and incorrect

Registrar

applications may be returned to the applicant for correction or completion. After applications have been passed upon by the Board of Managers the Registrar shall, if the application be accepted, forward one copy to the Registrar General of the National Society, and shall make a record of such parts of said application as he deems necessary, in a book of forms prepared for that purpose. The original application, with accompanying proofs, shall be kept on file. He shall also have custody of all historical, geographical and genealogical books, papers, manuscripts and relics of which the Society may become possessed.

Historian

SEC. 5. *Historian*.—The Historian shall keep a record of all facts in connection with the Society which he may judge to be of historic value, and shall make a report in writing at each annual meeting.

Chaplain

SEC. 6. *Chaplain*.—The Chaplain shall perform the religious offices of the Society.

Board of Managers

SEC. 7. *Board of Managers*.—This Board shall judge of the qualifications of the candidates for admission to the Society, and elect the same; expel any member after due notice and impartial trial, who by conduct unbecoming a gentleman, shall render himself unworthy to remain a member, subject to appeal to the Society; shall digest and prepare business; shall authorize the expenditure and disbursement of money from the treasury for the payment of current expenses, and generally superintend all the interests of the Society and execute all such duties as may be committed to it by the Society. It shall make, through the President, a general report of its transactions at the annual meeting of the Society.

ARTICLE IV.

AMENDMENTS.

Amendments

Amendments to these By-laws shall be made only in the same manner as to the Constitution of this Society.

Preliminary Application Blank, Arizona Society, S. A. R.

NOTE.— Fill out the following blank, and send it, together with admission fee (\$5.00), to the Registrar. If approved you will be sent the regular application blanks of the Society, which must be made out in duplicate, and as per Article I of the By-Laws. See page 13 of the Society's hand-book.

Name of Applicant..... Age.....

Born..... State of.....

I am the son of..... and..... his wife

Grandson of..... and..... his wife

Great-g'dson of..... and..... his wife

Great-great g.s. of..... and..... his wife

.....
and he, the said....., is the ancestor
who assisted in establishing American Independence.

[OVER]

[SEE OTHER SIDE]

My ancestor's services in assisting in the establishment of American Independence during the War of the Revolution were as follows:

.....
.....
.....
The following are references to authorities for the above statements: (If affidavits or certificates be among authorities, attach them to this blank.)

.....
Signature of Applicant.

If you noticed, the membership fee was only \$5, annual dues were only \$3, and the Life membership option was only \$50! Of course my handy inflation calculator shows those amounts today are \$190, \$115 and \$1900 respectively.

So who was Herbert Fulwiler Robinson?

Herbert Robinson was born in Lexington, Illinois on June 7, 1865, about two months after the end of the Civil War. In 1887 he moved to the bustling metropolis of Phoenix, Arizona, with its population of about 3,000 souls where he worked as a civil engineer (with a focus on water-related systems such as irrigation).

Robinson joined the District of Columbia SAR in 1892 after being “Nominated and recommended” by none other than Charles D. Poston! His National number was 2194 and his DC state number was 384.

In 1895 H. F. Robinson was delegated by the SAR to organize a Society in Arizona which he successfully established. The organization was officially chartered in 1896—with Robinson retaining his National number and receiving Arizona state number 1. He was elected president of the Arizona SAR during the organizational meeting on June 13, 1896, elected again in 1897 and 1898. He was then elected vice president in 1899 and 1900.

Robinson was also active in the Arizona National Guard and on August 5, 1898, Governor Murphy appointed him Adjutant General of the Territory with the rank of Brigadier General. He retired in 1902, relocating to Albuquerque, where, years later, he was instrumental in reorganizing the New Mexico SAR.

SAR admission policies were much less stringent

Cautionary note to State and Chapter Registrars: the following may be disturbing! When Robinson joined the SAR—and for years thereafter—applicants were not required to submit copies of their Patriot ancestor's records for admission. Traditional authority was deemed sufficient and detailed family history was not a necessity.

Here is information, taken in part from his D.C. Society application:

“State fully such documentary or traditional authority as you found the following record upon and also the residence of ancestors, with dates of birth and death, if known.

“My Ancestor's services in assisting in the establishment of American Independence during the War of the Revolution were as follows:”

Robinson's response: “[Isaiah Robinson] was a member of the 5th company, 11th regt., militia of Conn. (Capt. Ephraim Patton). This company at the time he was a member thereof marched to Westchester in September 1776. This is all that is positively known of his services, though family traditions, say that he served from that time to the end of the war”

And what about the term: “American Independence during the War of the Revolution”? Has a neat ring to it!

To be continued!

