

## **The Arizona Society Early History**

### **13 June 1896 - 13 June 1996**

A brief review of the beginnings of the National Society of the American Revolution is in order to frame our Arizona story. The National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution came into existence after a number of State Societies had already been formed. "Preceded by The Sons of Revolutionary Sires, formed in California July 4, 1876." The National Society Sons of the American Revolution (NSSAR) was established April 30, 1889. For details see The History of the Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, by John St. Paul, Jr., Historian General, published 1962. Revolutionary War Ancestors are known as "Patriots." Descendent members of the NSSAR are known as "Compatriots." " True" or "Real" sons refer to first generation sons of the Patriot.

Residing in the Arizona Territory, before June 13, 1896, were members of Sons of Revolutionary Sires and of other state Societies of the National Society Sons of the American Revolution. These Territorial men found they shared many common interests including a strong love for their country and of their American Revolutionary ancestor heritage.

There were at least three charters of the Arizona Society Sons of the American Revolution (AZSSAR). The first charter was signed on June 13, 1896 by President General Horace Porter of New York and Secretary General Franklin Murphy of New Jersey. A second charter was signed on May 23, 1934 by President General Arthur M. McGrillis of Rhode Island and Secretary General Frank B. Steele of New York. A third charter was a "Memorial Charter", signed May 15, 1950, by President General Wallace C. Hall of Michigan and Secretary General Edgar Williamson, Jr. of New Jersey.

First Charter" members were Herbert Fulwiler Robinson, William Henry Robinson, Omar Asa Turney, Lewis Wilfred Coggins, John Ernest Walker, J. Frank Elwell, George W. Christian, Harry Roswell Barden, Charles Bennett Christy, Lemuel Campbell Butler, George Dorr Christy, Lloyd Bennett Christy, Shirley Addison Christy, Alfred Perry Walbridge, James W. Benham, Samuel Seay Stout, Prosper Powell Parker, Henry Adelbert Thompson, John Dennett, Jr., and Rev. Lewis Halsey, DD.

The 20 signers of the June 13, 1896 First Charter may be inferred from the records of their applications as being in three categories: a. "certain," b. "probable" and c. "possible" in modern usage only. Arizona membership numbers 1-8 were assigned prior to the charter date. Arizona numbers 9-17 were assigned on 27 June 1896, after the charter date. Arizona numbers 18, 19, and 20 were assigned prior to June 13, 1897 anniversary date. Current custom is for the Charter to be left open for signers until the first anniversary date.

The "Second Charter", was signed by 40 AZSSAR Compatriots in the following order: G. M. Butler, Evan L. Stallcup, J. Rockwood Jenkins, Franklin D. Lane, Lewis W. Coggins, Walter L. Ingalls, Frank T. Alkire, M. B. Hazeltine, R. G. Lanmeade, Corydon R. Dusenberry, Elkanah A. Babcock, III, Charles A. Carson, John Dennett, Jr., Howard S. Reed, George W. P. Hunt, Lloyd B. Christy, Everett E. Ellinwood, Harold Baxter, L. J. Taylor, H. Greenway Albert, Kenneth G. Freeland, Julian Dorsey, R. Lyle Thomas, P. W. Hodges, Robert A. Greene, G. N. Burcham, T. Carlyle Roberts, Jr., James R. Ahl, E. D. Ball, A. E. Douglas, Talbot T. Smith, A. H. Caldwell, Jr.,

Leonard J. Curtis, K. E. Parke, Dr. Laurel W. Moffitt, Frederick E. Johnson, Wyatt W. Jones, A. R. Buehman, Frank C. Kelton, and E. D. Gardner.

Note that Lloyd Bennet Christy, Lewis Wilfred Coggins and John Dennett, Jr. all signed the "First Charter" and the "Second Charter"

No copy of the First Charter has been found. The Second Charter is in the custody of the AZSSAR Historian. Mounted in a frame behind glass, the condition is very faded and very brittle. Charter 3, a "memorial" charter signed May 15, 1950 by President General Wallace C. Hall of Michigan and Secretary General Edgar Williamson Jr. of New Jersey, contains no member names. A copy is in custody of the AZSSAR Historian.

The above information was compiled by Compatriot John A. Williams as he prepared to publish "The Arizona Society Sons of the American Revolution Centennial Register June 13, 1896 - June 13, 1996". He worked in conjunction with the Chairman of the AZSSAR Centennial Activities Committee Compatriot L. Bernard Schmidt who provided historical personalities of early Arizona figures, many of whom were Arizona SAR members. These articles were written for publication or speeches in preparation for the 103rd National Congress, NSSAR, held in Phoenix, Arizona in June 1993.

**1 November 2014: Update on our Arizona Charters:**

The preceding document was most likely written in 1993 by John Williams and Bernard Schmidt. At this time, none of the Arizona Charters can be accounted for. Many society members have spent time and energy trying to locate them, to no avail.

With the assistance of our current Secretary-Treasurer Warren Alter, we have been able to determine who our Society Historians were since about 1996 (except the year of 1997). John Williams (1996), Unknown (1997), Michael Pratt (1999-2005), Bob Ackley (2006), Dr. Rudy Byrd (2006 to present). Unfortunately John Williams, Michael Pratt and Bernard Schmidt have all passed away, so we were unable to obtain any further information from them. Our President for 1995-1996 was George Reece. He is currently living in Mesa, Arizona. He thought that the Historian at that time might have been a Bernard Williams? Further research revealed it was Bernard Schmidt.

Secretary-Treasurer Warren Alter reports that all of the paperwork and documents that were handed down from Michael Pratt and Bob Ackley did not contain any of our Charters. We are still looking.

**23 November 2014: Update on our Arizona Charters:**

Past President Walter Seaton spoke with John Williams' widow, Fran Williams. John was President in 1984. Walter was advised by Fran that she remembered her husband bringing the Charter to some of the state meetings. She advised that her husband turned the Charter over to his vice president, when he became President. That would have been James Wallace Polk. We are pretty sure that he has passed away?

Warren Alter has an email address for Kenneth Hales (1992 President), however Kenneth has yet to reply to me. His phone number isn't good.

I called Major McCreery (1993 President) who lives in Green Valley and he can't recall ever seeing one of our Charters.

So, at this time it appears that our 3rd Charter became misplaced between 1985 and 1993.

November 2014: 2014 President of the Barry Goldwater Chapter, David Swanson, was given a box of AZSSAR items from Rob Bohanan (son of Robert Bohanan our 1991 President). No charters were in the box.

If you know any of these living Past Presidents, or family members of our Past Presidents listed here, please make the attempt to contact them to see if they know where our Charter is. Could it be in a box in someone's closet?

Past	Arizona	Society	Presidents:
1984	John	Arthur	Williams
1985	James	Wallace	Polk
1986	John	Milton	Durham
1987	Elwess	Foster	Dyer
1988	Ralph	Jackson	
1989	Charles	Jackson	Meek
1990	Wilbur	DeLancey	Lockwood Jr.
1991	Robert	Critchfield	Bohannon, Jr.
1992	Kenneth	Glyn	Hales (living)
1993	Ronald	Arthur	McCreery (living)

George  
Arizona Society Vice President

Lipphardt